

Training in the 21st Century

A Blended Approach for Training Providers



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Training in the 21st Century – a Webanywhere eBook

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The last year has seen significant change in the way that organisations large and small approach employee training and development.

Within enterprise organisations' L&D and HR departments, the economic climate has brought even closer focus on identifying how they might reduce their training overheads.

Training companies, which often traditionally relied on their reputation, expertise and reliability as their USP, are looking beyond human mediated training and traditional instructor led methods to save classroom costs and develop new revenue streams.

In the dynamic setting of today's enterprise environment, a traditional approach alone is rarely sufficient.

What to consider when setting up e-learning

Corporate training budgets have been significantly slashed. At the same time, corporate social responsibility policies are demanding carbon footprint reductions.

Many training organisations are following market leaders by blending the approach of traditional instructor-led classroom methods with online courses.

To ensure that effective training is delivered to the end user, many training companies look to partner with specialist e-learning companies to ensure they have the necessary levels of support and expertise to complete the transition.

Within client organisations there's usually a cultural shift to manage too.

Corporate enterprises are often relatively new to computer based training methods.

Specialist training providers must manage the risk that in blending online training with traditional methods the end user doesn't get lost in the 'e-learning muddle.'

What to consider when setting up e-learning

So what are the first e-learning ingredients that the training company should look to incorporate?

The instructional design of the e-learning is critical.

As training companies begin to build their own e-learning content, the immediate need to design content that's really engaging for the end user may be overlooked. The result: indifferent results and the client goes elsewhere.

Given the transformational change to a blended learning approach, the training company must consider:-

- **WHICH** software to adopt, open source or closed?
- **WHO** to opt to partner with on the project;
- **IF** there is a definite need for a blended approach (simply conduct a survey, speak to your advocate client);
- **HOW** to mix the blend, pre-course e-learning / post-course assessment - what works best for your current programme? And...
- **WHEN** to adopt the correct instructional design expertise and how you will fit this for each client. For example, management training requirements are different to compliance based training.

Training in the 21st Century

The Blend, The Benefits



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The blend, the benefits

“Okay...so what’s in this for me?”

It’s simple. If you’re saving your clients money they will like you!

It’s a truism that even though your classroom training courses may be utterly invigorating and you’re an extremely charismatic individual, these will probably hold very little sway with your customer’s CEO.

All he or she is likely to be interested in is the financial bottom line - costs, savings made, revenue. For the CEO, you’ve saved money that can be invested elsewhere whilst creating a ‘value add’ course for the workforce.

In the fast-mobilising world it’s not always convenient for employees to attend week long classroom training courses.

In the traditional model, employees attend a training session for a full week out of the office and post-course, materials then gather dust on a shelf.

With blended e-learning capability employees can learn where and when they want to, with an online learning portal that can be accessed at any time to refresh their learning.

The blend, the benefits

Management information at a keystroke

Many training companies suffer from the problem of managing an ever-growing paper mountain. With a blended approach, digital course content is all securely stored and backed up 'on the cloud.'

As well as promoting environmental benefits, this approach eliminates much manual handling work such as counting multiple sheets of paper and then logging the information on a computer. Rather than burdening this administration upon your employees, e-learning enables them to focus their time on more creative or productive activities.

Further, your enterprise clients' management team can access the learning portal themselves and view all relevant statistics and reports in real time. This is a great benefit particularly for ensuring compliance with industry mandates.

Of course, the old way of working would be for individual managers to email you, requesting the information, which if you hadn't prepared and you were out of the office could be a complete hassle...

The blend, the benefits

Why you should care about social media

Social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc) is becoming a popular digital marketing channel in all business sectors. Online communities can often deliver unique ways to learn and develop new ideas, even unconsciously.

One such project is the BT 'Dare to Share' video channel, a YouTube - type site where BT employees could upload their learning experiences and tips on doing their job. Employees could upload a video directly from their smart phone and within seconds it was live on the Internet, enabling colleagues to comment or adopt new thinking.

The accepted training model is that 70% of learning is 'on the job', 20% is formal and 10% informal. BT has proved that corporate social networks can support informal learning by encouraging employees to interact in a fun, yet productive way.

Why should I create a online community?

- An online portal enables on demand progress reporting vs. training goals
- Users become more engaged in the course material you are delivering.
- Creates a online discussion which may evolve into unexpected opportunities.

Top 3 reasons for adopting a social media plan

1. Rich, engaging user experience
2. Live collaboration with colleagues and subject experts - delivers knowledge when and where it's wanted
3. mLearning (mobile learning) enables learning on the train platform, in the hotel room, at the event

Training in the 21st Century

Adopting a learning management system (LMS)



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Adopting an LMS – some considerations

Training providers are now changing the way they deploy their programmes.
The LMS is key to supporting this roll out.

Scalability

Your LMS will need to be fully manageable and user friendly both within your own organisation and by your client.

This requires a specialist consultant to produce the right learning paths and a model which can be expanded as the service is made available on demand.

Further, your LMS should be customisable to integrate with legacy data and management systems already in use within your client organisation (e.g. CRM, HR, eCommerce, Finance).

Commercial model – realise the revenue

When positioning the learning portal with your clients, several options are available:-

- Charge a license fee per user;
- Reduce costs per user through economies of scale;
- Design an e-learning course for use in a third party LMS

The key benefit of the above is that the LMS enables a subscription-based fee model. As users join your learning portal, they will begin to subscribe to your online information and pay monthly or annual fees which are guaranteed.

