Delivering a **successful** learning report

How to **prepare and deliver** a successful learning report

Learning report eBook - **Part 2** of 3

Introduction

The reporting of learning can be time consuming. However, with some simple tips and tricks, it needn't be a headache. By **planning reporting up-front and accounting for its delivery** in your reporting approach, you will be on the way to being fully prepared.

90% of L&D professionals want to play an active role in improving business innovation [1], and by presenting and delivering a successful learning report, you will be able to **showcase the importance of learning and development** in the workplace and the transformation it can make.

If you can't track it, you can't report it!

You've now decided what it is that you want to report on. **It is now time to understand what is possible**.

You may have courses that have been built from scratch, been developed using a popular authoring tool, or have access to a library of content from a third-party supplier. However, each content piece might well offer different tracking capabilities, especially when coupled with the options available in your chosen LMS.

Questions you may need to ask yourself include:

- Do you want to report on test scores?
- Does your content export this data – and what happens if there is more than one test within the content? Does it report on all tests, or just one?
- Does it report 'pass/fail' or some other labels, such as 'incomplete/complete'?
- Can you see the actual percentage achieved?
- Do you want to see the answers to individual questions?
- How are you looking to track completions?
- Will success mean 100% of the course has been taken, or is a lesser percentage acceptable?
- Does your content report this way or are you limited to a simpler status indicator – or even just a 'pages viewed' count?

If your content is designed to be dipped in and out of, what happens when someone logs back in for a second time having first completed it and been awarded the 'completed status'? Does the course status reset to 'not started' – so making them 'non-compliant', or does it retain the initial score? **Often known as the 'best versus latest score/status' conundrum**, this is one to clarify early on.

Some authoring tools allow you to see how long people are spending on certain screens. This level of insight will be able to provide reports on the ways in which users take a course; **by drilling into your content this way**, you are able to execute qualitative reporting as to how well a course is performing.

Think about the functionality

When considering the reporting function of your learning strategy, **think about how your content will fit into your LMS** - will this enable you to extract and deliver your reporting goals as expected?

Think about if your current LMS can **correctly interpret the data** that is being sent to it from your content. Unfortunately, not all content will behave in the same way despite the so-called interoperability 'standards'.

Also take deadlines into account. How easy is it for your learners to see for themselves how long they have remaining to complete a course?

Learners claiming not to know what was expected of them is one of the more popular reasons given to explain poor course completion rates.

Auditing requirements are often based around the concepts of:

- **Accreditations** – the need to have completed a suite of content and assessments in order to be internally qualified for a specific role
- **Refreshers** – the requirement to repeat content at set intervals to ensure ongoing compliance

How does your LMS handle these, and more importantly, how does it report on such activity?

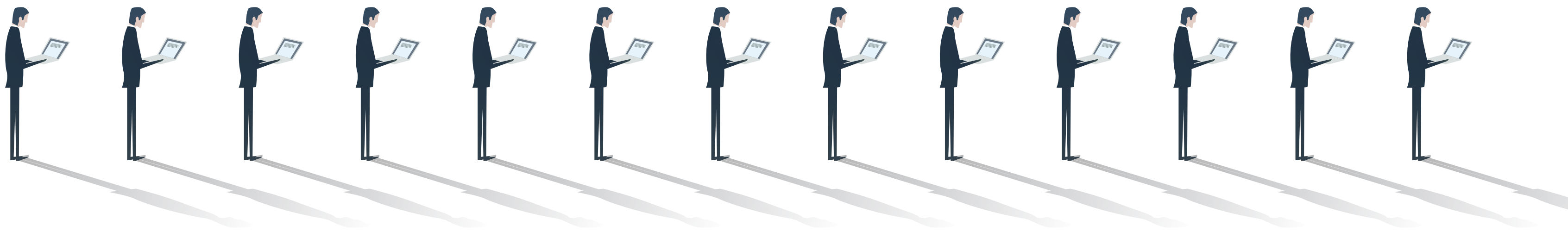
When considering the functionality of your LMS, also **take into account its usability** for a multi-lingual portfolio. Ideally, for example, it should regard English, French, Spanish and Chinese versions as one and the same when it comes to its reporting functionality.

What can you report on?

Evaluate how well equipped you are to undertake the required reporting activity. **Ask yourself:**

1. **What is it that** you're looking to report on? Is that data accessible?
2. **Where will your** data come from – your LMS or further sources?
3. **Can the new data** be added to the LMS database, or will you need to use another tool entirely?
4. **Does your LMS** have the functionality to manage all reporting, or will some manual intervention be required?
5. **How long will** each report take to compile? Consider if all the data is contained within the LMS, or if using an external tool may delay the gathering and processing of data.
6. **Are your systems** able to handle the quantity of data that the reports require?
7. **Is your report** to be run on an ad hoc basis, or can it be automatically scheduled and distributed? If it must be run on an ad hoc basis, consider how to make the reporting process as simple as possible so that it does not disrupt your day-to-day roles and responsibilities.
8. **Are your systems and reporting tools** able to report as per the organisation's hierarchal structure? It is very frustrating to want to issue a compliance report for Team Z that is lower down the organisational chart, only to find that your LMS stops categorising at Team X that is just a few levels higher.

