



10 ways

an LMS and CPD
solution can drive
membership value



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Membership bodies are under increasing pressure to work harder and faster to demonstrate their relevance and value to retain members, especially if they want to safeguard revenues and drive business growth.

They have an opportunity to revamp and modernise their continuing professional development (CPD) offerings and create, sell and promote new forms of online learning to support their members and, most importantly, deliver increased value for money.

People join membership bodies to learn and develop in their chosen industry and profession. So it's vital to provide top quality resources and tools that deliver a personalised learning experience. This should be tailored to the unique role, position and development requirements of the individual member.

There are many ways to maximise benefits and value to ensure member engagement, retention and growth.

Here are 10 recommendations to consider:

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1. Embrace digital learning

In today's highly competitive and crowded market, there's a wealth of quality digital learning materials on offer. It's important that your sector specific content matches the user experience it provides. To make this a success, it's vital that you embrace digital learning.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you prefer to use printed forms or spreadsheets for CPD data capture?
- Do you force the use of desktop browsers to access content – that is, are you not actively supporting mobile?
- Do your web interfaces look dated and struggle to work at all on particular modern browsers?
- Are your membership and content websites not yet fully integrated with your CRM systems to provide a seamless member onboarding experience?

If the answer to any of the above questions is “yes”, then the chances are that your offerings need modernising and you've not yet fully embraced digital. This is more important than ever as the younger generation of member joins your organisation.

2. Membership bodies are different

Every membership body is different, with alternative ways of setting targets and encouraging members. Each has different drivers, membership needs, terminology and planning approaches. They all have varying skills and competency frameworks, with different certification requirements and levels of membership.

It's highly unlikely, therefore, that completely “off-the-shelf” solutions will satisfactorily meet your needs. Equally, developing your own solution can be very costly and risky. A combined approach that involves a tried and tested platform, plus configuration, customisation and integration, might be the best solution.

Choose a supplier who has a “partnership mentality” and wants to work with you to deliver the right solution, rather than simply suggesting the one they're selling.

3. Align your learning resources with sector specific skills frameworks

Start by providing a library of quality, accessible and relevant content to your members. Many membership bodies already have a large catalogue of valuable materials but you need to consider how to simplify its delivery.

