ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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How to prepare your company for using a new LMS

10 steps to implement an eLearning platform within your company and make it quickly operational and profitable.

When a company starts an eLearning project, it has both educational and motivational objectives: to induct newcomers, train employees, monitor their success, give rewards to those who perform best, and/or meet certain compliance standards. And this is just the tip of an iceberg of benefits that LMSs offer companies.
A proper implementation strategy allows you to choose the most appropriate platform for your company's needs and to derive better results both in terms of employee utilisation and in terms of achieving your goals.

What is an LMS?

An LMS, or Learning Management System, is software that allows employers to organise, monitor, administer, track and deliver corporate training courses.

Implementing an LMS helps develop a learning culture within your company and allows you to easily and accurately identify the training needs of your employees.

For more details, also read ' **What is an LMS? Questions and Answers**'.

Steps for correctly implementing an LMS in your company

Implementing an LMS within a company is a far from simple task that requires a lot of planning and a well-defined strategy. Let us therefore take a look at the necessary steps.

1. Establish objectives and expectations

The first step must start with an analysis of your expectations and business objectives: why are you implementing an eLearning platform? **What do you expect from your LMS?** Answering these questions is fundamental for defining all the subsequent steps and will help you to keep your business objectives in the foreground throughout the LMS implementation process.

2. Designate the team

Identifying the team that will be in charge of the LMS implementation is an important step before the launch. Generally, the team should comprise representatives from different business areas:

- A **team leader**, i.e. the one who supports the LMS implementation process, works closely with both the internal team and the supplier and is responsible for managing any conflicts, addressing any doubts and answering questions from colleagues involved in the project.
- A **project manager**, i.e. the person who oversees the objectives and deadlines and ensures that all implementation phases proceed smoothly: configuration of the platform, possible migration of content, testing, etc.
- An **eLearning technology specialist**, i.e. the one who checks the content to be migrated and/or develops new lessons, quizzes and learning materials.
- A **training department contact person**, i.e. the person who, working with the eLearning specialist, will ensure that the training content is useful, relevant, engaging and in line with corporate objectives.
- **IT specialists**, i.e. those who will follow the technical aspects relating to the configuration of the platform and any software integrations. However, if you use a cloud-based SaaS system, these aspects will be handled directly by the eLearning provider.

3. Outlining the implementation plan

The implementation plan must address variables such as:

- **Understanding your audience** - To develop a learning management system that works, you will need to understand the characteristics and needs of your employees. Remember that your LMS will be used by many different people, from junior staff to directors. So make sure you assess their needs well.
- **Change management strategy** - Introducing new software into the company can frustrate both managers and employees. Our advice is therefore to try to anticipate any possible complaints or objections. How? Through a change management strategy: make sure to involve management and maintain clear and transparent communication at all stages of the process.
- **Choice of eLearning platform** - Not all learning management systems have the functionalities you need. To get the most out of your LMS, it is important to select a vendor that understands your organisation's objectives, provides a learning experience that meets the needs of your employees, and offers high-impact features such as microlearning, adaptive learning, gamification, mobile access and advanced analytics.
- Timing of implementation - Implementing an LMS platform is a far from straightforward process that can take anywhere from a few weeks to ten months, depending on the size of your company, your objectives and the level of customisation required. Therefore, set clear deadlines and define time and responsibilities for each task.

4. Configure the LMS

The configuration of an eLearning platform comprises several stages:

- Initial configuration
- Customisation
- Integration of any external software
- Creation of users
- Configuration of the course catalogue

Ensure that each of these steps is correctly managed according to the deadlines and responsibilities identified above.

5. Developing content

There are basically three ways to populate your new LMS with learning content:

1. Migrate content from your old LMS (if you were already using one)
2. Populate your LMS with new and original content created by you
3. Upload ready-to-use content created by an external provider to your LMS

Which of these options is best? We recommend a combination of these three. Ready-to-use content is very useful because it is developed by eLearning professionals and saves you a lot of time. At the same time, creating customised content allows you to respond to your specific training needs in a timely manner.

6. Test the platform

Once you have completed the configuration, customisation and loading of the learning content, it is time to test the platform. To this end, we recommend that you select a group of users who can test the LMS both technically and in terms of user experience. In the testing phase make sure to:

- Solicit feedback from stakeholders
- Review the feedback received and note down areas for improvement
- Document any bugs or errors and submit them to the IT team or eLearning provider

7. Prepare employees

Before the actual implementation, make sure your employees have everything they will need to use the platform to its full potential. The training plan should cover not only how to use the LMS, but also when to use it and who to contact in case of doubts or technical problems.
We recommend that you deliver this training via a live webinar, so as to bring together as many people as possible and ensure the involvement and active participation of employees (something that a tutorial or pdf guide may not ensure).

8. Launch your new LMS

At this point, if the testing phase has been successfully completed, you can officially launch your new LMS. In doing so, you can opt for a gradual implementation (soft launch) or an immediate implementation (hard launch).
If you are migrating from an existing LMS, we generally recommend that you opt for a soft launch. This will allow you to move users to the new system incrementally or to limit access to the platform to a restricted group of users in order to further test the system and refine any critical aspects.
Conversely, we recommend an immediate implementation if you are confident that the new system is ready to meet your company's needs.

9. Create a learning culture

Once the platform is up and running, it is essential to nurture a learning culture that encourages employees to use the platform. To do this, foster open communication, including within the LMS (e.g. via forums, social media groups or periodic surveys) and encourage completion of assigned courses. You can also provide specific **reward programmes for corporate training**.

10. Managing platform maintenance

Think the process is over? You are wrong. If you want your eLearning strategy to be really effective, once the implementation phase is complete, you will have to start the process of continuous maintenance and monitoring of the platform:

- Regularly review reports and analyses
- Conduct regular evaluations of the training delivered
- Analysing the main **training KPIs** (employee engagement, impact on performance, ROI, etc.)

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