



KALLIDUS

Choosing and implementing a new LMS or migrating to a new learning platform?

Allocate the right resources
to your decision making

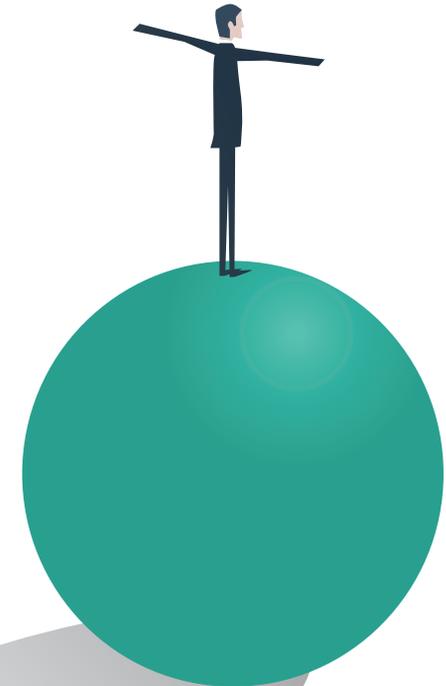


Introduction

A recent study found that **48% of organisations were looking for a new or different learning technology**^[1]. Once you have researched the LMS options and shortlisted your preferences, take your preferred vendors' implementation schemes into account – choosing the best LMS is not an assurance of success in itself.

Whether you are implementing a new LMS from scratch or simply migrating to a new learning platform, ensure you allocate the right resources to each stage of the process. Without sufficient planning, the ability to deliver meaningful learning experiences will be difficult.

Our eBook will consider the challenges you may face when choosing and implementing an LMS into your organisation, and will look at ways to mitigate risk to ensure its fit to your organisation's culture and the long-term success following its execution.



Seeking: honest LMS, willing to take on my fast-growing or large workforce, for long-term success

What to ask

There are a number of things to consider when looking at a potential LMS for your organisation.

This includes:

- **Default “bells and whistles”** – do you actually need them, or are you spending over the odds for these defaults, spending more time implementing this complex option and spending even more time removing them?
- **What are your core objectives** – will the LMS fulfil these core objectives for business benefit, or will it be all-singing-and-dancing, but actually, unusable?

- **How many users will be using your system** to begin with, and is there room for organisation growth in the future? Is your LMS scalable for employee growth?

A large organisation will have different requirements from that of a small organisation – but think ahead for the next five years. Your organisation may only have 50 employees to date, but how much growth would you like to see in the next five years? **Your LMS may be able to grow with you if this is taken into account** during the early days of planning.

Also consider your organisation’s **infrastructure**. The system should be able to deliver content at speed regardless of your bandwidth – however, if a potential vendor’s system appears to struggle, you’d be wise to stay away – learning modules need to be quick and accessible, and nothing will turn off your learners more than buffering videos and slow page loads. **Make the most of demonstration offerings**; see how the system functions in real-time and how this could be applicable to your specific organisation.



How will you engage your learners?

Once you have decided on your objectives and how your LMS should support this, consider the channels that you wish to use to engage your users – **what is the fundamental thing you are looking to improve**: compliance? engagement? culture shift?

Whilst social aspects may be attention drawing, decide what needs to be improved first, and what will need to be improved in the future as your organisation grows, focusing on how your potential solutions address these needs. Implementing and monitoring your LMS, particularly in its early days, will require resource so decide how best to spend time without affecting your daily workflow.

Focus on what you are trying to achieve and what the business pain is rather than the feature you think is going to solve it.

If you approach the vendors with your business pains and objectives rather than a pre-conceived idea of what features you need, you will get more insight into the **innovation and experience** of the company rather than going through a tick-box of “must-have” requirements, which may not actually help you solve your overall objective. Once you have shortlisted your preferred vendors, speak to your stakeholders.

Top Tip: Ask to peek inside

Have someone with good technical understanding when talking to a vendor, and include HR and Procurement during initial conversations. Ask to see the backend of the system – beauty is as beauty does!

Your preferred LMS may not withstand IT **penetration** testing for security reasons; HR may have gripes with its aesthetics; L&D may struggle with its limited content; and Operations may be reluctant to use employees’ data in this way. Having gathered their concerns, go back to your preferred vendors.

