



Critical success factors in e-learning for small and medium enterprises

Richard Elliott and John Clayton

Emerging Technologies Centre
Waikato Institute of Technology

In 2008 the Ministry of Education in New Zealand funded a project titled *Using e-learning to build workforce capability* (Clayton, Elliott, Saravani, Greene & Huntington, 2008). During the project the team recognised the benefits of identifying those *critical success factors* (CSFs) a small or medium enterprise (SMEs; those with less than 100 employees) needed to address to ensure e-learning initiatives were implemented effectively and efficiently. Five critical success factors are identified, described and illustrated.

Results

In the literature reviewed (Lain, & Aston, 2004; Becta, 2005) and the results of the analysis of case studies undertaken for the project (Clayton & Elliott, 2008), it was noted the CSFs underpinning the successful implementation of e-learning in SMEs: included:

- *Awareness*: The benefits of e-learning are accepted by senior managers/owners of SMEs. This commitment is demonstrated by the allocation of sufficient resources (fiscal, human and physical) for e-learning activities to be deployed, supported and sustained.
- *Identification*: Firms are able to clearly identify how e-learning can be successfully incorporated within current training plans. This would include the identification of recognised e-learning providers and potential collaborative offerings.
- *Implementation*: An e-learning training plan is developed and offered to employees. During this implementation phase perceptual evaluations are carried out to assess the effectiveness and impact of the e-learning undertaken.
- *Evaluation*: The impact on the organisation of the e-learning training plan is assessed. The results of this assessment are communicated to all stakeholders, owners, managers and employees. Changes and or improvements to the training plan are made as a result of the formal assessment.
- *Sustainability*: After the initial e-learning activities have been delivered post-e-learning support is provided to embed e-learning in normal training practices, for example in induction, employee reviews and organizational procedures.

These success factors are illustrated in Figure 1.

References

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E-Learning for Small & Medium Enterprises (SME)

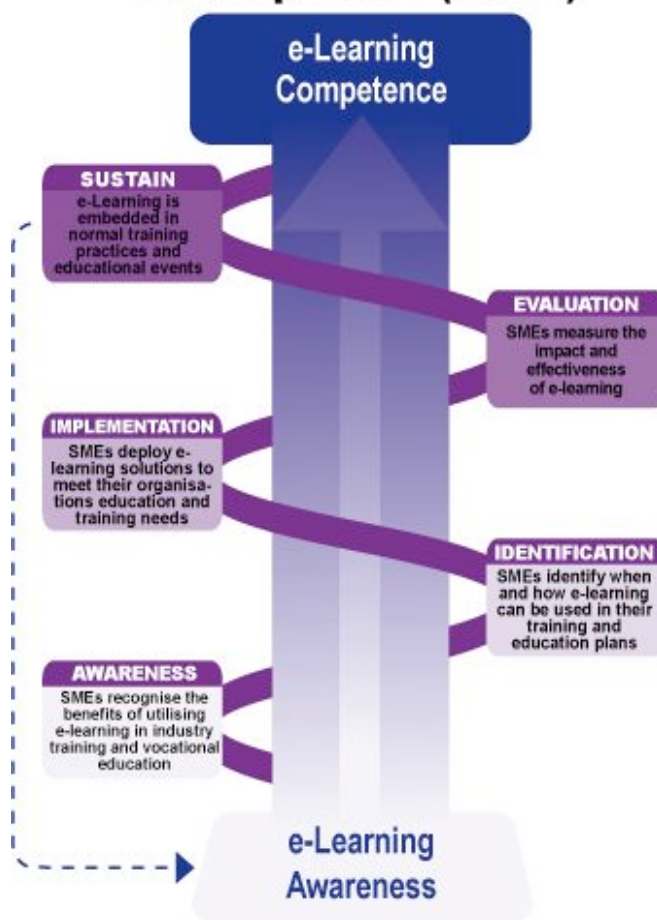


Figure 1: e-learning in SMEs

Authors: Richard Elliott, Director, elearningWatch Ltd, Auckland, New Zealand.
Email: elliotrichard@gmail.com Web: <http://elearnwatch.falkor.gen.nz/>

John Clayton, Emerging Technologies Centre, Waikato Institute of Technology.
Email: John.Clayton@wintec.ac.nz

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