



A BUYER'S GUIDE

Choosing the right LMS for
customer and partner training

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our guide to choosing the right LMS to support your customer or partner training programme.

You're no doubt here because you know that a formal training programme will help to create more profitable and long-lasting relationships with your customer and partners. Knowing this is one thing, but developing and sustaining a highly effective programme needs work and strategic planning. Selecting the right LMS is a major part of the success of your new training programme.

That's why we've produced this buyer's guide that discusses what is on offer, what you need to consider, and what you need to do to make a successful purchase. **We're here to help!**



This entire guide is based on what we've learned over the last 20 years when building, administering and managing global external training programmes for our customers.

By the time you've finished reading, you will know:

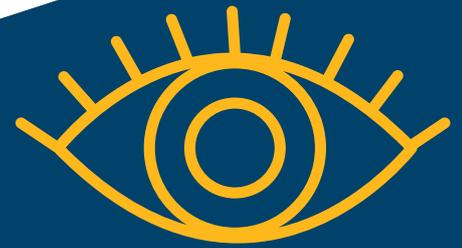
- What features you need to look out for
- What you need to do before you go ahead and purchase
- How to choose the right LMS for your organisation
- How to make a success of your LMS and training programme

Let's dive in!

WHAT AN LMS REALLY DOES

An LMS is ultimately a tool that supports the administration, management and delivery of training programmes, by allowing organisations to:

- Deliver training flexibly and on-demand
- Manage and curate training content
- Monitor and track learner performance
- Improve retention rates
- Update learning content easily



KEY FEATURES TO LOOK OUT FOR

There are so many features to choose from, but firstly, **find out whether the LMS was developed for external training**. Once you know that, here are some of the features you should look out for:

- System integration
- In-depth reports and analytics
- Responsive design
- Intuitive interface
- Certification and badging
- Gamification capabilities
- Translation tools for global audiences
- eCommerce tools



THE PROBLEMS AN LMS SOLVES



“

If a Partner doesn't start to market and sell your offering within the first 90 days of recruitment, it's highly unlikely they ever will.
(SiriusDecisions)

”

Partner training is often a quick 'tag on' to the sales process but your network will benefit hugely from a formal learning process that nurtures them.

A **well-structured** and **designed training programme** using an LMS will help you to **solve** many of the **challenges** you currently face, including:

- Lack of motivation amongst customers and partners
- Brand dilution
- Stagnant sales growth
- Customers and partners with a lack of detailed knowledge
- Misaligned goals
- Underperforming customers and partners
- No categorisation of partners
- Lack of communication between your sales team and partners



The **right** LMS will solve these challenges and be the key to growing and maintaining a successful network for your organisation.

Deliver bespoke training

- **Increase** product or service knowledge and partner performance.
- **Create a personalised**, tailored and engaging experience for each audience.
- **Deploy** new updates and information quickly and easily.
- **Onboard** new partners with in-depth training aimed at accelerating mobilisation.

Assess results

- **Track and monitor progress** to easily see gaps in knowledge.
- **Motivate** your network through the use of badging and certification schemes.

Strengthen your brand

- **Deliver consistent** brand **messages**.
- **Increase market share** and strengthen and develop long-lasting partnerships.
- **Gain a competitive advantage** and increase the customer lifetime value.

Increase cost-effectiveness

- **Train your network** wherever they are based, without the need for costly travel.
- **Create a revenue-generating** training programme.

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF LMS'S



The key to understanding how to build a strong training programme is to consider both the platform and how you will administer and manage it effectively.



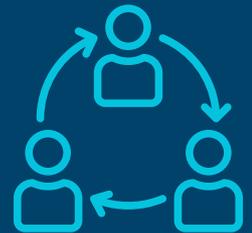
OPEN-SOURCE VS PROPRIETARY

Proprietary LMSs are owned by your organisation and are restricted from any modifications, reverse engineering and other uses. They are closed-source and come with licence costs per user.