Experienced vendors should be familiar with your concerns, and be able to **show clear examples** of how they have helped similar organisations with similar concerns.



Introducing your LMS to your workforce: the challenges

Firstly, consider who will take ownership of your LMS: will it be IT, HR, Operations or L&D?

If no one takes ownership for the system, it is more likely to run amok as no one can take responsibility. **Consider team turnover** – if the original implementer-owner leaves the organisation, they take with them their working knowledge of the system. If there is opportunity for a handover procedure with their role replacement – can their replacement automatically inherit the personal data saved within the system?

Ownership can encompass many factors, including the initial cost, maintenance costs, implementation and the day-to-day running of the system. It is crucial for one team to take ownership of these responsibilities, but with it, consider each potential owner's invested interest in the LMS.

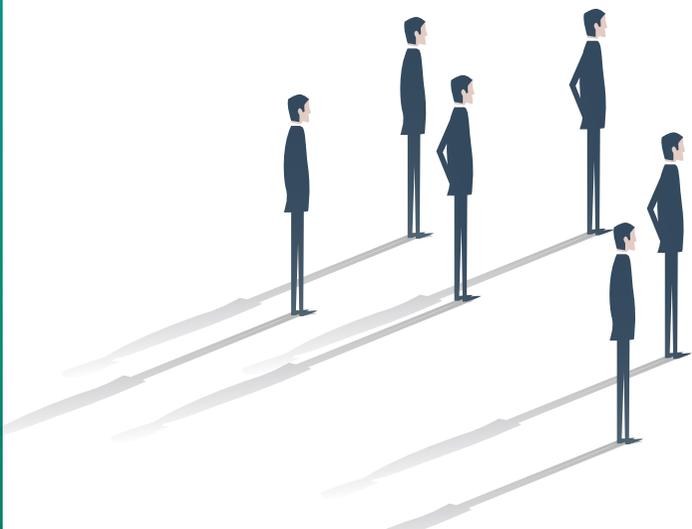
Also account for the potential owners' available resource. Will your system's owner have time to look after and grow the system? With complexity comes further steps, which can be more time consuming or require a greater skillset.

IT may prioritise the system's overall functionality, its accessibility for remote working, and the security of the system.

HR teams, however, may give precedence to the system's frontend aesthetics; they will be considering what the end user – the learners – will be looking at.

They may also **focus on the system's reporting functionality**. Reporting takes a huge amount of administrative time for HR teams, and online LMSs can automate reporting to reduce the time spent on manually manipulating data.

Ideally, L&D teams should take ownership for the system, supported by IT and HR – L&D teams will be aware of their requirements in terms of updating and administering the system, whilst also recognising their learners' needs.



Back it up

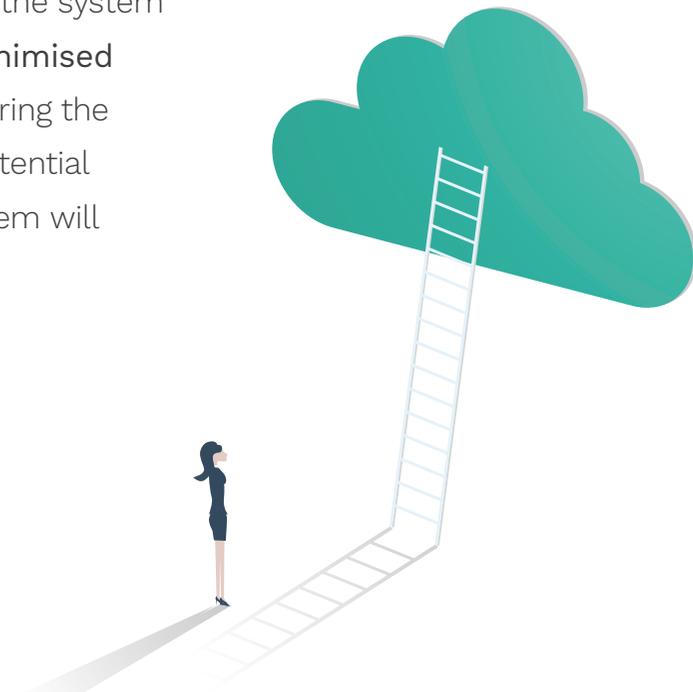
However, there is one factor that is often underestimated by all teams during the initial conversations of implementation: administration. This is a broad subject that not only includes the ease of administering the system itself, but also **who** should administer the system, and **how** the system should be administered.

