

Learn & Grow

Tips When Shopping for a Learning Management System

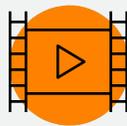
A learning management system (LMS) is a great asset for businesses of any size. In the past, LMS options were only available to enterprise clients and large businesses, but that is no longer the case. Now even small businesses can get access to the benefits of learning and training opportunities, which directly impact employees and their abilities to progress and build their skills. If your company is considering a LMS for the first time, it's helpful to evaluate several aspects of each system you're comparing to find the right option for your business needs.

What is a LMS?

A LMS is a software program that helps companies manage how their employees (or learners) gain access to training. Depending on how you set up your training program and what learning opportunities you want to offer to employees, you can choose from a wide range of LMS options. Some companies require employees to take compliance training – especially those in industries that are more heavily regulated, such as finance, health care, power, petroleum and gas, and manufacturing. Other companies focus their training on specific topics that relate to the needs of the organization.

Across the board, most companies work to develop a training strategy that includes a mix of learning opportunities. It's also important to consider different styles of learning and how your employees will benefit from various offerings. A strong training program should include videos, supporting documentation, and engaging elements to keep learners engaged and interested. The days of sitting in a lecture-style training with most participants tuned out are behind us. Your company's training program can incorporate the needs and desires of modern learners and provide better results, and a LMS is the way to make that happen.

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videos



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engaging
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Core Features of a LMS

As you compare different LMS options, it's helpful to understand some of the core features and how your organization might use them.

Dashboard

The dashboard is one of the first things you and your learners will see upon logging into the system. It serves as the home page and should be intuitive and user-friendly. Within the LMS, the dashboard should include any messages for learners from the organization, along with courses in which they are currently enrolled, training requirements, and records noting what they have completed. A learner may also need to print or save proof of completion, such as a certificate, so this should be accessible from the dashboard.

A LMS may also include more advanced elements, such as gamification, forums, and help request functionality. If the LMS you're considering does include some or all of these components, it's helpful to ensure that they can be accessed from the main dashboard.

Course Catalog

A course catalog is where learners can look at what training opportunities are available to them and learn more about each one. A LMS should include a detailed catalog with all available learning content, where administrators and supervisors can also assign courses to their team members. A single course may include multiple learning elements, such as a PowerPoint presentation, a video, a game, a quiz, and/or a syllabus.

It's also helpful if the courses can be bundled together into learning paths, which can then be assigned to applicable employees. For example, all customer service representatives may need to take courses focused on customer interaction, support and communication. Multiple courses could be bundled together into a learning path designed specifically for those members of your organization who interact with customers and provide service.

The LMS you choose needs to be able to support the learning elements you want to offer to your learners. If video-based learning is important to your organization, ensure that you can upload customized video content to the LMS and share it with employees.

State-Mandated Training Requirements

Many states, cities and municipalities require certain training courses to be provided to employees. For example, both California and New York have required anti-harassment training that must meet the criteria set forth for topics covered.

The LMS you select should support your state-mandated training requirements without having to spend extra time to build courses.

Engaging Elements

Learning and training are only beneficial if your employees actually listen to and retain the information presented. When information is tuned out or ignored, it doesn't do much good. Engaging learning is a must if you want the topics and data presented to stick, and a LMS can help. Many modern LMS options include gamification, quizzes, and other features designed to gauge participation, competency, and completion.

The ability to earn a certificate for completing a course or path may also serve as a motivator for learners. Offering certificates that can be saved and/or printed can become an engaging and appealing aspect of a training program for employees. If this is something you want to offer, make sure the LMS you're considering includes certificates as an option.



Custom Course Creation

The ability to create custom courses catering to the needs of the organization is one of the best elements of a LMS. Your company has unique needs – whether those include rolling out training around a new organizational policy or outlining a new process – you need to be able to quickly reach all employees to provide them with the necessary information. Uploading your own content and creating customized courses will drastically benefit your company's training program and the employees who utilize it.



Access to Additional Courses/Training

Although creating custom training is important, you may also want to rely on other content creators for more generic training topics. Access to additional training opportunities and courses benefits both the organization and its employees. Your business shows its desire and willingness to invest in employees, providing opportunities to learn new skills and perfect existing ones. A well-trained workforce also tends to be more productive, and your employees will appreciate the opportunity to gain new knowledge.



Cloud-Based

When considering LMS options, you'll have to decide whether you want an on-premise solution or cloud-based implementation. In most cases, cloud-based is preferred as it provides a more scalable and cost-effective solution. A cloud-based system will also be updated on the vendor's schedule without requiring any effort on the part of your organization or users.

An on-premise solution may be beneficial if you store sensitive information within your customized content, but be prepared that you'll have to use your own IT personnel to host and manage it, as well as invest more heavily in hardware and other support requirements.



Additional Considerations

For many companies, reporting on training is one of the critical functionalities of a LMS. Without reporting capabilities, you're left wondering who has completed their training requirements and whether any of your team members struggled with concepts within the courses. Ongoing reporting that is continuously reviewed at various levels ensures that managers and supervisors can monitor training progress. The ability to quickly pull and print training reports is also critical if your organization faces an audit or needs to submit documentation to maintain compliance.

A LMS for Today's Employer

The isolved learning management system is a powerful LMS available within the isolved human capital management platform. It incorporates many of the critical features outlined, providing a way for organizations to create, roll out and monitor training for employees. Reporting is simplified and easily accessible to those with the proper permissions, while supervisors and managers can roll out and assign training courses to their team members instantly.

This LMS delivers access to a library of 150+ pre-built courses on various topics, including customer service, leadership and management, business skills, and more. Some of the anti-harassment courses also meet state regulations, ensuring that your business remains compliant while providing the information employees need to stay safe in the workplace. Customers also have access to add single courses as needed from a selection of more than 50,000 options.

Since isolved LMS is built into the HR and payroll platform, users don't have to learn another technology or deal with multiple logins. All data transfers between the modules within the system, ensuring a seamless experience for every learner.



FAQ About Learning Management Systems

Q: How can a training program benefit my employees?

A: Training is a benefit you can provide your workforce that does a lot for your business. A strong training program can increase job satisfaction and morale among employees, increase their capacity to adopt new technologies and processes, and boost efficiency. Modern training courses can also assist with business continuity plans and encourage career development opportunities that show you are investing in your employees. Even something like paperless onboarding becomes easier when you have a training course that walks new hires through the process.

Q: Can a LMS grow and expand with my business?

A: Some LMS options can certainly grow and scale with a forward-moving business, while others are designed for smaller teams. Make sure to consider your company's plans for future growth when selecting a LMS. Look into any costs associated with additional training options or features that you may find yourself in need of in the future.

Q: What does SCORM mean?

A: SCORM stands for Shareable Content Object Reference Model and includes a set of specifications and standards used for web-based online learning content. The U.S. Secretary of Defense established an initiative for online training standards, which spurred the creation of SCORM. It has become the universally accepted standard for online courses.

Q: Will I receive support for my LMS?

A: Be sure to look into the level of support you will receive from each LMS provider. You will likely find yourself in need of assistance before you launch the training program, as well as during the implementation phase. The company providing the LMS should have a strong customer support team in place that is available to answer questions and provide the help you need to get the program up and running.



Businesses of all sizes can gain access to a robust LMS that delivers the features and functionality they want and need to enhance their training programs.