Open-source LMS's on the other hand are designed to offer complete freedom to share, change and update the platform depending on the organisation's requirements. Prices are usually based on the number of users per month, or licenses are not needed, depending on the support available.

WHAT ABOUT LXP'S?

When researching, there's no doubt you will have come across LXPs (Learner Experience Platforms).



These are a fantastic tool for breaking down formal barriers and collaborating and sharing learning, however, for customers and partners, those features are of little benefit. The last thing your partners will want to do is share their knowledge with potential competitors!



HOW TO DELIVER YOUR TRAINING PROGRAMME

Once you've done your research on the type of LMS to implement, and you've decided on open-source or proprietary, you will likely come across two further choices on how your training programme will be delivered. Here we explore two options - 'Do it Yourself' or 'Do it For You':



72% of global organisations see Learning Management Systems as a competitive advantage
Source: eLearning Industry

1 OPTION 1 - DIY

If you already have the internal capacity and an experienced team in place to run your training programme in-house, you have the option to ‘do it yourself’. This could all be delivered on either a proprietary, open-source or cloud-based LMS, but your internal team would complete the ongoing administration and management.



Pros

- By keeping everything under one roof, you have full control over your training programme.



Cons

- Everything must be done internally, including, ongoing maintenance, course management, course creation, and reporting.
- This can often lead to a slower turnaround time which will impact speed to market.
- Even if you have an internal team with capacity, which seems like the most cost-effective option, the amount of time it takes to effectively administer and manage your programme shouldn't be underestimated.

Summary

By taking everything in-house, you retain control of your programme and can continually tailor and customise your solution. However, the ongoing maintenance, management and administration should not be overlooked and must be thoroughly researched and planned for in advance, and the costs factored into the budget.



*IBM noticed a return of \$30 for every \$1 spent on eLearning.
Source: eLearning Industry*

2 OPTION 2 - DFY

A fully managed service, or 'do it for you', allows you to focus on your core business, while the chosen vendor maximises your investment and optimises your programme. They should take care of all the ongoing administration, management, eCommerce, maintenance, and learner and user support.



Pros

- If you don't have an internal team in place, the budget available to employ new personnel, or are not looking to recruit due to the hassle factor, this option ensures your training programme is continually delivered successfully.
- The vendor should work as an extension of your team to offer a seamless experience for all users and learners alike.



Cons

- Relinquishing control of your training programme could lead to failure if you choose the wrong vendor.
- It's crucial to ensure your chosen vendor guarantees response times and most importantly, works in partnership with you.

Summary

Allowing a professional, highly experienced external team to support your training programme, and accompanying LMS, will give you and your team the chance to concentrate on the launch and core objectives while being confident that your training programme is in safe hands.

THE COST OF A GOOD LMS

Now, let's talk budget!

As you can imagine, budget requirements vary hugely depending on the depth and breadth of your programme. There are however some important things to be aware of when considering the cost.

In general, Human Resources departments hold the purse strings when it comes to training, and their training budget is usually earmarked for internal use.

Your next challenge is justifying the additional budget needs to the senior management team. You need to get buy-in from the right stakeholders.

To do this you must be able to communicate how a training programme will increase the effectiveness of the channel and if done correctly, will boost growth and increase revenue.

You should also discuss eCommerce capabilities and the option to sell your training so the programme can pay for itself or even turn a profit.

Your HR department will likely be reluctant to allocate budget or resource for external training, regardless of the overall benefits. The same can be said for sales teams who don't yet understand the benefits of external training and how it can positively impact revenue.

WHAT'S NEXT?

As well as the initial outlay, it's crucial to consider:

- **Ongoing management costs** - how will you administer and manage it?
- **Internal resource requirements** - do you need a team in place for this to work?
- **Implementation costs** - what impact will implementation have on your day-to-day business.
- **Onboarding requirements** - who needs to learn what about the new system?
- **Learning content production** - how will you design and implement your training courses?
- **Ongoing maintenance and support costs** - how will you maintain your LMS and offer the necessary support to users and learners?



