

Building a Culture of Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging with Microlearning

*Everything you need to know to bring your
important initiatives to life.*





Why this guide can make a difference.

Whether you're a diversity and inclusion professional working to build a high-performance culture of belonging or an operations leader working to help enhance employee understanding of inclusion issues, our Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging curriculum can support your vision.

In this guide we'll share information you need to:

- Create learning experiences that support a more inclusive culture
- Become well-versed in microlearning and the science that supports it
- Leverage your long-form training and transform it into digestible learning bites
- Influence key decision-makers that microlearning is an effective strategy for enhancing diversity, inclusion and belonging
- Evaluate a potential microlearning partner
- Layer microlearning into your overall D&I strategy



“Offering Blue Ocean Brain microlearning to our people shows them that we are committed to providing them with learning opportunities that are **tailored to their unique needs.**”

- Jason Gill, MetLife



Diversity is a vital strategic advantage.

At Blue Ocean Brain, we support companies by helping their people gain, retain and exhibit a common core of knowledge for fostering an inclusive environment. An environment in which differences, talents and perspectives are maximized in order to build the highest-performing teams and deliver exceptional results.

Diversity is about acknowledging and celebrating our differences. Helping people value and respect individual differences empowers them to grow professionally and contributes to organizational success.

Inclusion and Belonging is about creating an environment where people feel, *and are*, valued. True inclusivity enables people to bring their authentic selves to work every day and bring their personal best to every interaction.

The Proven Impact of Creating a Culture of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

2.3 times higher
cash flow per
employee over a
three-year period

1.7 times more likely
to be innovation
leaders in their market

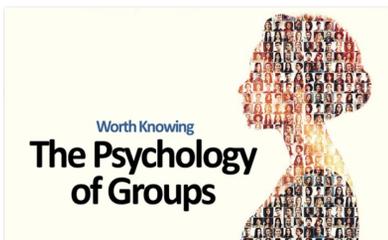
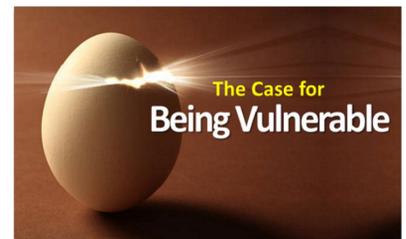
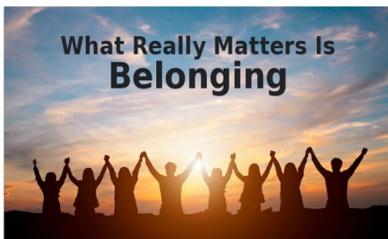
3.8 times more likely
to be able to coach
people for improved
performance

Source: Bersin by Deloitte 2015 High-Impact Talent Management global research

Getting Started Diversity & Inclusion Sampler

The Blue Ocean Brain team of writers, learning leaders and Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging specialists are constantly expanding the microlearning catalog. Our writing is informed by academic work, leadership experience, industry thought leadership, and beyond. We aim to arm employees with knowledge and a broader perspective that enables all people to bring their authentic selves to work and to be met by others with a sense of inclusion and real belonging.

Our wholistic approach offers learners a valuable opportunity to enhance their communication skills and emotional intelligence and work toward building a growth mindset of resilience and inclusion. Here is a small sampling of content we provide to support client-specific initiatives. The Blue Ocean Brain catalog includes 4500+ microlearning lessons and is growing every day.



Positive Steps to Real Results

Research shows that framing diversity and inclusion initiatives in a positive light – offering everyone an opportunity to learn and grow together – yields better results. Microlearning injects thoughtful, actionable learning into your people culture. When an individual’s beliefs and behavior are not in sync with organizational goals and norms, that person experiences something known as “cognitive dissonance”.

Studies show that people have a natural tendency to “resolve” dissonance by changing either their behavior or their beliefs. By prompting them to act in ways that support a more positive view, their opinions shift toward that view.

Diversity Programs That Get Results

Companies do a better job of increasing diversity when they forgo the control tactics and frame their efforts more positively. The most effective programs spark engagement, increase contact among different groups, or draw on people’s strong desire to look good to others.