It is worth noting that IT teams generally have little understanding of an aesthetic user experience, whilst HR teams generally have little systems experience. L&D teams should cultivate a broader understanding of both.

The backend of an LMS should be considered during the initial conversations when the frontend is seen – after all, it is your team that will be updating and amending the system, and in order to do so, the backend should be easy to use and in line with support from the vendor's support desk.

Ideally your LMS provider should have spent as much time developing a functional backend as they have spent developing an aesthetic frontend with user experience at the forefront of consideration. Clashes between the Head of L&D and the administrator of the system should be expected in the initial stages due to differing interests – the administrator may find that some requests are impossible to submit into the system due to its functionality. **This can be minimised by sharing your internal processes** during the procurement stage and inviting your potential vendors to demonstrate how their system will mimic or even improve on these.

A 2017 study found that nearly two-thirds of companies have either a poorly defined learning technology strategy, or worse, no strategy at all^[2]. This can cause countless issues throughout the implementation process, so by passing the ownership of the system onto one particular team, you can **ensure that the project's objectives and end goal remain consistent throughout.**





Online vs offline

You may decide to remove classroom-based training entirely from your training syllabus, or you may opt to merge online training with classroom-based training for a holistic and rounded learning approach.

Whatever your approach, remind yourself of the benefits of online training compared to that of classroom-based training: online LMSs are scalable and won't be affected by a growing workforce. Classroom-based training is disadvantaged due to the lack of physical space available to cater to all your learners, as well as being costly. Furthermore, it can be difficult to capture all of your new joiners for scheduled classroom compliance training.

Instead, new joiners can complete compulsory training during their induction week if the process is taken online.

Online training systems also have the further advantage of **engaging learners in ways in which the classroom cannot**. Using multi-media content allows learners to remain focused in their training courses, enhancing engagement and providing a topic of conversation amongst colleagues. Whichever approach you decide on, your LMS should support your strategy to ensure you have a seamless approach to all channels and can report holistically.

An online LMS will allow you to record all training regardless of its delivery, aiding in the reporting of training and development over the course of the year. This will not only help compliance matters, but build skillsets across the business to ensure that employees are sufficiently trained for their roles within the organisation.

Connecting a disparate workforce

Large organisations are more likely to have a **disparate workforce**, with a range of invested interests, priorities and skillsets, alongside a breadth of technologies. This said, SMEs are increasingly employing a disparate workforce with the popularity of remote working on the rise.

Due to this, any enterprise must ensure that the LMS they opt to implement can support every browser and device available.