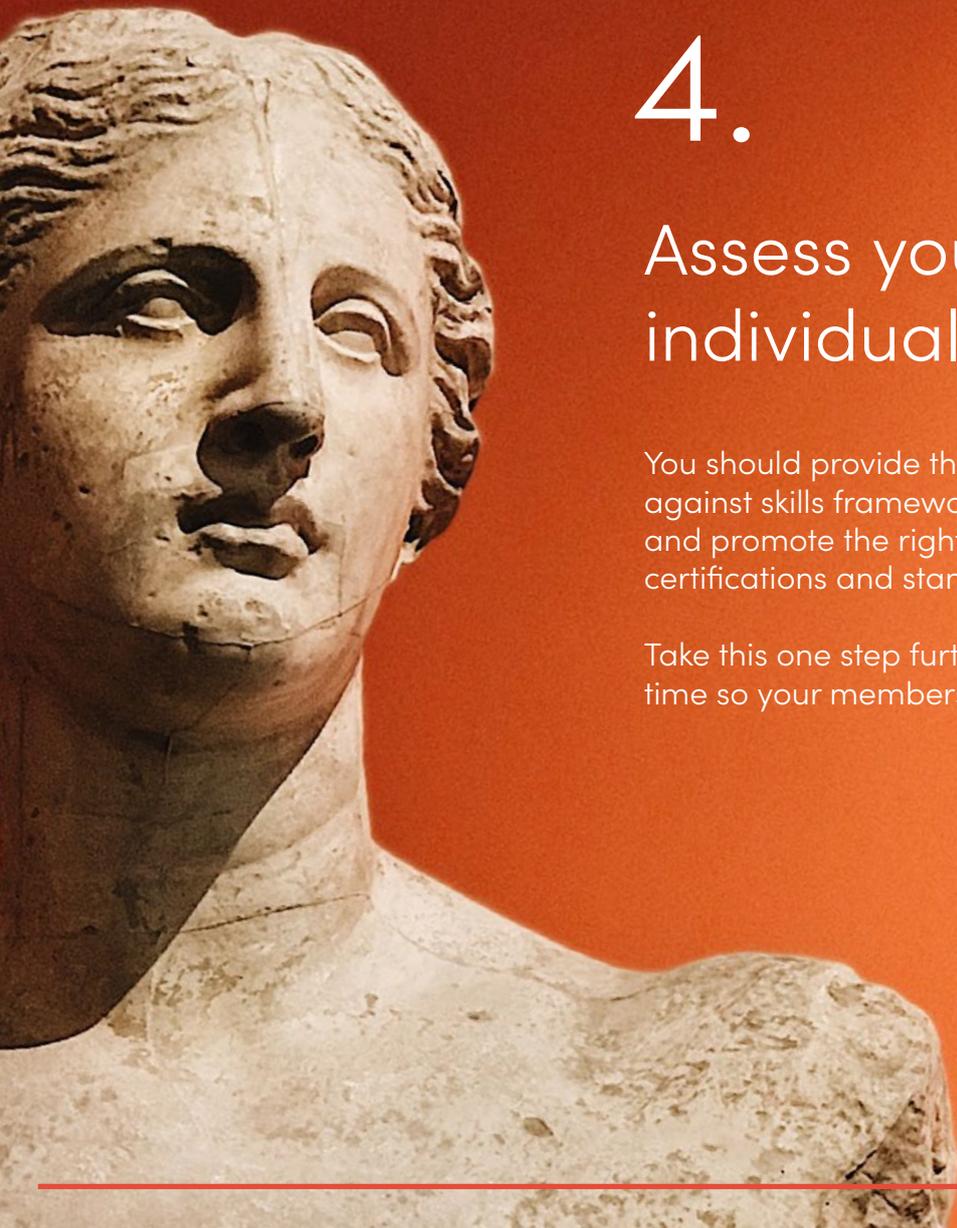
To avoid the real dangers of information overload, you must personalise your learning offering and align it to sector specific skills and competency frameworks, with varying membership levels and other relevant standards and qualifications.

4.

Assess your members' individual needs

You should provide the tools to assess your members against skills frameworks. This will help to identify gaps and promote the right content to help them easily achieve certifications and standards to complete their CPD.

Take this one step further by enabling comparisons over time so your members can demonstrate progression.



5. Should you provide free content?

Consider offering certain content and resources free of charge. Encourage users by delivering a quality experience and providing additional resources as part of your standard membership packages. Think about selling premium content by using eCommerce to open up additional revenue streams.



6. Encourage CPD planning and progress tracking

Equip your members with the solution they need to plan, record and track their CPD. Encourage members to spend time at the start of the current CPD cycle – often aligning with the membership year – to plan and consider specifically which skills or competency areas they need to focus on with their learning activities.

Your CPD solution should then allow them to continually track their improvement against that plan. Visual progress charts and printable PDF reports show members some tangible evidence that their learning is on track.

7. Offer a mobile learning and CPD App

Native Apps for Android and iOS devices can significantly improve the overall user experience for members accessing your offerings from various devices. Ideally, your Apps will also support members' CPD logs, enabling them to record CPD activities without leaving the App. Mobile is perfect for many scenarios – for example, taking a photo of a course completion certificate and having that automatically generate a CPD record.

By making Apps available via Google Play and the App Store, you also have a natural vehicle for promoting these offerings. Make some content free within the Apps and available before login. Use the Apps to deliver regular membership updates and personalised content tailored to specific career aspirations. Use a combination of manual and automated push notifications and CPD progress nudges at carefully considered intervals – such as when members fall behind targets – all to help increase engagement.

8.

A preference for microlearning

Bear in mind that members want to access your content anytime, anywhere, on any device. Traditional eLearning catalogues requiring desktop access are often dated and can be a general source of frustration.