% CHANGE OVER FIVE YEARS IN REPRESENTATION AMONG MANAGERS

Type of program	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Voluntary training			+13.3		+9.1		+9.3	+12.6
Self-managed teams	-2.8	+5.6	+3.4	+3.9				+3.6
Cross-training	-1.4	+3.0	+2.7	+3.0	-3.9		+6.5	+4.1
College recruitment: women*	-2.0	+10.2	+7.9	+8.7		+10.0	+18.3	+8.6
College recruitment: minorities**			+7.7	+8.9				
Mentoring				+18.0	+9.1	+23.7	+18.0	+24.0
Diversity task forces	-3.3	+11.6	+8.7	+22.7	+12.0	+16.2	+30.2	+24.2
Diversity managers		+7.5	+17.0	+11.1		+18.2	+10.9	+13.6

*College recruitment targeting women turns recruiting managers into diversity champions, so it also helps boost the numbers for black and Asian-American men.

**College recruitment targeting minorities often focuses on historically black schools, which lifts the numbers of African-American men and women.

NOTE WHITE INDICATES NO STATISTICAL CERTAINTY OF A PROGRAM’S EFFECT.

SOURCE AUTHORS’ STUDY OF 829 MIDSIZE AND LARGE U.S. FIRMS. THE ANALYSIS ISOLATED THE EFFECTS OF DIVERSITY PROGRAMS FROM EVERYTHING ELSE GOING ON IN THE COMPANIES AND IN THE ECONOMY.

FROM “WHY DIVERSITY PROGRAMS FAIL,” BY FRANK DOBBIN AND ALEXANDRA KALEV, JULY–AUGUST 2016

Source: HBR

What is Microlearning?

As the name suggests, *microlearning is a series of short, focused learning segments designed to meet a specific learning outcome*. And it's more than just a trending topic, it's evidence-based: microlearning aligns with how our brains learn best.

When delivered well, microlearning happens within the natural flow of work, enabling people to make learning continuous and self-directed.

4 Keys to Effective Microlearning

In order to deliver an effective microlearning solution, it must include the following elements:

1. A specific learning focus

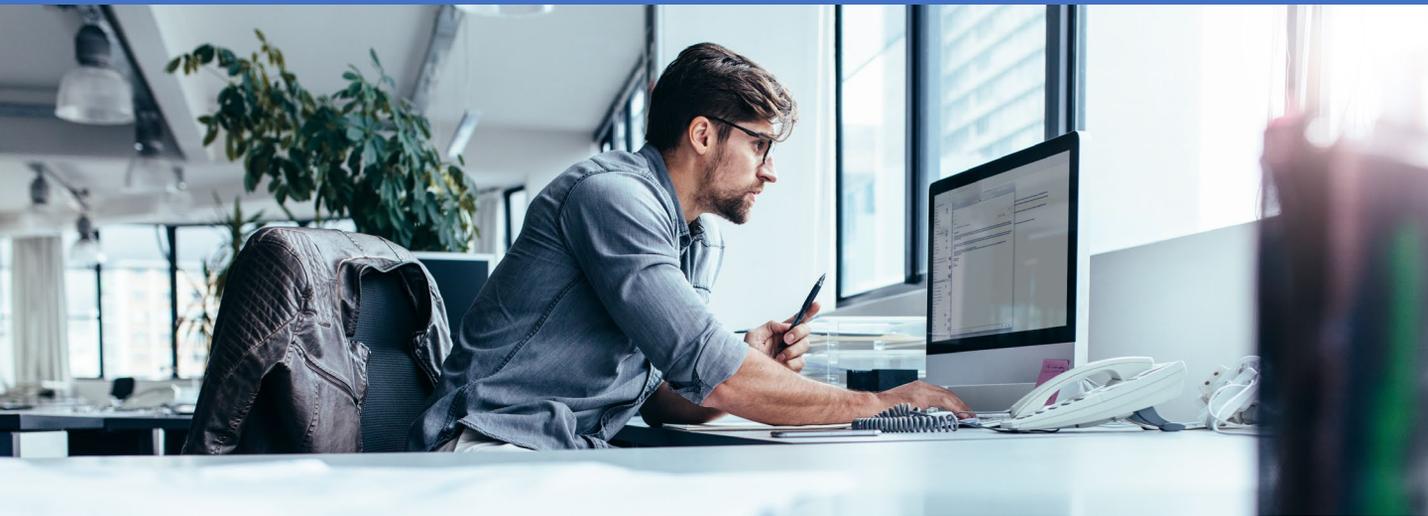
Defining a clear learning objective should come first. Microlearning should be all about driving positive behavior change, and should be designed with the end solution in mind. Here are some sample goals to get you started:

Build awareness of brain biases and their impact building belonging at work.