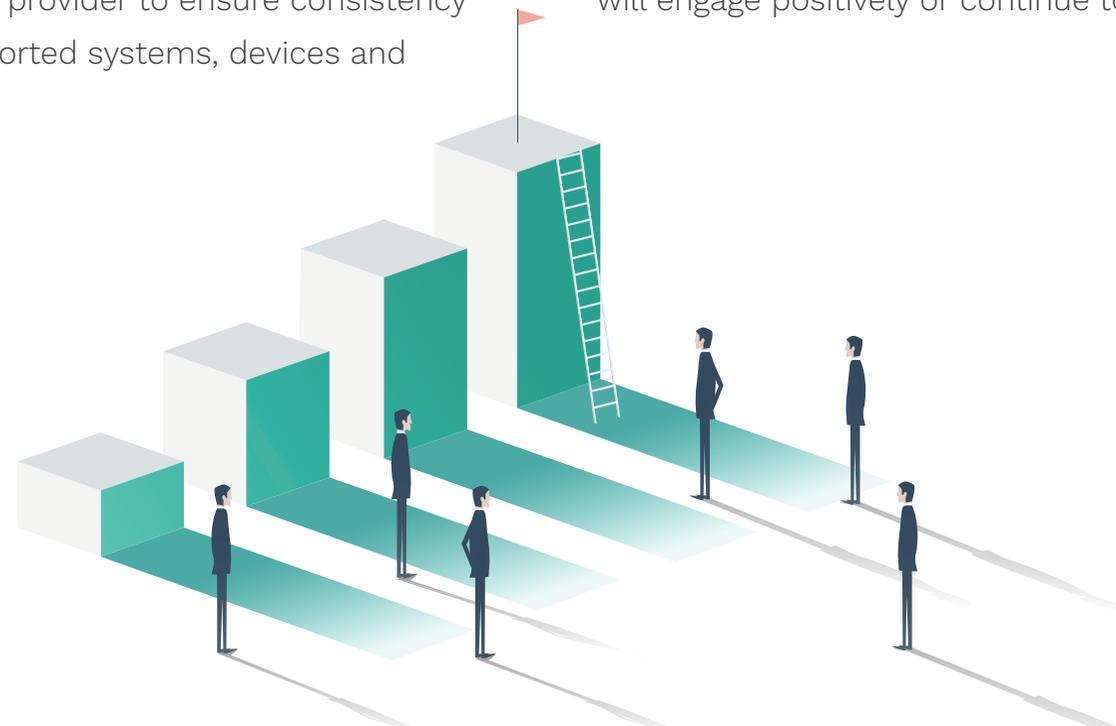
If you use VPN or Citrix, or prefer your employees to use Internet Explorer or Google Chrome, **the LMS's usability could be affected** if it is not optimised for all computer systems devices.

This will require your LMS provider to have **tested their product thoroughly** and honestly. They should ensure that their product has the functionality to work as expected on all computer systems, and may further require the support of your internal IT team.

Your IT team should collaborate with your chosen LMS provider to ensure consistency across supported systems, devices and browsers.

Establish the level of assistance offered with their support desk. Find out if your LMS provider has a troubleshooting document.

You will inevitably have issues, particularly in the early days of its use, and if your disparate workforce cannot access the LMS anywhere, anytime, on any device, it is unlikely that they will engage positively or continue to use it.

