Future of Learning - SURGE 2017

Speakers:

Jeff Cobb, managing director of Tagoras.

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Josh Goldman, vice president of learning with the Ohio Society of CPAs.

Amanda Beckner, vice president of learning for InfoComm International.

JEFF: Facing and embracing the future of learning. Three relevant areas: micro – micro-learning and micro-credentialing. Workforce development. Value and business models.

CELISA: Micro. Stats: collecting stats at Tagoras since 2009 about use of tech to support and enable learning at associations. On the cusp of releasing the latest data and report: Association Learning + Technology 2017. Stats on microlearning among associations – 30.1% of respondents that used technology for learning report offering some form of micro-learning. Another 36.1% say they're going to begin offering a form of micro-learning in the next year. so if that pans out, by the end of 2018, the majority of associations will be offering micro-learning. We first collected data about it in 2016 and it was only 18.1% of respondents who used it. another big uptake predicted for next year.

Data around micro-credentialing is not quite as impressive. 2017 data: 14.8% respondents that used tech for learning said they're offering microcredential. Planning to do so next year – another quarter, 23.5%. poised for a lot of growth. Micro-creds make sense for many associations. Many already offer some form of it. does it make sense to break it down into smaller bits and pieces to add more value? Fits with what's happening in the world today with market demand – the other 50 years between when people leave their formal education and the end of their life – that college degree has a short lifespan! How are you going to keep retooling and prove that you're able to retool? Micro creds have potential there. Way to get to micro cred could be powered by micro learning. Rise in mobile learning now that we have so many smartphones and devices. We can effectively deliver mobile learning. All tied together. sector wide stats – snapshot, but we want colour commentary from this session.

JOSH: All of the above is true to OSCPAs. Our goal by getting into micro learning in Jan 2015, the staff had been working with the regulators on adding flexibility and adult learning best practices to the compliance based education models and rules. One thing we pushed for was launching a micro-learning concept in the cpa profession. We wanted to expedite the shift that was slowly starting to occur by shifting away from compliance based and always thinking about the minutes, to incorporating adult learning best practices into that model. We wanted to model better practices of learning and learning innovation. Those of us who've been in the education business for a long time know that sitting in a chair being lectured to for an hour is not the optimal ideal learning situation. We needed flexibility to model that – micro learning provides opportunity for pre-learning and design – in pre-learning opps, post-learning opps, subscription based learning business, or true learning like spaced learning opps.

We had been in on-demand business for a while. We already had a studio and were producing self-study, self-paced content in one hour segments. From a production perspective, easy to shift into micro learning. We had the model for the business. We launched with stand-alone micro products. In our world stand alone is in 10 min increments. We launched these stand alone ten min blocks. We'll eventually move into more subscription based learning and micro support based learning.

One thing we've found interesting from an app perspective, micro works well for just-in-time changes that are frequent or regulatory in nature. In the cpa environment there are a lot of these changes in content. We shifted away from developing just stand alone small segments, now I've contracted an SME who monitors the regulatory space. Within 24 hours of a new financial standard being issued to the marketplace, we have a micro product created, developed and ready to go. We're really responsive. Think about that model compared to how that may have worked in the past, where you may have had to save those updates and lump them together to end up with a one hour piece of content. It covers what you need to know. To decide if you need to go to a deeper level. We look at it as a spectrum. Micro introduces concept, gives you an awareness. Oversees functional area. Later there's a workshop or deeper lesson about application and the "how".

Everyone always asks about market adaption. We have about three per cent of our customer base that's utilising micro learning in some capacity. We've been in it for 2 years now – I'd like to see that grow. We've taken a step back to look at its role from a strategy perspective, so we've slowed down development, we're continuing down the path of subscription model and regulatory changes. We're

pausing and giving that some thought. We want to do it right. As one of the first associations of cpas in US to introduce micro-learning to market, we want to do it right. We found market success and acceptance – despite some sceptics – people ask, can you learn anything in ten minutes? The average college educated adult can read a Harvard business review article in 10-15 mins. Why couldn't you learn from a video? We'd like to see it grow and have a deeper market adaption rate across the cpas in ohio. We're trying to figure out the best way to do it.

CELISA: Any barriers to adaption?

JOSH: My opinion: work on user experience – how you access and buy micro products. Excited about the subscription opportunity, that you buy into a content area, and it becomes available to you, we're pushing as opposed to pulling. Also: regulatory nature of CPE – we have to unfreeze the market place – my soul dies when I talk with a cpa and they say I learn every day, that's the key to my success – CPE is what I do to keep my license. At the OSPCA, we believe that we put exceptional learning products into the market, and we're trying to be a thought leader that suggests CPE is not just compliance for maintaining our license. There's a nuance to the compliance based regulatory market that changes the way people look at learning. We're trying to lead the way in changing that perception. Making CPE cool, fun, valued again.

