

6 STEPS TO SELECT YOUR NEXT LMS

A central, modern LMS is an essential investment for your organization.

As the nature of work itself continues to change, the need will intensify for organizations to offer employees a wide variety of learning opportunities to quickly upskill and reskill your team. To meet this demand, your organization needs a central, modern learning management system (LMS) to automate the creation, assignment, distribution, tracking, auditing, and measurement of learning across your entire employee base. Your LMS should be agile, and capable of supporting your learning needs as the organization evolves.

This is a big decision, and one we know you can't take lightly. That's why we've outlined the six steps our most satisfied customers take when evaluating the best match for their business.

STEP 1

DOCUMENT YOUR OBJECTIVES AND ASSEMBLE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

The first step should be to document the drivers for evaluating new LMS offerings. Write down both pain points of using your current LMS and the expected benefits a new LMS might offer. Avoid the temptation to do this in isolation. Assembling an executive sponsor and a committee of stakeholders will accelerate the selection process and improve the likelihood of securing funding.

STEP 2

COLLECT AND PRIORITIZE YOUR LMS NEEDS

Once your stakeholders have reached a consensus on a business case for your new LMS, the next step is collecting and prioritizing your LMS needs. Most organizations consider these six capabilities minimum requirements.

COMPLIANCE

CONFIGURES TO INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT-MANDATED TRAINING, COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION, REPORTING, AND AUDITING.

INTEGRATION

INTEGRATES WITH OTHER HR ELEMENTS (E.G., TALENT MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT).

ANALYTICS

PROVIDES AN ARRAY OF SOPHISTICATED REPORTING CAPABILITIES TO OPTIMIZE LEARNING AND BOOST USAGE.

USABILITY

DELIVERS A HIGHLY INTUITIVE LMS USER EXPERIENCE (UX).

CONTENT CURATION

EMPOWERS USERS TO EASILY SEARCH AND FIND THE MOST UP-TO-DATE AND RELEVANT LEARNING.

SCALABILITY

SUPPORTS LARGE NUMBERS OF CONCURRENT USERS EASILY TO SUPPORT A SUDDEN INCREASE IN DEMAND.

STEP 3

RESEARCH LMS PROVIDERS (LONG-LIST)

There are hundreds of LMS vendors on the market, so it's unlikely most will fit your requirements. Use this stage to eliminate providers who are not a good fit.

LET US HELP YOU SET THE BAR. REQUEST A SUMTOTAL DEMO [HERE](#)

STEP 4

DETAIL YOUR LMS REQUIREMENTS (RFP)

Together with your stakeholders collaborate on detailing all of the requirements and selection criteria you plan to use to evaluate and compare LMS providers. A typical way to organize your LMS requirements is by functional or process area assigning each requirement a level of importance - from must-have/critical through to important, but not currently essential to nice-to-have or optional. If you plan to deploy your new LMS in phases, also include in which phase each requirement is likely to be needed.

You can also work with your stakeholders to define between four and six high-level LMS use-case scenarios or stories. Each scenario should contain a detailed step-by-step description of how a specific LMS user - an individual learner or a learning manager - executes or plans to execute a particular learning process, including the objective of the process, any preconditions around the process, and what your organization considers to be a successful outcome of the process.

STEP 5

EVALUATE LMS PROVIDERS (SHORTLIST)

Prepare your LMS Evaluation Scorecard that will be used to compare vendor responses to your RFP.

Consider written RFP responses but also other interactions that signal what your relationship will be like after the sale is completed.

KEY SECTIONS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR LMS EVALUATION SCORECARD:

WRITTEN RFP RESPONSE

OVERVIEW

PRODUCTS AND ROADMAPS

FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

USE-CASE SCENARIOS' RESPONSE

PRICING OR INITIAL QUOTE,
IF PROVIDED

CHOICE OF CUSTOMER REFERENCES

INTANGIBLES

INTERACTIONS WITH SALES,
OTHER PERSONNEL AT THE
LMS PROVIDER

RESPONSE TIME TO
YOUR REQUESTS

FEEDBACK ON THE LMS PROVIDERS
FROM CUSTOMERS, VPARTNERS,
ANALYSTS

STEP 6

SELECT YOUR LMS PROVIDER

In the final stages of vendor selection, you will want to consider conducting reference checks. During these discussions you will want to go beyond product functionality and dig into the vendor's ability to partner with you over time.

REFERENCE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What are the key learning benefits you've gained with the LMS?

What are the overall business benefits you've realized with the LMS?

Did the LMS vendor deliver the system as promised, on time, and within budget?

What has been your experience interacting with the services team of the LMS vendor?

In hindsight, what would you have done differently in your LMS project?

DON'T FORGET TO FUTURE-PROOF YOUR LMS DECISION

As you finalize the contract with your chosen LMS provider, make sure that you clarify what's going to happen after the sale is closed. Take the time to review the proposed timeline for implementation and go-live, how you'll move from your existing solution to the new LMS, and the training schedule to make sure learners and learning professionals are ready to use the new LMS as soon as it's deployed. Ensure that the LMS provider has a way to deliver on new features and that they will keep you continually up-to-date on their roadmap plans and other innovations. You want to be confident that your new LMS is going to support both your organization's current learning requirements and those yet-to-be-fully-defined future needs.

GET AN IN-DEPTH LOOK INTO EACH OF THE SIX STEPS. LEARN MORE

After completing these steps, you should now have all of the information you need to decide on your LMS provider. As you make your case to the budget holders, you can present a compelling business case for a new LMS and all of the reasons why you and the other stakeholders have chosen this particular provider.

ABOUT SUMTOTAL

SumTotal provides a unified, comprehensive Learning and Talent Development suite that delivers measurable impact across the entire employee lifecycle. With SumTotal, organizations can build a culture of learning that is critical to growth, success, and business sustainability. SumTotal's award-winning technology provides talent acquisition, onboarding, learning management, and talent management solutions across some of the most innovative, complex and highly regulated industries, including technology, airlines, financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, and pharmaceuticals.

Skillsoft and SumTotal are partners to thousands of leading global organizations, including many Fortune 500 companies. The company features three award-winning systems that support learning, performance, and success: Skillsoft learning content, the Percipio intelligent learning experience platform, and the SumTotal suite for Talent Development, which offers measurable impact across the entire employee lifecycle. Learn more at sumtotalsystems.com.

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