



Training in a Bottle

New eP Affiliate Open for Business

By Mae Prestera, Executive Director
effectPerformance, Inc.



We are proud to announce the launch of effectPerformance's sister company, Bevenour Prestera and Associates. This new firm will focus on developing blended training solutions for leadership, management, sales, communication, and other professional development skill areas.

The company is a partnership between Gus Prestera, effectPerformance President, and Colleen Bevenour, formerly a partner at Brooks Consulting and before that owner of Circinus Consulting. Colleen brings a wealth of design and facilitation experience as well as content knowledge. Gus brings his curriculum design know-how as well as an in-depth understanding of what it takes to make e-learning work effectively.

Both sets of skills will be key. Bevenour Prestera will produce primarily blended training solutions, which means that most programs will involve a mixture of classroom training and online courseware, simulations, and assessments. "Today's workers are busy people," said Gus, "so

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What do you get when you combine in-depth content, performance-based instructional design, multiple delivery methods, and decades of experience?

**Bevenour Prestera
and Associates**

Going Mobile: eP's New M-Learning Demo

By Gus Prestera, President
effectPerformance, Inc.



Imagine that you're on a long flight to China, on your way to a business meeting. As is often the case these days with international carriers, you are able to get cell phone reception on the plane. After checking voicemail, responding to emails, and downing your third Bloody Mary, you realize that you still have 12 hours left to go! What to do with that time?

Well, one way you might spend the time is brushing up on your Mandarin or Cantonese. Or you might learn a little about Chinese business culture and etiquette. Through your mobile device, you can access small learning modules from your company's learning management system. This was the scenario that we explored as our team began to conceptualize the design of our first mobile learning module.

Attending a Business Meeting in China is a demo m-learning module that you can now

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What makes an exercise interactive?

When we're talking with training professionals, we often find that different people have different ideas of what an interactive exercise is. Seems odd that there could be disagreement about such a fundamental concept, but sadly there is.

Some training professionals feel that if the learner is able to click on different options and see different information, that's an interactive exercise. Unless the learner receives feedback, we're really just talking about activity, not interactivity...a task, not an exercise.

Let's say you are taking an online course, and the course asks you to click on different parts of a flowchart to reveal details about that step in the process. Is that an interactive exercise?

No! There is no feedback.

What would make it an interactive exercise? Well, let's say that the learner is asked to connect various boxes, diamonds, and ovals to form a flowchart that accurately describes a process. After doing so, the learner is told how closely that flowchart approximates an expert's response. That's feedback. That's what makes this an interactive exercise.

So when we talk about making instruction more interactive, remember feedback and its effects on learning.

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we want to maximize how much knowledge transfer happens online before they attend the classroom session, so that the classroom experience can be very hands-on with lots of practice, feedback, discussion, and real-world application happening." The online components will also, "enable us to follow up on the classroom experience with online coaching; with online and mobile performance support tools; with assessments that gauge learning and transfer; and with simulations that enable the learner to get more practice applying what they learned or to refresh their skills. Blending not only yields better training, it also helps us support workers as they try to transfer what they learned to their jobs, and that's why we're all in this business, to help workers succeed in their jobs."

The online components will be designed and built by the team of instructional designers, graphic designers, and

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programmers at effectPerformance. This development team has been producing high quality e-learning courses together for the past 5 years and each team member brings over 10 years of experience in his/her specialty.

Their e-learning courseware, simulations, and assessments, as well as any mobile learning components they produce, will be hosted on Bevenour Prestera's learning management system (LMS). The partners have not come up with a catchy name for it yet, but one can imagine it being called BP University, BP Academy, or perhaps Dr. Gus' House of Pain. This is just speculation on my part.

While the online components will help with pre-work, post-work, and continuing education, the classroom experience will



Colleen Bevenour

Gus Prestera



be the centerpiece of each program. With Bevenour Prestera courses, the classroom experience will involve a great deal of hands-on practice and feedback. Live simulations, role plays, and case-based learning will be frequently used strategies. Learners will work in groups, where relevant, and engage in meaningful discussions about how to apply what they're learning back in the "real world."

Of course, the content is the heart and soul of any course. Colleen Bevenour believes that most leadership, management, and sales courses contain content that is too shallow and too high-level to be useful for today's workers. "The workplace is a complex system; the issues workers face are complex; we need to equip them with more than just generic business models and simplistic guidelines. The content needs to be detailed, specific, practical, and actionable. The depth of our content is one of the things that will differentiate a

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Welcome Back!



Diane Darling, crack instructional designer, is back in eP blue and orange. Diane took a training manager position at EDS last year, but now she's back and we're happy as can be.

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Bevenour Prestera course from those you can get elsewhere. If you're just trying to meet a 'butts in seats' quota', send your managers and sales force to SkillSoft's repository of courses. If you want substantive learning content that will help your workers succeed, we need to talk."

Bevenour Prestera and effectPerformance will operate as separate entities, with Colleen heading up the former and Gus continuing to head up the latter. The two companies, however, will work very closely. Through this arrangement, effectPerformance clients will be able to access off-the-shelf training content and facilitation to address professional development needs, while at the same time Bevenour Prestera clients will be able to access effectPerformance's custom design services to develop home-grown training solutions as well as its e-learning development capabilities.

How might that work? Say a client has asked effectPerformance to design a curriculum for training new hire sales reps. eP designers would conduct a job analysis and design a curriculum map. That curriculum might include a new-hire orientation, training on the company's proprietary products, services, key processes, and systems. For those home-grown needs, eP would build out the training. However, the curriculum might also include training on selling skills, communication skills, business planning skills, and other generalizable skill areas. For these needs, we could leverage Bevenour Prestera's off-the-shelf sales training solutions and customize elements of it as needed. "In this way," said Gus, "we can deliver end-to-end solutions for our clients."

