

An Agile and Adaptive Giant

How Pakistan's largest telecommunications company learnt to synergise classroom and digital learning



Headquarters:
Islamabad, Pakistan

Industry:
Telecommunications

Employees:
10,001+

“ PTCL has a well-developed and extensive training and development infrastructure in place, with well-equipped training academies located in the top three cities of Pakistan. To explore a fresh perspective on new learning methodologies, a conscious decision was made to set up an independent, digital learning team. Precisely, to test the waters. The adoption and digital learning appetite of employees after two years was seen as a great milestone. Now that we have proven that there's a voracious appetite for digital learning, both teams are working synergistically to support our people on their development journey and our company in its digital transformation efforts. ”



Zehra Rizvi
Senior Manager, Digital Learning,
PTCL



Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) is as old as the Republic of Pakistan itself. The national carrier was founded in 1947 following the country's independence and has since grown into its largest integrated information communications company with over 22,000 employees. It operates Pakistan's largest fibre cable network and largest fixed line network while offering enterprise-grade solutions for business connectivity all across the country.

"Because of our long history, we tend to be perceived as a traditional organisation but, in reality, company-wide digital transformation has been steadily taking place over the past 10 years. Digital learning is an important part of that," said Zehra Rizvi, PTCL's Senior Manager, Digital Learning.

Seeking Scale

When Zehra joined PTCL in July 2019, she was conscious of resistance to change, especially since the company has many long-serving employees. But PTCL's culture of learning, albeit rooted in classroom-based training, had seeded a proactive learning attitude in its people. When the digital learning team rolled out PTCL's first digital learning hackathon, where employees formed cross-functional teams to pitch solutions to case study

To this end, PTCL made a purposeful decision—to establish a digital learning team independent of its strong Learning & Development department. This ensured that the newly formed Digital Learning team had the freedom to innovate with new digital learning interventions while classroom-based training for employees continued seamlessly.

What began as an experiment to gauge employees' appetite for digital learning has quickly grown into a fully-fledged programme that is synergised with PTCL's classroom-based training efforts.

challenges, the enthusiastic response signalled that employees were game for change.

In January 2020, the digital learning team launched PTCL's first in-house library called LearnEx with over 80 e-learning courses developed in-house. This supplemented the company's subscription to an online learning solution but scale was still an issue.

"Our people have an incredible appetite for learning. Once they discovered that digital learning allows them to learn comfortably at their own pace and in their own space, demand exploded. We even had employees calling us and asking for more digital learning content because they had already completed everything we made available."

Raza Sarwar
GM, Talent Acquisition and Digitalisation



So in March 2020, when PTCL's subscription with the online learning solution expired, the company turned to LinkedIn Learning. Having had a positive experience with the platform and due to the content richness, PTCL's EVP of Talent and Culture Amjad Iqbal recommended LinkedIn Learning as a valuable resource with a wide variety of readily-accessible content.

"As an experienced LinkedIn Learning user, I know how useful it is. It's a problem solver at work. When I

get stuck, I go to LinkedIn Learning, look up relevant courses, quickly pick up new skills and apply them right away. In large organisations like PTCL, having the right idea at the right time can make all the difference. That's why I strongly recommended LinkedIn Learning to my management team," explained Amjad.

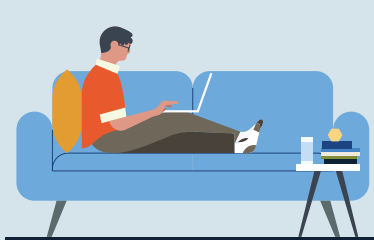
Within a week, the team received approval to acquire 1,000 licences for a start from the PTCL management.

Challenge



- To experiment with new digital learning interventions aligned with PTCL's digital transformation
- To address the scalability of learning content for over 10,000 employees
- To encourage more proactive, self-directed learning

Solution



- Created initial buzz by leveraging PTCL's internal social media platform to launch LinkedIn Learning
- Invited employees to request for licences by posting about the skills they want to learn using the hashtag #ILearn(Skill)
- Developed monthly LinkedIn Learning courses mapped to core competency areas

Results



- **76%** activation after launch
- **81%** monthly repeat learners
- Learners are watching **179 videos** on an average a month against top industry figures of 30
- Learners are averaging over **7 hours** of video viewership a month, against industry figures of about 1.5 hours

Mastering Momentum

Armed with 1,000 licences and a workforce of eager learners, PTCL developed a creative launch campaign. Using its internal social media system, the digital learning team invited employees to nominate themselves for a LinkedIn Learning licence by sharing the skills that they want to learn. The hashtag #ILearn(Skill) quickly went viral and, within five hours, over 2,000 employees had responded.

While it was difficult for Zehra and her team to turn down more than half the nominations, the exercise gave them insights into their colleagues' learning desires. The selection process became more informed as they were able to match learner needs to LinkedIn Learning's content.

With learners onboarded, PTCL started developing monthly LinkedIn Learning calendars to maintain momentum. Each month, the company would focus on one core competency area and populate the calendar with relevant LinkedIn Learning courses for every day

of the month. Zehra believes that this has been useful in guiding learners on their digital learning journey while encouraging a habit of continuous learning.

PTCL's start with LinkedIn Learning also coincided with Pakistan's COVID-19 lockdown, which had the unexpected effect of highlighting the benefits of digital learning. Having an on-demand and online learning resource like LinkedIn Learning during that period provided much-needed support to employees as they adjusted to working from home. It also sparked closer collaboration as the digital learning team now works synergistically with their Learning & Development colleagues to translate classroom-based training into the online space.

Looking into the future, PTCL expects to continue its partnership with LinkedIn Learning as it leverages digital learning interventions to embed artificial intelligence, virtual reality and other technologies into the way it works.

“Reward and recognition is a big part of our culture. LinkedIn Learning supports this because our people can showcase their learning achievements directly on their LinkedIn profile. This helps keep them motivated as we work hard to ingrain a culture of continuous, self-directed learning across the company.”

Zehra Rizvi,
Senior Manager, Digital Learning, PTCL



LinkedIn Learning is a leading online learning platform that helps professionals learn relevant skills and achieve their goals. It combines a library of 16,400+ up-to-date courses in 7 different languages with an engaging, intuitive, and personalised learner experience. LinkedIn Learning also includes real-time skills insights that help learning leaders identify skills gaps. For more information, visit <http://learning.linkedin.com>.