JEFF: You have a seminar oriented group. They want to show up for a day or two and get as much CPE as they can. You're going to have to change habits to make learners understand the new way of doing it.

JOSH: Don't work under the assumption that it's just younger and newer members that'd be interested in this. Seasoned professionals have just as little time as new professionals. They value finding the content that speaks to what they're looking for.

CELISA: Amanda, what's InfoComm doing with micro-credentialing?

AMANDA: We've conditioned our audience to value professional certification. We have an accreditation called a CTS for audio visual professionals. When you buy into that program, you ask for certifications on other topics. Accreditations are a big lift – some topics are too niche to make that investment worth it. Hence micro-creds. We started out talking to our stakeholders about what they wanted reported out of our new LMS – they said we really need something to support those who are certified. Certified professionals at companies are used for a lot of things to take advantage of that certification, for project and business value, etc. we created a micro cred that allows a narrow training pathway to a specific

set of skills, offers virtual access to instructors to help coach on things that would normally be handled by that certified person, and offers a way to have a cred that you can put on social media, your resume, website, that leads you to a portfolio of work that you can show demonstrates your competency in that skillset. So different from micro learning in that it is not small in timeframe, but it is narrow in scope.

CELISA: That's the benefit of the digital badge – linking to the portfolio, where it's not just saying you have this cred, but someone can go and find out what you did to earn this cred and see the body of work provided to complete that. How has adaption and response been among stakeholders?

AMANDA: So far great. Rolled out in June. We have 5 people with their micro creds now. we're working with them to find out how the experience was, how we learned from that, how the user experience was. To help people understand the work involved and to help their managers. Our micro cred program is for new hires. We were relying on managers to reinforce that doing the exercises and documenting them in the micro cred is important to have a portfolio at the end. We have to do more scaffolding in the exp of the micro cred to provide reinforcement about why you'd want to do that and the value of the coaching that you get from an instructor on the work that you did. we also have some operational things we ran into, eg. when you are a manager and know you'll be hiring a couple of people, and you're working with InfoComm on a service package of what we can give you, you might say I have 5 people and I want to purchase micro creds for them, but don't have names for them yet. need to have registration and purchasing system to allow for this. logistics must be satisfied before developing more micro creds.

We have a standards developer and adoption of standards as Josh was discussing, those are perfect for micro creds – you can demonstrate your ability to do that and provide documentation and your company could add that to any big work that they do for projects, saying, this is what our org can offer and we have micro cred to demonstrate that.

CELISA: tagoras.com/surge for resources and data. If you're thinking about how you can apply micro learning/cred at your org, we'll offer data and questions for reflection. The first being: look at your current portfolio of offerings: what might you be able to remix as a microcredential or microlearning, something smaller? Eg a certification in breaking it into smaller segments, which could stack up into full cred? If you have an in-depth curriculum would bits and pieces of that stand alone and become micro-learning components? That's a place to start. Also think

about positioning of microlearning. What's their unique value and relationship to bigger offerings? Is the value of micro conveyed in a way that preserves value of what you already have in your portfolio? Thinking about the unique benefit of each format. Hint: value ramp. Third Q: any barriers you'll need to address? Eg. regulatory issues, educating your market, changing mindsets.

JEFF: Next topic. Workforce dev. A backdrop to micro stuff. Whole issue of people needing to keep their skills up and expand throughout their careers. There are challenges for employers in making sure that they're helping maintain people in their careers and getting the right talent in. Are there talent shortages out there? Where do associations and the learning they provide fit into all of this and help to address workforce dev issues?

Some stats: recent study, Talent Shortage Survey by Manpower Group the staffing company, they found that globally employers are reporting the highest talent shortage since 2007. They are not finding the skilled people they need to come into positions. Another: automation. Artificial intelligence. This one is saying that 47% of jobs in the US will be impacted or replaced by AI and automation within the next decade – Uni of Oxford. Disrupt many industries and fields in many ways, impact the talent pipeline, how it can be sustained over time. economist report: role of lifelong learning and how critical it has become – tech is making it necessary to have a combination of skills, to have hybrid skills to bring to a job. Most people don't have that. They have been trained in a particular thing but need a broad array of skill sets now to operate effectively – skills to pick up after formal education when they are in the workforce. Finally: training has been dropping in many instances. Amount of training provided by employers. In The Economist report (still: 25.03). steadily falling on the job training between 96 and 08. There is a big role for associations to play around talent and workforce dev.

Josh, what are you doing about it?