THE FOUR MOST COMMON LMS PRICING MODELS



Subscription

This model is based on a monthly fee for each active user. Usually, the vendor will offer pricing brackets. If you are a smaller organisation that wants to minimise monthly outgoings but keep the ability to grow, this is the most sensible option.



Licensing

Typically this model involves an annual fee that is reviewed and reviewed on an annual basis or an upfront fee for the life of the contract. With this option, you are likely to have to upgrade software as and when there are technological advances.



Freemium

This option offers free basic features but costs will increase as more advanced features are used. Although it's an option to use this type of model, it does make it hard to budget for overall costs.



Perpetual Licence

Like the licensing model, this is based on a fee paid when you buy the software. There are no fees or subscriptions to think about, however, it does not account for software upgrades in line with advances in technology.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT LMS FOR YOU

Every organisation has its own set of unique requirements. To make the right decision on which LMS to implement, you need to set out what your organisation's overall training programme goals are.

- Ensure you **review your current requirements** and more importantly your future plans. Choosing an LMS with a high level of flexibility is key here.
- As well as organisational goals, it's important to take into account your **audience's requirements**. Talk to them, ask them what type of training they need, and what would be valuable to them.
- Never underestimate the importance of planning and **fine-tuning your requirements**. When an investment is made without these considerations, adoption rates can be low, and ongoing management resource and cost is often overlooked.

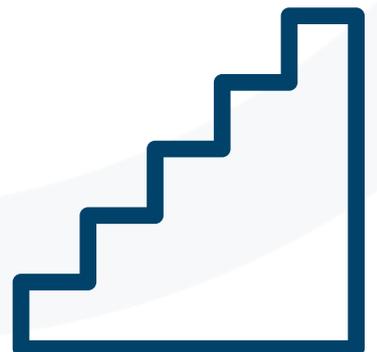
If you get it right, you will benefit from accelerated product adoption and onboarding, reduced support costs, increased customer satisfaction, and a competitive advantage. All of which leads to a boost in sales and increasing market share.

Your customers or partners will also see the business benefits of partnering with an organisation with aligned goals and one that cares about their success.



KEY STEPS TO TAKE WHEN CHOOSING YOUR LMS

- 1** Plan/define your objectives and understand training programme goals.
- 2** Keep an idea of required integrations in mind.
- 3** Understand how your organisation can benefit from the right LMS choice.
- 4** Do a training needs analysis.
- 5** Ask all stakeholders involved how they like to learn.
- 6** Think about the future, will your LMS grow with you?
- 7** Look at your internal resource to find out whether there are any gaps.
- 8** Consider budget and where it will come from.



HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR LMS

To get the best results from your LMS and training programme, it's important to:

Plan and Launch

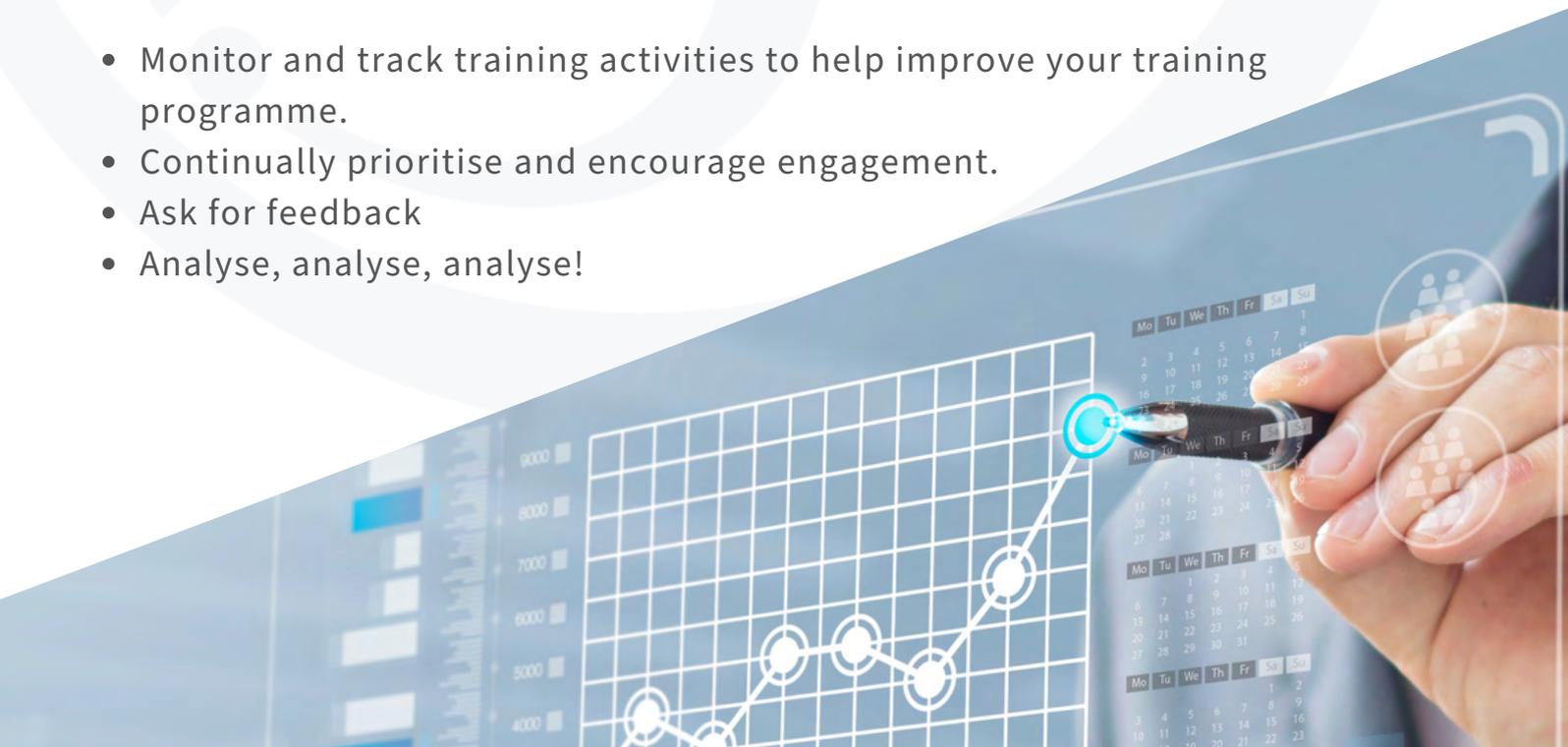
- Take your time to plan your training programme.
- Have a launch plan in place - make sure everyone knows about it!
- Begin with a pleasant onboarding experience.
- Offer system training so learners know how to utilise its features and understand the benefits.

Utilise Relevant Features

- Offer learning incentives through the use of gamification.
- Enable the use of tailored learning paths for each audience.
- Incorporate both in-person and online training to start with.
- Make use of eCommerce functionality to build a revenue-generating programme.
- Set up certification and badging schemes to help measure performance and segment partners.

Keep Track

- Monitor and track training activities to help improve your training programme.
- Continually prioritise and encourage engagement.
- Ask for feedback
- Analyse, analyse, analyse!



SUMMARY

Training is key for business development and the improvement of your selling ecosystem.

Your training programme leverages your expertise, knowledge, and experience to deliver a comprehensive range of learning resources.

From our years of experience, we have created a suite of solutions to allow you to run a successful training programme with no internal resource needed. We empower organisations to deliver high-quality engaging training and we do this through the use of our innovative Learning Management System and unique management and support services.



We become your partner in training, and we specialise in delivering partner training programmes and can help build your programme effectively and cost-efficiently.

The entire process is managed by us, leaving you to focus on your core business while we take care of your training.

Talk to one of our team about how we help organisations like yours develop, deploy, and manage successful online training programmes.

BOOK NOW