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Complete guide to choosing an eLearning platform

Everything you need to know about choosing the right eLearning platform for your training needs.

Whether you're a company looking for an **eLearning platform** to train your employees, or a training organization looking for a system to manage and sell its online courses, in this article you'll find everything you need to know to orient yourself in the world of **eLearning providers** and choose the LMS platform that best suits your needs.

eLearning platform: what is it?

An eLearning platform (or **LMS, learning management system**) is a software designed to deliver training courses, administer them and monitor their use.
The most complete eLearning platforms also allow you to create customized eLearning courses and sell them directly online.

For more in-depth information on the different types of eLearning platforms, costs and main functionalities, read also " **What is an LMS? Questions and Answers**".

What is the purpose of an eLearning platform?

Generally speaking, an eLearning platform allows you to **digitize and simplify the management and delivery of training courses**.

But the possibilities offered by an LMS change depending on whether the user is a company that uses it as a means to qualify, train and update its employees, or a training organization that delivers courses to sell them to its customers (B2B or B2C).

eLearning platform for corporate training

If you are in charge of managing the training of your employees, an eLearning platform allows you to:

- **simplify your training management**;
- have a single, **easily searchable archive** of all training carried out and to be carried out and all related documentation (certificates, attendance records, certifications, etc.);
- **monitor the activities carried out on the platform by your employees** (and therefore know whether they have done the training, how many times they have logged in, what results they have obtained in the learning tests, etc.);
- manage **funded training plans** by producing all the required documentation;
- generate **detailed reports** on the training delivered and to be delivered;
- **deliver courses on any device**, thus allowing your employees to access training at any time, even on the job (for example, to quickly consult procedures or manuals while performing a certain task);
- **create eLearning courses**, videoconferences and training pills on any topic;
- **continually update the contents**, so that you can offer your employees always updated and relevant training contents. Have you introduced new company procedures? With an eLearning platform you have the guarantee that all employees are informed at the same time and that they access the same materials.
- analyze **course utilization statistics** (completion rates, results in learning verification tests, etc.) to evaluate their effectiveness;
- monitor the **general training status of their staff**, the level acquired, and the improvements achieved over time;
- **improve the insertion of new hires into the company**, creating customized onboarding paths that help your employees acclimatize quickly and reach full productivity in less time;
- (if equipped with a module for skills mapping), thoroughly manage the tasks and related skills to be assigned to your employees, monitoring in real time any skills gaps and filling them quickly and effectively (for example, by assigning

each person mandatory or optional courses useful to fill the gaps between the expected skill level and the actual level possessed by the employee).

In addition, if you opt for a platform with a catalog of pre-installed courses, you can immediately start delivering training to your employees, counting on a range of courses created by professionals.

eLearning Platform for Training Providers

If your company is a training organization, an eLearning platform will allow you to expand your training activities by achieving new economies of scale free from constraints such as class capacity, classroom costs, availability of teachers, printed teaching materials, etc..
But that's not all. An LMS allows you to significantly optimize the activities of a training organization, because it allows you to:

- **manage course enrollments** automatically;
- deliver online training to an **indefinite number of users** without territorial or classroom capacity limits;
- **create customized online courses**, whose modules can then be reused in other courses and adapted according to the specific training needs from time to time detected;
- deliver training courses in **videoconference or mixed mode** (with part of the learners in the classroom and another part online) for flexible and cost-effective training;
- exploit the best that technology has to offer in training to increase the **effectiveness and level of interactivity of courses** (artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, etc.);
- analyze **course utilization statistics** to measure their effectiveness and, if necessary, intervene to improve them;
- centrally **manage all documentation** related to the training provided and/or to be provided (enrolments, certificates, satisfaction questionnaires, learning tests, etc.);
- reach **new markets**, even those distant from the company headquarters;
- (if equipped with **eCommerce**) sell courses to customers directly online.

Read also " **How to choose an eLearning platform for training institutions**".

Choosing an eLearning platform: the elements to consider

1. Analyze your needs
In order to choose the right LMS, you must first ask yourself what you will use it for, what are your goals in the short and long term, who will manage the platform and who is going to do the training. Based on this analysis, you can then identify what essential features the platform should have. Here are a few examples.

Do you need the platform to be usable anytime, anywhere, and from any device? We recommend that you opt for a cloud-based LMS with a mobile learning module.

Do you want to optimize the management of corporate training by constantly monitoring the individual growth of your internal resources? Opt for an LMS that allows you to implement **HR management functions** as well.

Don't have the time or resources to create courses from scratch? Choose software that already includes a catalog of ready-to-deliver courses designed by eLearning professionals.
Is training your core business? Select an eLearning platform with **integrated e-commerce**, so your customers can purchase courses directly, fill out registration forms, and make payments online.

2. LMS types: cloud or local?
Once you've identified the features you need, you'll have to deal with choosing the type of platform that best suits your needs: **local LMS** or cloud?
In the first case, in fact, the software will be installed directly on your company's servers. This implies the need for a solid IT infrastructure and a dedicated IT staff to supervise the installation. A **cloud LMS**, on the other hand, is hosted on remote servers (in the cloud) and does not require the installation of specific software.These two types of LMSs offer completely different user experiences and are suited to different budgets and goals.

In general, today cloud technology is able to guarantee high levels of security, as well as easier management of updates and technical malfunctions (which are entirely the responsibility of the provider), which is why cloud LMSs are very popular among both companies and training providers.
For further discussion, also read " **Is a cloud or local LMS better?**".

3. Data and Platform Security
An LMS is, to all intents and purposes, one of the main repositories of company data and information. For this reason, another element to consider when choosing a platform concerns the system for managing and processing the data contained in the platform.
Does it comply with privacy regulations? Does it ensure that the information is handled according to the principles of confidentiality, integrity, privacy and availability required by the GDPR (EU General Data Protection Regulation)? Investigate these issues before purchasing the platform to avoid unpleasant surprises in the future.
Want to learn more? Also read " **How to ensure the security of your LMS data**?".

4. Support and assistance
As simple as it is to use, an eLearning platform must provide support for administrators. In this case, make sure that the provider you choose will follow you even in the phases following the purchase of the platform, with a rapid and qualified technical support.
In addition, check that service continuity and back-up systems are guaranteed in case of failure or malfunction.

5. Ease of use
An eLearning platform should streamline and simplify the management of training. To make sure this is the case, make sure it is easy to use according to your needs. To this end, ask for a demo of the platform in which you can verify if the software meets the needs of your company, discover in detail the technical functionalities and evaluate the interface and usability.

Read also:

- How to choose the right software for corporate training
- How to choose your new LMS
- 8 questions to ask before buying your next LMS
- How much is an LMS? A guide to avoid surprises

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