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ASTD: Training Professionals Must Embrace Social Learning to Stay Relevant

(Alexandria, VA) July 30, 2009 – To increase their relevance and understand how the next generation in the workforce will learn, training professionals must understand the influence of social media. In the August issue of its flagship magazine, *Training + Development (T+D)*, Tony Bingham, president and CEO of the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD), the world's largest association dedicated to the training and development field, encourages members to understand the impact of what he calls "social learning."

"Our job, our focus, and our creative energy must include getting our hands around informal learning and the power of social media to impact it," says Bingham. "The Millennials – who will account for almost half of the workforce in five years – have grown up with the Internet and they are driving this trend. Training professionals must understand the huge opportunities Web 2.0 technologies provide for learning and lead the paradigm shift in how the profession thinks about informal learning."

ASTD's recently released report "Transforming Learning with Web 2.0 Technologies" looks at industry trends and shares best practices from companies that are maximizing the utility of Web 2.0 technologies in their training and development offerings.

Key Findings include:

- Only 9 percent of companies say Web 2.0 technologies play a major role in the learning function of their company
- 87 percent of respondents predict in the next three years their companies are more likely to use Web 2.0 technologies than they currently do
- 77 percent of respondents believe Web 2.0 technologies will improve knowledge sharing to a large or very large extent
- 36 percent of respondents view the top risk of using Web 2.0 technologies to be leaking confidential information

For companies using Web 2.0 technologies in the learning function, survey respondents also provided feedback on lessons learned. They include:

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- Performing advanced planning before rolling out the technologies
- Allowing enough time for the technologies to take root in the company
- Avoiding trying to control usage too much
- Securing senior-level commitment
- Building controls into the process to ensure integrity of process, content, and measurement

The report also states that 95 percent of respondents think that Web 2.0 technology is effective, though the highest marks for it are not very high, indicating that many respondents do not know how to use the technologies and the associated fear of them.

“In the learning profession, we’ve never had the opportunity to broaden our impact as we do today, says Bingham. “Social media is here to stay and using Web 2.0 technologies provides the catalyst to take our careers, our profession, and our organizations to the next level.”

For more information on ASTD’s resources on social learning or to schedule an interview, contact press@astd.org, or call 703.683.8192.

About ASTD

ASTD (American Society for Training & Development) is the world’s largest association dedicated to workplace learning and performance professionals. ASTD’s members come from more than 100 countries and connect locally in more than 130 U.S. chapters and with more than 30 international partners. Members work in thousands of organizations of all sizes, in government, as independent consultants, and suppliers.

ASTD started in 1943. In recent years, ASTD has widened the profession’s focus to link learning and performance to individual and organizational results, and is a sought-after voice on critical public policy issues. For more information, visit www.astd.org.

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