JOSH: Huge issue for our profession globally. Our members tell us there are three things that keep them up at night: regulatory changes; pace of change of their business and modifying business to respond to clients and market needs; talent management – workforce dev. How do I find qualified talent at all levels? How do I train that talent to be productive and service focused? How do I align people with the direction we're trying to go in? many market forces that are creating that pressure on talent management. More people are graduating with accounting degrees than ever before – but the ratio of those who pursue CPA

credential is going at the same pace. More people going into it but less pursuing the CPA credential. Educational environment is under pressure – our members who work in industry and CPA firms are articulating that their new employees aren't coming job-ready – they don't talk about audit methodologies and tax and accounting skills lacking, but applicable people skills. Opportunity for micro stuff to fill the gap between education and job readiness.

What can be achieved when you leave higher education and enter a workplace. Whose responsibility is that. There's a huge opportunity for associations to play in the third sector, third wheel, to be the lifelong learning provider. Help employers bridge gaps for employees. On the cusp of significant trends and change in how associations create value for membership base and employers they work for.

JEFF: Scott Wiley, CEO and also president of American society of asso execs. One point of conversation we had: associations play a significant role in workforce dev and talent dev and lifelong learning process. We aren't recognised for that. People don't know trade and professional associations are fundamental to the third sector. For all organizations, among members and broader public, raise awareness – vital roles that organizations are playing. Relevance questions – associations' role is important.

JOSH: On applicability, what do you do as association? We're dedicating resources to pipeline. Attracting people and those already strongly interested to consider working for a CPA firm. Working a grassroots effort about how you change the way the CPA credential is talked about. (basically repeating the Scott Wiley session on workforce crisis.)

We're also applying number one power of associations – power to convene. Academic providers, employers, CPAs, students – having convos about addressing this as a community. We often think as asso professionals that we have to be providing solutions – creating and developing it – sometimes we just have to create space to enable value or creation to happen. That might be one of the ways the workforce dev solution comes to bear. May not be creating another product or service, but putting power to convene.

JEFF: pipeline: Amanda – you're tapping into a great opp in workforce dev – collaboration with another sector, in this case the academic sector, to look at pipeline.

AMANDA: InfoComm was approached a couple of years ago to go to unis and say we have this certification program, curriculum, textbooks – how do we get

this into programs? It requires a champion, a heavy lift for folks to integrate it into a degree program. Didn't get traction. Fast forward – 7 years later – we started getting calls from state institutions – we see you have a cert program – we asked them why did you call us? They said, our schools are being directed by the governors through funding to provide education where there are a lot of jobs. There's a lot of market data that indicates that jobs in audiovisual are out there in every market for a variety of disciplines. Terrific news – timing was perfect. I'm excited that today there are 2 unis engaging with us to make a degree program – 2 year institutions in both Boston and Orlando that use our curriculum. Students will come out with our certs. Those institutions are very excited about micro cred program because it's a stepping stone for students who are studying that material anyway, for them to get internships while they study and make themselves marketable – employers are thrilled.

JEFF: Seen a number of associations striking those partnerships with institutions – seen it in (lists some examples).

JOSH: Governors said there's funding for where the jobs are – don't gloss over that! Workforce dev traditionally had blue collar connotation, manufacturing, etc. it's meaning is being redefined by marketplace. Govts are putting resources behind making people job ready. Encourage everyone to take a look at in-demand jobs lists. Accounting was in the top ten. Healthcare related jobs were just ahead. Resources on how to solve this issue – US chamber of commerce foundation – they have white papers, models for approaching workforce dev issues.

JEFF: There's funding out there for associations or you helping your member companies. Money is out there around this.

JOSH: ASAE foundation is working on this, established a task force. It'll come together in the next several months.

CELISA: Some questions about this topic to explore on your own or with a team – what gaps are there in terms of skills and knowledge in your field? What could your org do? What skills will be demanded by growth in AI and automation? Being forewarned is being forearmed. Think about partnerships – e.g. academia, corporations, other associations.

<center>NEXT TOPIC</center>

JEFF: Everything points to value. How to provide it, what is the value asso can provide connected to learning, we've always fretted about this – now the internet and social media are disrupting forces – we have to stay relevant and

provide value. Most member surveys of organizations about value will say education takes top spot. Org recently told me that they made the move to stop selling education separately and make it core to the membership proposition. So when you pay dues you get all of it – not just the online stuff. You pay for access to educational programming they provide. In certain markets that makes a lot of sense. We'll probably see more of that going forward.