The Bevenour Prestera and effectPerformance teams are working together even now to design the first set of courses that will reside in Bevenour Prestera University. Colleen and Gus are in talks with potential clients who would want Bevenour Prestera to build them a custom curriculum for a discounted price in return for being able to repurpose the core content for Bevenour Prestera's library. If you might be interested in that sort of an arrangement, contact Gus or Colleen.

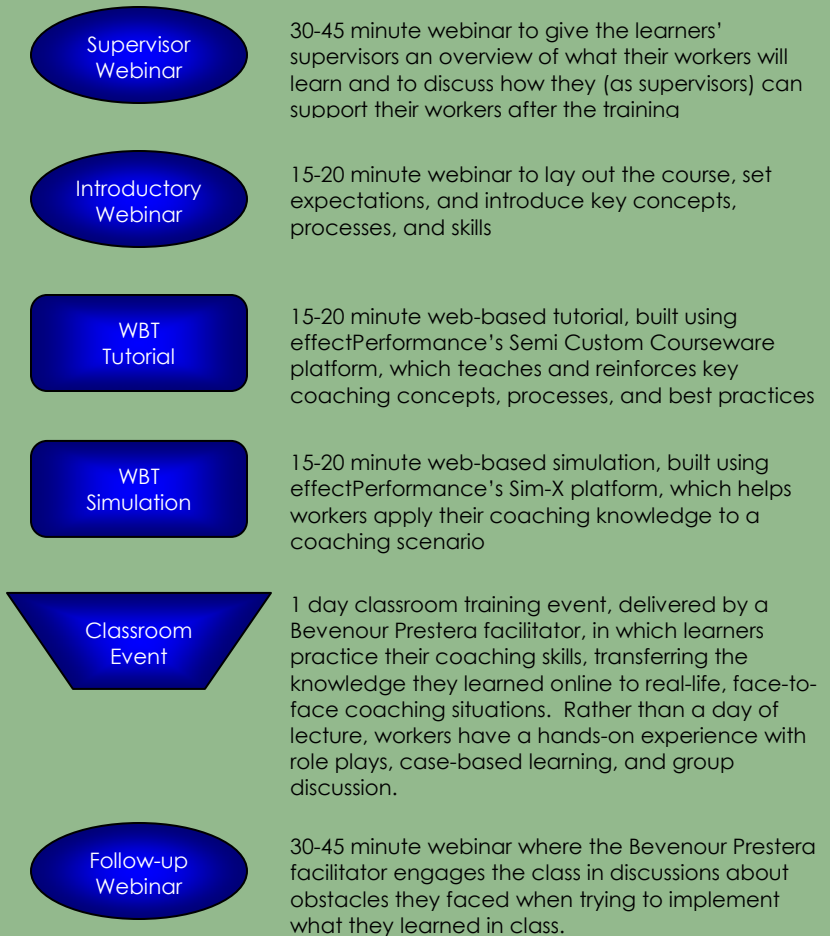
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Bevenour Prestera's Blended Strategy

Bevenour Prestera will apply a blended learning strategy to the design of its courses. What might that look like? The diagram below gives you a sense of what a typical course might contain. This example is a coaching course



This basic instructional sequence might also be complemented with online games, additional simulations used for reinforcement or as refreshers, coaching tools made available online for PCs or for mobile devices, job aids, and other resources.

Most courses would involve some sort of transfer activity, where the worker is asked to identify a real-life situation from their work (e.g., someone they want to coach about a particular performance issue), apply what they learned in class to that work situation, and then debrief on the challenges, obstacles, and success they experienced. Through this process, we ensure that training is having an impact on performance.

Going Mobile

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view from the effectPerformance web site (www.effectperformance.com) to your PC or to your BlackBerry. The idea of this module is that it acts as a refresher for training you may have already had in this area. It contains a Tips job aid listing a series of do's and don'ts related to Chinese business etiquette. For example, don't wear clothes with an open neckline. This is



Tips Job Aid

followed by a series of multiple-choice, multiple-select, matching, and sequencing exercises. After answering each question, the learner receives feedback and an explanation of the correct answer. The intent is that the business traveler would use this module as a refresher, reviewing the tips and/or going through the quiz.

Along the way, the development team—consisting of Alicia Pfaff, Allan Kobernick, and Belen Bilgic-Schneider—learned several lessons.



Multiple Choice



Multiple Select

Sequencing

One, while mobile technology is improving constantly, the current state of the technology imposes a great deal of constraints on the learner. BlackBerry's web browser, as of today, does not play Flash files, so we needed to develop the module in HTML. The iPhone and several other models do play Flash; however, BlackBerry is the mobile device the most organizations use these days.

Another constraint is bandwidth. Streaming audio and video are challenging at the present time, though that will improve dramatically over the coming year. Also, once the BlackBerry plays Flash, it will enable greater control of audio and Flash media.

The BlackBerry's interface only allows for a couple of forms of interactivity, typing and clicking with the pearl or track wheel. The iPhone pushes these boundaries, enabling not only touch screen interactivity (the learner can point to an object to select it) but also a variety of ways to manipulate onscreen objects using your fingers (the learner can move things around, can re-size, and flip things over and around, etc.).

Mobile learning on an iPhone holds tremendous potential for interactivity and robust media. For now, so long as BlackBerry is the standard platform, we will need to do the best we can with its limited capabilities. This demo gives you a sense of what those capabilities are at the moment.



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