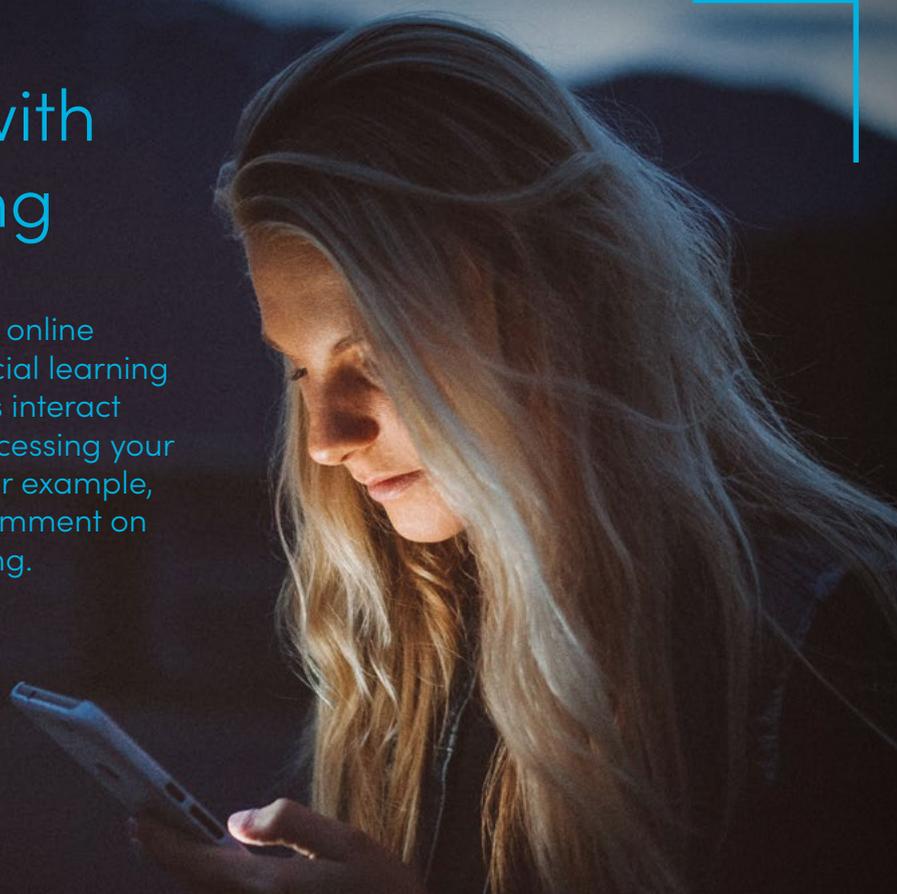
Bite-sized microlearning – content designed for mobile consumption – is preferable. You could offer a varied blend of digital learning content that includes videos, podcasts, animations, infographics and micro-courses. Ensure the content has been built to support mobile.

Building your own content is costly and time consuming, so enable connections to third-party sources of quality content that's relevant and proven within your industry sector.

9.

Get social with your learning

Develop and expand your online community by offering social learning solutions and let members interact with one another while accessing your digital content libraries. For example, let them like, share and comment on the content you're providing.



10.

Consider gamification and rewarding achievement

It has to be said that gamified learning experiences tend to divide opinion – you do need to strike a balance.

However, with careful consideration, elements of gamification really can provide encouragement for members and motivate them to stay on target throughout the year. For example, simple visual trackers that show someone's current progress against their specific target – often based on points, numbers of reflective statements logged, or learning hours recorded – can be a source of encouragement. Comparison charts showing an individual's overall progress against relevant peer groups might also be effective.

You could consider rewarding members when they achieve set targets. Consider presenting a certificate on successful submission of CPD at the end of the current year. Or take things a step further and award an "open badge" – one that the member shares as part of their professional profile on LinkedIn and elsewhere. After all, CPD is a career-long activity, so the achievements and rewards should reflect that.



Summary

There's never been a more important time for membership bodies to emphasise the importance of their learning and CPD solution – and the value that membership brings.

Now is the time to embrace digital learning and CPD and work harder and faster than ever to deliver value to members. There's a golden chance to entice back those who have left, safeguard future retention and drive business growth.



Agylia is a learning technologies company that empowers organisations to support their people with digital learning through the use of innovative learning management, CPD and custom eLearning solutions.

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