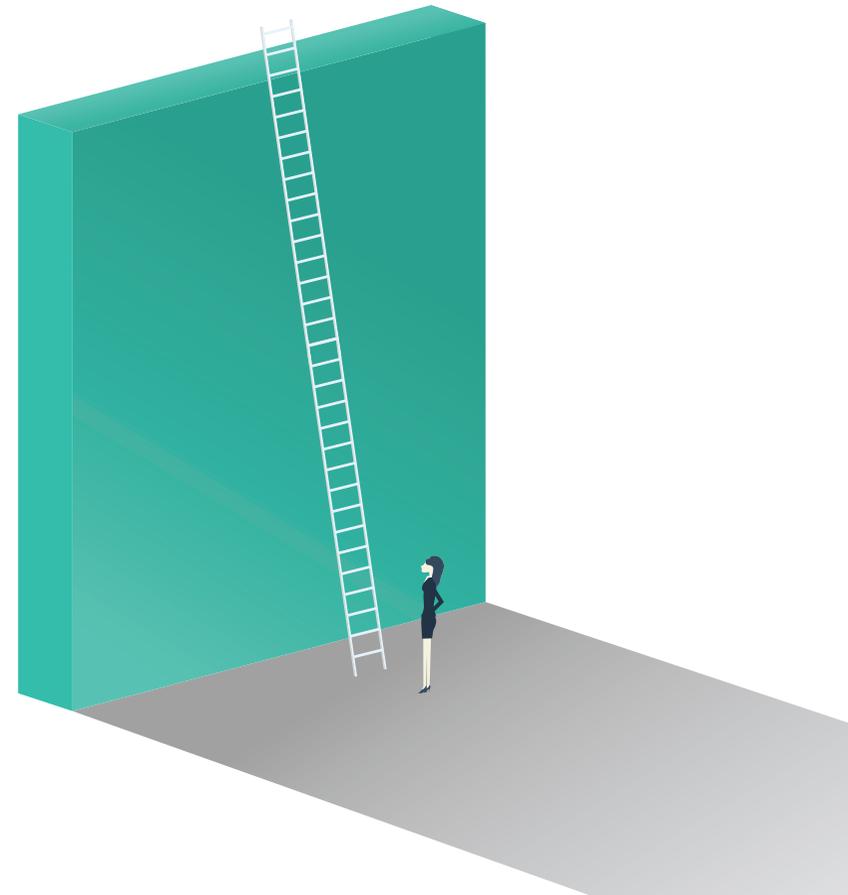


Be prepared

Spending time **planning and preparing for the launch of your LMS** will make a huge difference to the success of your implementation. Getting it right first time will leave a lasting impression on your users and will encourage them to become repeat visitors to the site.

Once you have decided on your LMS provider, think about the following things prior to system training:

1. **Are your key stakeholders on board** and in agreement in terms of costs, proposed timings and security and data provision?
2. **Is your employee data available** in the right format? You will need to ensure that extracted data is clean and consistent, with data that is usable for reporting purposes: think about whether you will want to filter certain information.
3. **How are employees** to be assigned training?
4. **Map out your user journeys** – why would they access the LMS? What do they need to be able to do? What would they need to be able to see?
5. **How many reports will you be required to produce?** Work out the data you will need to store, and the reports you will need to create
6. **How would you like to improve structure** and access to the training matrix, and how will you communicate this to your supplier?
7. **Do you need to upload training history** against users and learning? You may want this for reporting purposes, or simply for users to be able to see the training they have previously completed.
8. **What key dates are you working to** – and why? Do you have constraints in terms of resourcing that your vendor should be aware of when planning the work?



Gaining acceptance from your learners

Simplicity.

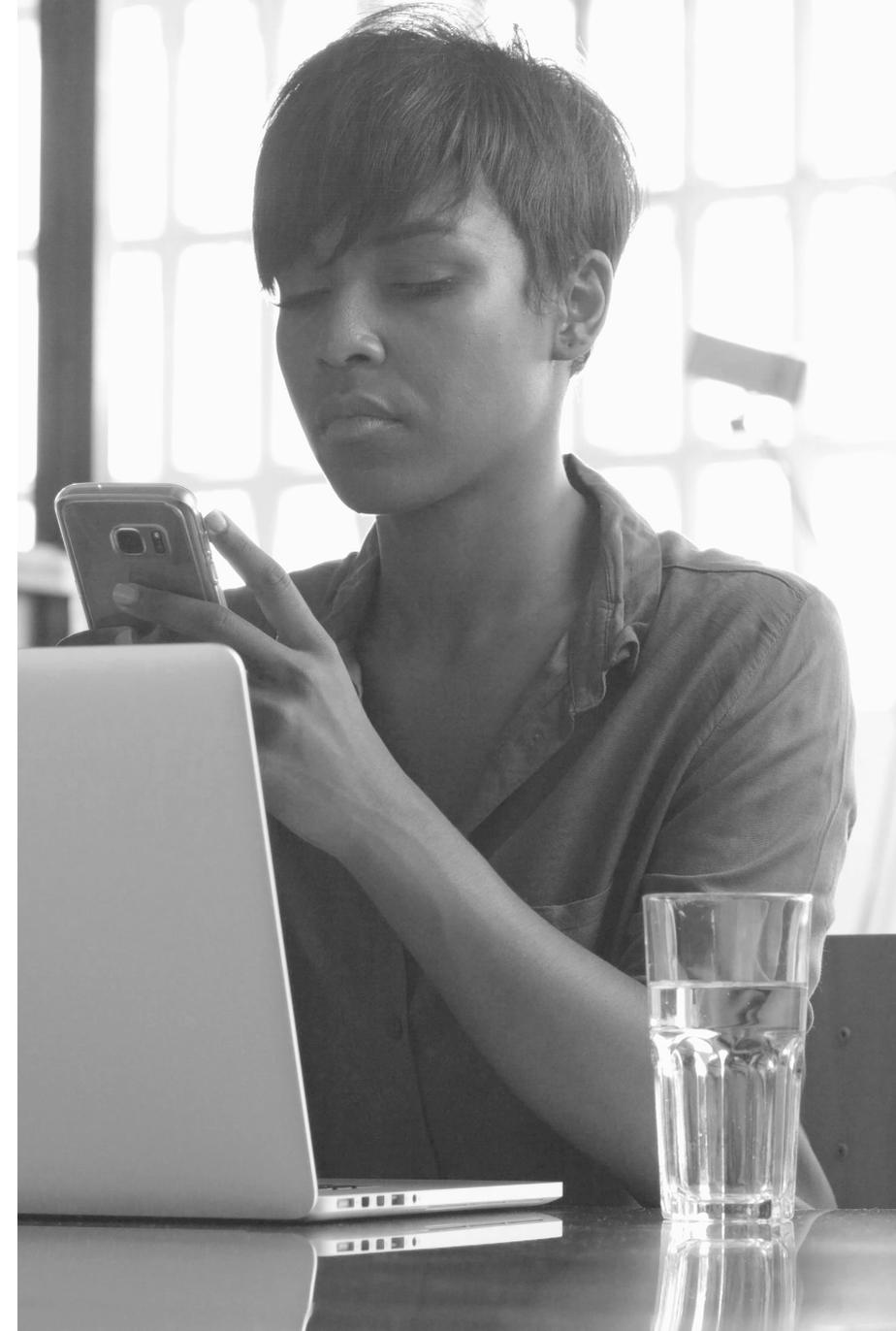
Learners are increasingly time short, with modern technologies such as emails, texts and apps fighting for their attention. With just 5 to 10 seconds available to gain attention, employers must ensure that all learning content is designed with the learners' experience at the forefront.