Expand the number of diversity candidates in your new hire pool.

Provide daily opportunities for employees to develop their emotional intelligence and communication skills.





4 Keys to Effective Microlearning *continued...*

2. Access to learning anywhere and anytime

Gone are the days of 9-to-5 and an hour for lunch. In the modern world of work, managers are juggling more than ever before. And for individual contributors it's even more difficult to disengage from work to sit through lengthy training modules. Microlearning holds a distinct advantage in delivering learning within the natural *flow of work*. Putting learning at the fingertips of people already holding their laptops, smartphones and tablets makes growing and developing your people a reality.

3. Content is king

Research now suggests that our attention spans are shrinking, which seems logical when we look at how we consume information in the mobile era. But information, no matter how well-packaged, does not add value unless it is relevant and high-quality learning. Selecting a microlearning partner, or attempting to build in-house, is an important decision. Producing great content to support D&I initiatives is no easy task but is the crux of driving engagement and real results.

4. Measurable results

Determining the effectiveness of microlearning comes down to assessing its efficiency, effectiveness, alignment with your objectives, and the learners' knowledge retention. As an example, here are metrics we measured when polling the Blue Ocean Brain overall learner and leader population regarding our Unconscious Bias learning content:

Efficiency

20x

higher voluntary participation rates over traditional e-learning

Effectiveness

86%

of learners demonstrated a higher awareness of unconscious biases impacting workplace decisions

Alignment

95%

of business leaders affirmed the learning aligned with their overall operational objectives

Retention

92%

of learners demonstrated retention of new learning at the one year mark

Why it works

Scientists have long known that **learning in short segments aligns with how the brain learns best.**



The Science of Microlearning

Modern microlearning produces results because it takes advantage of latest technology to tackle the most significant problems facing traditional training and long-form e-learning: disappointing retention and application rates.

Solving for the Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve

Way back in 1895, German psychologist Herman Ebbinghaus discovered that within 24 hours of learning something new, 67 percent of that new learning will be forgotten. The cause? Cognitive overload, or when too much information reduces the transfer of information into our long-term memory. Learning must be stored in long-term memory to be retained and applied in practice. Presenting information in more manageable bite-size pieces reduces cognitive load and builds retention. While this is old news in the scientific world, it's taking off in learning today because digital technology now makes it easier to develop and deliver learning in small, interactive lessons within the natural flow of work.

The Spacing Effect

Spaced repetition, the technique of increasing intervals of time between training delivery, further boosts successful learning by encouraging the brain to store information between intervals. Concepts that are understood easily can be reinforced at longer intervals, while those that are more challenging are presented at shorter learning intervals. Using spaced repetition allows you to be more purposeful and design learning with the intended outcome in mind.



When you begin to put training dollars next to the brain's forgetting curve, lost information is a major drain on your investment.

Is Your Training Stuck in the 1990s?

Outdated training materials and delivery methods are a major problem facing organizations today. Long eLearning modules, training manuals and lengthy classroom instruction are likely gathering dust on digital shelves across your LMS.

When it comes to learning in the modern world of work, less is more. Use caution before building mountains of new training. Well-designed, succinct learning lessons are an effective way forward for the 21st century learner.

Assess the Unique Needs of Your Modern Learners

Your organization's learning ecosystem is always changing. Designing an effective learning strategy begins by focusing on your people. Here are some important facts to consider:

71% of employees face frequent interruptions throughout the workday¹

The typical employee has only **24 minutes** a week to devote to training³

Most learners won't watch videos longer than **4 minutes**²

58% of learners prefer to learn at their own pace³



The major issue for the modern learner is not a lack of desire to learn—they are working hard to keep pace in the digital world. They want learning content that is relevant, focused, timely, succinct, and engaging. That's where **custom** microlearning can help.

