

# Book Summaries from www.e-LearningGuru.com

## Book Facts

- © 2001 by the American Society for Training and Development
- ISBN: 1-56286-299-5
- # Pages: 117

## How to Buy It

- Call ASTD at 800-628-2783
- [www.astd.org](http://www.astd.org)
- [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## Selling E-Learning

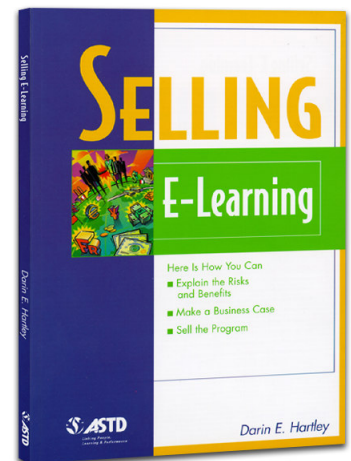
By Darin E. Hartley

### Overview

Selling the notion of e-learning internally to senior executives is very difficult. Often training managers must convince others to provide the requisite budgets and resources necessary to support learning architecture (e.g., LMS), off-the-shelf content or custom solutions.

*Selling E-Learning* provides very realistic, practical advice to obtaining the necessary support. Included are sample business case reports, tools, checklists, and ROI formulas.

This book is part of the ASTD series focused on bringing e-learning to life in large organizations.



### How to Explain e-Learning

E-learning is defined as any type of learning that is enabled or delivered to students by Internets and Intranets or other types of computer networks.

A simple model that can be used to classify types of e-learning offerings categorizes solutions as:

- Technology infrastructure (e.g., Saba or Docent)
- Custom services (e.g., NIIT or Intellinex)
- Content (e.g., Skillsoft, Smartforce)

Before recommending an e-learning solution to management, make sure it meets the following criteria:

- Easy to access
- Easy to use
- Reasonable cost
- Complies with e-learning standards and works with other applications
- Provides feedback and meets learner needs
- Meets needs of a

business leader

Six key action steps should be taken when you are ready to obtain management commitment:

- 1) Identify stakeholders
- 2) Identify true learning need
- 3) Set up meeting
- 4) Introduce need and e-learning concepts
- 5) Create business case
- 6) Present business case and gain support

## The Business Case

Remember that your business case will be judged in part by the quality of your presentation. You may want to consider using a CD-ROM, digi-card, or web site to deliver your presentation in order to “practice what you preach”.

The main components to include in your business case are:

- Cover page
- Business case title
- Date submitted
- Revision number
- Table of contents
- Name of author
- Routing information
- Executive summary
- Scope
- Purpose and benefits of e-learning
- Business need
- Associated risks
- Risk management
- Task list
- Timeline
- List of deliverables
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Potential vendors
- Estimated costs
- Supporting data
- References
- Glossary
- Signature page

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*“The next big killer application for the Internet is going to be education.”*

*-- John Chambers, CEO of Cisco Systems*

## Return on Investment (ROI)

Return on investment, commonly called ROI, is simply the “return”, or amount, that a person or organization gets back from a specific investment.

To calculate ROI you must determine all the true costs of each potential learning solution. For example, to prove your business case, you may need to show the ROI of your e-learning initiative versus the ROI of doing classroom-based training.

Typical costs you will estimate include costs associated with the development of the training, any licenses or purchase fees, production costs (e.g. duplicating CD-ROMs, or printing workbooks), and maintenance fees. Totaling all of these separate costs will give you the *investment* amount required.

The next step would be to estimate the anticipated return from the project. The return can be from increased productivity of employees, or greater sales, or reduction in errors, etc.

There are many common mistakes in calculating ROI, including:

- Inconsistent data comparisons
- Letting bias towards e-learning lead to “fudging” the results
- Poor quality of data on inputs – not enough time gathering accurate information and assumptions
- Wasting time and money conducting ROI studies that aren’t truly warranted

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*“Anybody attempting to implement e-learning should be prepared to share an estimate of ROI with decision makers.”*

*-- Darin Hartley*

## Presentation Strategy and Be Prepared for “No”

After completing the business case document you must prepare diligently for the live presentation. Don't underestimate the value of practice. Ask colleagues to rehearse with you and have them ask questions along the way so you'll be prepared for the real meeting.

Specific strategies to use during the meeting include:

- Be clear about the objective of the project
- Start with a project overview
- Discuss all the risks involved
- Consider using the technology you're recommending to deliver your presentation
- Provide references on the proposed solution or vendor

- Present third party studies or endorsements when possible

Be prepared to handle resistance and objections. Make sure you have solid information to combat the following fears:

- Fear of expense
- Fear of change
- Fears that e-learning is a fad
- Fear that e-learning systems will compromise other IT systems
- Fears of a new way of learning
- Fears about tracking training usage
- Fear of lack of prior experience in e-learning

Remember that receiving objections is *good* in that it shows your audience is engaged and evaluating the proposal seriously.

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*“If possible, demonstrate the proposed application and let your audience try it out.”*

*-- Darin Hartley*

## Strengthen Your Case with Success Stories

Managers in your organization will give your proposal greater credence if you can provide success stories from organizations that are similar to your own. You can find many case studies of e-learning efforts in training trade publications such as *T+D* and using Internet search engines such as [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

When reporting on other e-learning cases, make sure to describe the organization, the problem it faced, describe the learning solution and, of course, the ultimate results. Some cases are described below.

### Case One: Qualcomm

Qualcomm is a Fortune 500 wireless phone company. Their challenge was in the training and certification of their employees in topics associated with the

effects of electrostatic discharge. A team developed a series of Intranet-based e-learning modules which included audio narration, hyperlinked word definitions, a high degree of interactivity and a final certification exam. Over 600 employees from around the world have successfully completed the training and certification.

### Case Two: Conoco

Conoco University was established in 1996 with a mission to close its employees' business literacy gap. The curriculum included concept overviews, business simulations, and self-assessment games. 82 percent of learners who completed the program estimated that the program would enhance their on-the-job abilities.

Other successful cases include programs at Dell and Federal Express.

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*“Success stories for e-learning can provide motivation, strategic direction, and a source of inspiration for your e-learning initiative.”*

*-- Darin Hartley*

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Darin Hartley has been working in the training industry for the past 12 years and has undergraduate and graduate degrees in corporate training and training management.

He was program manager of the customer-focused e-learning solutions department at Dell Computer's, Dell Learning division.

Darin's other books include *Job Analysis at the Speed of Reality* and *On-Demand Learning: Training in the New Millenium*.

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