This means that the LMS design should support an easy-to-navigate experience.

For an LMS to be fully accepted amongst learners, their perspective should be at the forefront of every decision:

- **Does it allow users** to view customised content filtered by office and department?
- **Does it feel familiar** in terms of personalised and relevant projects and courses?
- **Does it integrate** with systems that users are familiar with?

This is where HR and L&D teams can work seamlessly together – HR can focus their energies on the frontend aesthetics, whereas **L&D teams can concentrate on the usability of the courses** inputted into the backend of the system.



Measuring engagement

Engagement is important. Tracking is important.

Ensure that the LMS provider you opt for **has powerful reporting functionality**. Without this feature, you will be unable to prove a return on investment, making your efforts void. With powerful reporting tools, you will be able to automate the extraction of data.

Consider, particularly in the first few months of use:

- The importance of **the percentage of employees** logging into the system
- How often they are logging in
- Courses that are proving popular
- Courses that are not
- The percentage of employees who are choosing extra courses to study for themselves

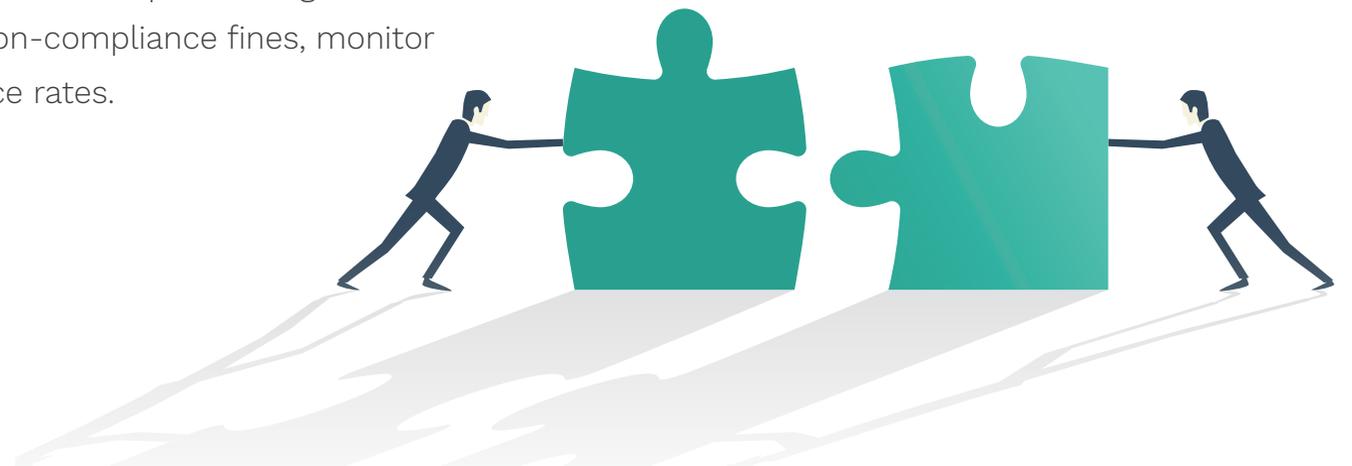
These questions will help you to gauge an idea of your return of investment in terms of employee engagement and **how the system is being regarded within your organisation's culture**. Consider also implementing staff surveys to gain open-ended feedback regarding the implementation of a new LMS.