Tip: Keep the above numbers handy when you're planning to make your case for internal support of microlearning. (More to come on that later in this guide!)



Getting Started with Microlearning

5 Small Steps to Big Results

Follow these steps to prove the value of microlearning to key stakeholders and make practical decisions about your approach to implementation.

- 1. Build your case.** We understand the importance of creating buy-in in order to bring any training initiative to life. To build your case, leverage external vendors and partners in microlearning. Talk with colleagues at other organizations who have been successful implementing microlearning. Collect data points (our guide can help!) to demonstrate and validate your approach.
- 2. Ask tough questions.** Take an honest look at your existing training materials and delivery methods. Determine which add value and could be brought to life with microlearning. Look for holes in your existing training content by asking business leads to provide input. Avoid the “sunk cost bias” – just because an investment was made years ago doesn’t mean staying on the same course is the best decision.
- 3. Go to the source.** Survey employees to gain honest feedback about their pain points. Microlearning is about changing behaviors to improve learning performance – understanding the day-to-day needs of learners is imperative.
- 4. Use a phased approach.** Sometimes it makes sense to start small. Work with a single team to pilot a new microlearning partner or start with a small microlearning module, then ask for feedback. Once you’ve proven microlearning can work you will feel confident in launching a broader rollout.
- 5. Celebrate success.** Look for opportunities to collect feedback from leaders and employees to measure your results. Engagement data and knowledge checks are important. Qualitative results are also a critical part of hitting the mark in building a true culture of learning.

Making Your Case

Creating the business imperative to implement something “new” is never an easy task. Thanks to status quo bias, our brains have a natural tendency to prefer leaving things “as is”. Here are several important points to help convince leadership that microlearning is a smart move:

Flexible and Focused

In the modern workplace, business agility is mission one. Leaders have a strategic need to upskill people quickly in targeted areas. Microlearning offers a faster way to build and implement training. Leaders are able to shift learning to new focus areas in real-time, making microlearning a proactive solution that flexes as strategic goals and training initiatives evolve.

Employees are Hungry to Learn

According to a LinkedIn global survey, **94% of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their career development.** Microlearning puts continuous learning opportunities into the hands of all employees within today’s geographically and generationally diverse workforce.

The Natural Flow of Work

LinkedIn’s new report (surveying 4,000+ L&D and business professionals) asked people how their workplace learning could be improved. The number one complaint? Employees do not have enough time to invest in their own development. Offering short, targeted learning served up in an accessible, approachable format empowers learners to grab content when convenient without disrupting their workday – making continuous learning a reality.



“Time is the biggest hurdle for our people around learning – Blue Ocean Brain eliminates that problem.”

- Joanne Sotelo, MD Financial

Evaluating Microlearning Partners

Working with outside partners can help bring your D&I strategy to life. Follow this checklist to collect the information you need when considering a partner who can support your goals while adding value and expertise to assure your success.

		Vendor Checklist
Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Can the vendor describe the value they can bring based on your unique diversity and inclusion objectives?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Does the vendor demonstrate an ability and willingness to customize their solutions to meet your needs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Will the vendor's instructional design team partner with you in a collaborative solution design process?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Is the vendor's methodology grounded in the latest science of learning?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Will the vendor provide ongoing support to help your team execute upon your D&I initiatives?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Is the solution accessible across all digital devices used by your employees?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Does the solution offer multiple content formats (articles, videos, knowledge checks, etc.)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Are learners able to search for learning content at the point of need?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Does the vendor provide reporting on employee knowledge and learning patterns?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Does the vendor offer flexible integration options in to your other learning and communication systems?





**Ready to learn more
about how you can bring
your D&I initiatives to life
through microlearning?
We're here to help!**

**[Take a tour of the Blue Ocean Brain solution](#) and see how we
have helped companies in over 50 countries around the globe
take learning to the next level.**

Or, reach out any time [by email](#) or at (855) 462-7238.