With this in mind, remind yourself that the **top performing organisations are four times as likely to be using learning analytics to improve the service they deliver** [3]. Whilst the above considerations may be challenging to apply to your organisation's needs, reflect on the potential for long term benefits.



Report to the board

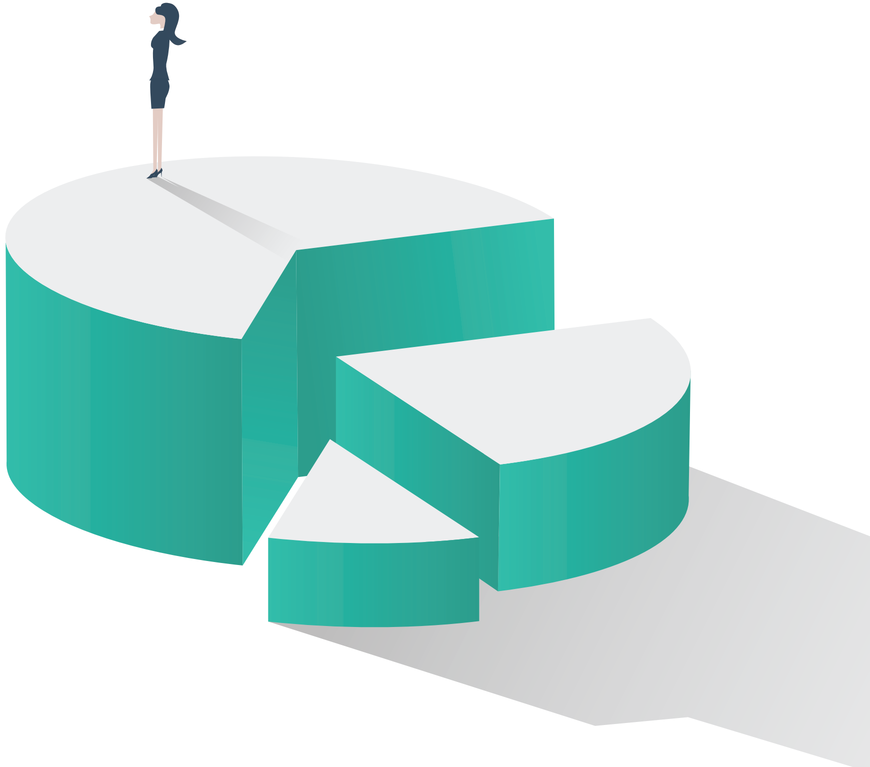
Take your stakeholders into account when formatting reports.

Do not spend time formatting the data nicely when all that is required is raw data that can be manipulated; equally, if a brief overview of learning data is required, it may be **appropriate to spend time formatting to present the information succinctly**. Can your current reporting tools present data in the required format?

There is a growth in the popularity in dashboards as opposed to full reports – yet **50% of UK PLCs don't have representation of learning at board-level, making it difficult to take advantage of a strategic approach** [2].

Many managers would rather be presented with a simple dashboard than receive a comprehensive report via email. If your LMS can surface these dashboards to users, this will **reduce the administrative task** of exporting dashboards to send across to managers.

Infographics can be a very helpful visual aid at presenting information in a succinct manner; however, the greater the number of formats and templates you make use of, the greater the risk of inaccuracies creeping in. Best practice dictates to present reports in just a small handful of formats. This will also reduce administrative configuring within your L&D team.



Get your learning strategy off to a flying start

Pilot your reporting requirements alongside the piloting of the learning content itself. You won't be fully aware of reporting issues until you have gathered the usage data from the group that has piloted the content.

Your objectives for piloting reporting should include:

- **Making sure** that the course itself performs as intended.

If completion means that the user must view 100% of the course, if it is possible for the user to miss a single screen, the report will show the course as 'incomplete' despite the user's best endeavours.

- **Ensuring that** the course is sending back the correct status.

If someone completes the course as intended, how does the LMS report back? There may be settings which require tweaking to allow your LMS to interpret the status correctly.

- **Evaluating the approach** to reporting itself.

It is often only when you have real data to manipulate that you realise if your reporting is meeting its intended purpose or not. If your stakeholders do not feel that they are being presented with the information they need, it is up to you to uncover how your LMS can work better for you. It may be as simple as producing more – or less – information as necessary.

- **Assessing the accuracy** of the data.

Step back and consider if your data appears reasonable, and if users are being correctly assigned to their related business areas. If there are obvious errors, these will need investigating.

Conclusion

Whilst finding out that your reporting is not working as intended during your pilot trials is disappointing, finding out that your reporting is not working following the launch can be devastating. It may be impossible to backtrack quickly enough, or to correct omissions that weren't prepared for beforehand. **Major initiatives can suddenly take on an air of amateurism**.

Your content, LMS and reporting capabilities **are all inextricably linked**, so ensure that you test these in conjunction with each other during the pilot phase.

KALLIDUS

Don’t resort to reporting – make it your priority

Integrate reporting into your planning process. **Speak to one of our experts** to discuss how planned reporting will transform your learning strategy for the long-term success of your organisation.

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