The need for using associates or freelance trainers to accommodate busy schedules disappears and your margin per course improves.

Hosting & support

You need a hosting package which can accommodate your growing LMS storage and bandwidth requirements. Most training companies require SaaS (software as a service model), similar to a pay as you go mobile phone contract. As your platform demand increases, the SaaS model enables growth without availability problems.

Adopting an LMS – some considerations

Compliance

Many training organisations forget that compliance is a key area they must consider when adopting a LMS. Many proprietary vendors 'get lazy' when it comes to compliance.

Your chosen LMS system should be W3C compliant for the needs of users with disabilities.

Compliance is also key when considering the content accessible within the LMS. Course content must be SCORM / AICC compliant which means content can be 'packaged up' and move from one LMS to another.

Open source LMS platforms such as Moodle are compatible with a large number of authoring tools for developing content such as Articulate, Lectora and Adobe Captivate.

Branding and theme design

When setting up your new LMS, you need to ensure that this fits into your brand guidelines and your corporate website. You will therefore require specialist graphic design capabilities to produce the design for each user community, and then a web developer to build the site itself.

Next Steps to Your LMS

1. Choose to partner with the LMS provider that's the best fit for you
2. Plan for the cost based on your ROI and needs analysis with your clients.
3. Build the e-learning with your subject matter expertise.
4. Reap the rewards of provisioning a more convenient, more cost-effective and engaging offer.

Training in the 21st Century

Totara LMS and Moodle
the world's most popular open source enterprise LMS



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Totara LMS

The distribution of Moodle for the corporate sector

Totara LMS overview

Totara LMS is an open source LMS which has been developed as an enterprise-wide learning and development platform for Corporate users. Totara builds on open source Moodle software that has been developed and used by companies such as Tesco, Nikon, Cable & Wireless and BP.

Because Totara is open source, there are no license fees per user so you are not charged each year for the number of users on your corporate learning management system (although you can charge your clients to access your content).

Totara is used globally and can be translated into over 70 languages. This makes things interesting, as possibilities emerge to collaborate internationally and expand your competitive advantage to the global market.



Webanywhere, author of this eBook, is a Totara Partner and Europe's leading Moodle Partner with offices in the UK and France, as well as the USA.

Moodle and Totara LMS - comparison



1. Course Management

Standard courses can be developed and built relevant to the subject training you deliver and then tailored for individual clients or vertical sectors. Multiple Moodle installations are not required; one will suffice.

2. Licence Management

User licenses are easily managed within the Moodle LMS. An annual subscription model can be provided to clients.

3. User Management

Many training providers like to manage their own user lists to access certain areas of the LMS via .csv or Excel spreadsheets. Your Moodle Partner can manage this for you.

4. eCommerce module

Users can purchase courses online and gain access to courses over the period you specified, delivering a reduction in back office administrative costs.

5. Reporting module

Can be easily configured to produce results per candidate in spreadsheet or chart form.

6. Training booking module

Enables clients to request further training that can be delivered either online through virtual classroom software, or instructor-led in the classroom. The module can send out email reminders before the sessions, and book out time in a desktop calendar.

7. Assignment & assessment module

Assignments can be based on specific competencies you are assessing. Specific feedback can then be provided to each individual before their next attempt of the course.

8. Certification module

When finishing a course or activity and achieving over a certain percentage (which is editable), training managers have the option to download a certificate.

9. Free plugins = multi-activities

Moodle has thousands of free plugins, similar in concept to the Apple iPhone with downloadable free apps.

10. Multi-lingual capability

Moodle can be translated to over 70 languages. This is useful when working with global corporates with dispersed teams.

11. Collaboration

The standard Moodle LMS comes complete with collaborative tools for group work and interaction. These include forums, wikis, blogs, live chat and the Moodle community hub.

12. Email notification

Moodle can send reports about learners in accordance with defined time/date criteria. This means more automation and less administration. This can also be set for certain times of the year, for example when compliance checks are due.

13. Ask the tutor

To support learners with specific help, Moodle has the functionality to involve the tutor in conversation threads. This activity can also be set so that other learners can access and join in the conversation, which reduces the burden on the trainer.



In addition to all the great functionality in Moodle, Totara offers the following functionality:

- **Competency structures and learning paths**
Add in your competency structure, link to roles and learning objects to create learner paths
- **Individual development plans**
Managers and staff can create IDPs collaboratively, review progress
- **Team management**
Managers can review progress of their staff and allocate additional learning
- **Classroom management**
Create and manage classroom events, allow users to book courses directly
- **Dashboard**
Quick overview reports ideal for MI reporting
- **Reporting**
Detailed drill down by competency, course or staff member
- **HR/ERP/CRM integration**
Proven large scale Enterprise integrations (e.g. PeopleSoft, SAP, Salesforce and Oracle).

About this eBook Sponsor



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We're an innovative e-learning technology company, experts in delivering online learning portals and content development solutions for business.

We build using Open Source tools including the Moodle Learning Management System which is used by Tesco, the Open University, M&S, Nikon, Apple and many more.

Webanywhere is an official UK Moodle partner which gives us exclusive rights to provide custom code development, training and consultancy for Moodle based training and HR LMS systems.

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