



Top 10 tips for providing your learners with powerful and fresh new learning experiences

Introduction

Learning technologies have leapt forwards in recent years with new mobile Apps, social features, gamification and microlearning. The latest learning platforms support all these features and much more, but their functionality tends to be more focused than a traditional Learning Management System (LMS).

Older, more established LMS solutions often have a wider set of features, but many of these are not so relevant to today's preferred learning methods. Linked to this, the older systems can be difficult to update to accommodate these more recent approaches.

The result is that you may find yourself trying to implement new learning styles and programmes in an organisation that is reticent or even unable to drop its existing LMS.

So if you don't want to wait for your incumbent LMS provider to catch up, what are your options?

To help you through the latest supplier talk, here are ten top tips to help you choose an LMS to help you deliver new learning experiences.

1. Listen to your learners

Mobile learning, microlearning, work based learning, gamification and social learning all have their place. It's important to understand which one(s) in particular are relevant to you and how they will improve your organisation.

Tip: Listen to your learners. Find out from them, the types of learning experiences they are looking for and then decide how this will impact organisational performance.

2. Can your existing provider do it?

The easiest place to start is to talk with your existing supplier and check through their latest product releases to see if what you need is actually already there, if it is then great, the task becomes all about how to implement and use this in your business.

If it's not already there, is it on the roadmap? This is often a tougher one to answer and suppliers can either be cagey about what they promise or

unreliable when it comes to making good on their promises. But make sure you ask the question and if necessary push hard for the answers. It's easier to implement the latest functionality of an existing product than to buy a new system!

Tip: Exercise judgement here. Past performance, relationship and their technical infrastructure will all have a bearing on whether you decide to wait for promised improvements or bite the bullet and look elsewhere.

3. Augment, or replace

A larger organisation may have made significant investment in their existing LMS, and have perhaps invested even more in integrating it with other systems. There may be a reticence to scrap the existing solution, or perhaps elements of it are seen as essential. There may be a fear of the disruption caused by implementing a wholly new solution.

Modern cloud based LMS solutions tend to be lower cost than their predecessors and, being cloud based, are usually much easier to implement, but it may still be unattractive to go for a complete replacement. If so, then the good news is that you can choose to implement all or some of the functionality of a modern LMS and have it sit alongside an existing system, providing all the required new functionality and benefits for staff without turning off the old system.

Tip: Make sure that you can fully integrate your new solution with your existing one and provide a seamless experience for learners.

4. The future

If you are unhappy with your existing solution and/or supplier, then it is probably because they have been too slow keeping up with new ideas. Make sure your new provider is innovative, agile and committed, and has a track record of being at the forefront of their field. Even if you are not going to use the new solution as your primary LMS, you may wish to select one that could do the full job if you ever decided to migrate across completely at a later date.

Tip: Choose a provider with experience of dealing with major organisations, the ability to come up with

exciting new ideas and the willingness to work with you in partnership.

5. Functionality

New suppliers to the market tend to have more focussed functionality sets and emphasise the new and latest ideas. On the other side, older suppliers and systems tend to be mature products with long feature lists that cover requirements that are more traditional.

Tip: Consider how you want to deliver your new learning experiences, then match it with the relevant functionality. Be ambitious to be at the forefront of your industry and be open to the other ideas your new LMS provider may have.

6. Learning beyond the LMS

Consider the learning that occurs beyond the LMS. Encourage your learners to take learning into the real world.

Make sure your new LMS allows you to set practical tasks for learners to complete within the workplace (wherever that is) as part of their roles.

Tip: Think beyond eLearning in the LMS. Think practical work assignments, mentoring sessions, presenting seminars or making a video.

7. Connectivity is key

If you're going for a standalone LMS to deliver specific new learning experiences, make sure your new LMS has a modern set of APIs to integrate to your other LMS, HR, Talent and CRM systems.

Tip: Some integrations will require technical support, so make sure your new supplier has competent technical teams to work with your own IT staff, or do this for you.

8. Backwards compatibility

If you already have an LMS, then you will have a library of content that is probably SCORM compatible. With the newer LMSs taking advantage of the latest Experience API capabilities to deliver

and track all sorts of extended learner activities, it's essential that your old content is still supported.

Tip: Load some examples of your content onto your new supplier's LMS and test what happens.

9. Security

The world's increasingly security sensitive. Your new system needs to be safe, particularly if it is cloud based. Make sure your supplier is ISO 27001 certified and has a track record in secure solutions.

Tip: Choose a supplier that can protect your content and your data, locating it in your chosen region (US, EU, Africa and Asia etc).

10. Service

Check out the service levels and providers' service level agreements.

Tip: Speak to actual customers and get a real feel for more than just the warm and fuzzy stuff. How good are the providers at communicating, how do they respond when there's a problem?

Conclusion

Often larger and more international organisations find it difficult to replace a group-wide IT solution. Be ambitious and go for the best learning and support solution you can find for your staff. If this means augmenting your existing group-wide LMS with a modern fully integrated equivalent, then this can be the ideal solution.

Contact Agylia for more

Visit: www.agylia.com

Email: info@agylia.com

Call: +44 (0)1454 269222 or +1 425 274 1970