Consider automating month-on-month reporting so that comparisons can be made, and changes logged.

If the initial reason for implementing the LMS was to avoid non-compliance fines, monitor your compliance rates.

However, there is no reason to overcomplicate matters; metrics are already available in terms of organisation satisfaction through the use of retention rates and turnover rates of staff.

50% of learners in 2017 reported **poor user experience** as one of the top barriers to their satisfaction^[3] which can affect employee retention rates: unsatisfied employees that feel they are being held back are more likely to consider moving on sooner.



Take the bulk from your to-do list

For your LMS to streamline your learning team structure, centralise data and enable you to report on learning success across the business, it **requires flexibility on the frontend** and **consistency on the backend**.

Your learners

The flexible frontend will allow for personalised branding on your LMS's screen pages, adaptable content dependant on users' accounts, and tailored content based on the users' function within the business. The choice of courses presented should be customised **based on popularity and their relevance** to the individuals' accounts.

If your LMS is mobile-optimised and user friendly, your learners will be more inclined to engage with your learning content. Your LMS should be designed so that it is **'nice and presentable, and [provides] a good user experience'** ^[4].

You

Ensure that the backend of your website is built for simple administration for updating different courses. Avoid LMSs with complicated, inconsistent backends that aren't scalable and don't drive efficiency.

Whilst it may initially feel novel – or be perceived to be essential - to opt for an LMS with customisation available, this can further complicate matters. The more you customise your backend, the more you rely on your existing team. With no documented knowledge, you take a risk.

If you suddenly face turnover within your existing team, you will need to rapidly train their replacements to a high level to ensure that the LMS can continue to run effectively. With this taken into account, it may actually be **favourable to opt for an out-the-box LMS** as there is less opportunity for error.

Once customised, it can be very difficult for your LMS provider to offer assistance; however, according to a Capterra study, 28% of organisations switch to a new LMS due to a lack of support ^[3]. With this in mind, ensure that you build a close relationship with your LMS provider so that support is always on hand should you need it.

Lastly, your LMS should have **strong reporting capabilities** to determine and interpret ROI: but also consider your existing data and team – do you have the right data and right skills available to interpret this data?

Conclusion

However you decide to use your LMS – in conjunction with classroom-based training, as a standalone, for compulsory courses or taking it one step further – **ensure that you build relationships across the organisation** to gain support from all departments.

By showcasing the benefits of the implementation of an online LMS, you can **strengthen your business case** through the backing of all departments; HR, IT, L&D and Finance should come together providing all relevant information unique to their department before presenting your business study to the board.

Once all the information is gathered and available, you will be able to prove how an online LMS can simplify the learning process, **provide better efficiency and user engagement**, whilst remaining scalable, making it a lasting solution to your learning and development needs.

[1] Cochran, K. (24 May, 2016). Brandon Hall Group eLearning market trends for 2016: Get more from your learning management system.

[2] Wentworth, D. (31 August, 2017). Satisfaction with learning technology is inextricably linked to strategy and planning

[3] Capterra (8 April, 2015). LMS Industry User Research Report

[4] Westfall, B. (n.d.). 7 best practices: Avoid flunking your LMS implementation





Is it time to implement a new learning strategy?

If you want to find out more about our **award-winning LMS** and how best to implement an online system in your organisation, please contact our team of learning and development experts who will be happy to discuss and provide recommendations **based on your specific needs**.

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