AMANDA: Our members say that the top 3 things they value are education, certification, and standards. I oversee all three. We're changing our membership structure. We've done a value proposition study. For years we had online courses, some of them free titles, some a la carte, virtual classroom courses, and cert. for decades that was our model, since 1995. Online courses were free or very inexpensive – in fact, there's more value there. How do we address this? What else can we do outside of this mindset? We're going to a subscription model too for online. When you purchase membership, many services will be included in that, including the subscription for online professional society members. So that was a big shift for us, and caused us to plot the value of a lot of our products and services, on Tagoras model of value ramp.

JEFF: Value ramp in action! The idea is: there is a relationship between price and value. We apply this to learning offerings. Imagine a curve starting from the bottom left of double axis and going up – bottom left hand side is where you'll offer things that are valuable but not your highest value products (still of graph at 41.33), often they'll be free (you have to offer free stuff these days to create momentum to pull people up ramp), white papers, video clips, social media, etc. moving on, charging for things – basic courses, on or offline, webinars, paid research. Moving up ramp – higher value, higher priced products like conferences – in the middle, often associations are heavy there. Traditional conference and seminar offerings. May not have much to create momentum down the bottom, or much on the other side, things that are really customised and high value, that you'll charge a lot more for. you want to tell a value story along that ramp. People understand the logic behind this.

We tell people to plot it out, draw it out – what do you have? Where are your gaps and opportunities?

AMANDA: We did that and saw in the momentum area we had a big gap. Needed something with the right amount of opportunity costs to help us draw people away from ???. keep our opportunity costs reasonable. One way was to do this online. We had an audience that is conditioned to see a user experience that starts out online as free – problematic. We've integrated a lot of consulting

work with our staff instructors as your skype coach to take you from something that was self-paced, to take you to something tactical, documenting, using hand tools, working with coach who is your mentor at a distance, or in small groups, to add additional learning value to what was traditionally self-paced and you as an island and silo. Micro creds added there.

We've looked at custom offerings too. What else can we offer at the top of that ramp that might draw attention up there. Licensing comes in there, contract training where you can hire us to do your education. Now we're licensing out our files, classroom courses, online courses, instructional materials, to other organizations – now they can customise and have some agency over the way they offer something and the context around it. they can break it up as they wish.

JEFF: Josh you're doing something similar.

JOSH: CPA space is highly competitive – you either fight that losing battle, or you accept that and figure out the part of your customer base that will treat it like a commodity, how do you serve that customer who is interested in that business. Undergoing strategic review of everything about how marketing occurs in OSCPAs. We redefined the overall mission of society – incorporated a more blended mission – core: individual CPA, core member. Added: the employers who employ them. We have the capability to serve the individual CPA, but we'd been ignoring relationships with employers of CPAs. That creates different conversations and opportunities. OSCPA may have value and assets that can be leveraged in a very different way to provide tremendous value to employers. Piloting business to business enterprise models on membership where the customer is the employer. We spent a ton of time out in the market with the 24 inches of truth – the space across the desk that you're sitting at in front of that customer – you talk with them about what they like about the society, what they wish we would do, what they feel we're not doing – we learned a lot from that. We've a goal now to achieve 120 employer visits this fiscal year among our senior team. We're constantly on the road in Ohio sitting across that desk, better understanding what they're trying to accomplish in their business. It has been eye opening, challenging and informative. We're on the cusp of a transformational period, in our org, about how we create value for that marketplace – where we buy, build, partner, how we bring things to market. It's an exciting time and challenging.

Experience of changing the engine on the plane while you're still flying in the air – you have a revenue and economic model that has been successful, then you

have challenges to that and you must switch up mid-course, how do you do that and not crash in the process. Everyone struggles with this. Great thing about being state-based is getting to most of my members in two hours.

CELISA: Are folks readily available when you want to talk to them?

JOSH: We've been lucky - staff have had deep relationships with these employers. These are mostly "first family" firms or organizations that have a history of loyalty to this society. We pilot stuff with them because there is a trust there. If we mess up they cut us some slack and we have opp to course correct. We've been fortunate to be able to get those meetings.

JEFF: We've had an intense focus on user experience, and that leads to value question. Josh, you've changed your value proposition to include employers to open up a whole new world of value. Not random value but strategic. Future of learning – focusing on value will be essential.

CELISA: Resources related to this at tagoras.com/surge. We'll link to info. Plot out products on value ramp, identify gaps, discussion questions. Think about who you should be talking to more often, more in depth – stakeholders.

JEFF: To wrap up, we've been talking about facing and embracing the future of learning, from the standpoint of trade and professional asso, other side of this is the learner. As we move forward, we as organizations want to make sure we provide excellent experiences and empower learners. World has changed dramatically. Tons of different types of learning. Must be fully empowered and enabled as learners. Important to model what that looks like to help your learners understand. We implore you to take seriously the idea of reflecting and discussing these questions, using resources. Take action!