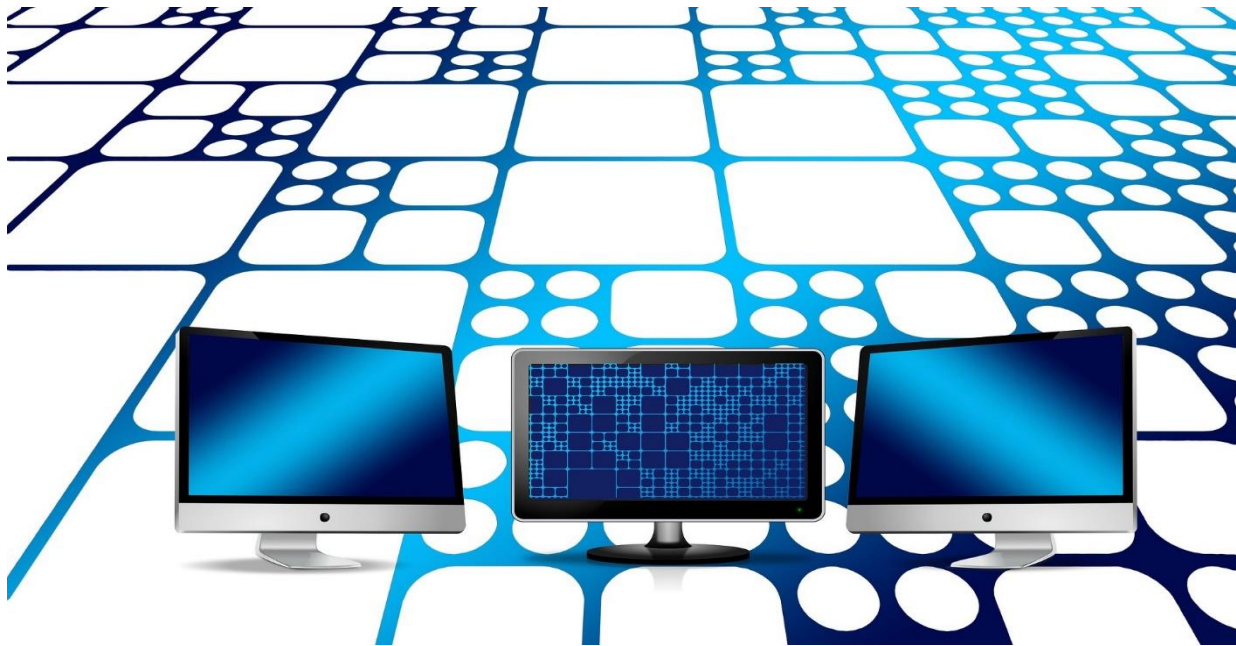# Best Practices Guide to LMS Implementation

Avilar Technologies, Inc. | 6760 Alexander Bell Drive, Suite 105 | Columbia, MD 21046 | (888) 759-7053 | www.avilar.com

By now, you are probably aware of the benefits that both a competency-based training program and a Learning Management System (LMS) can provide to your organization. And you may have even started planning. Just be sure that the implementation piece is as well-supported as the planning piece. With these LMS implementation best practices, your organization will be on its way to gaining new skills as well as boosting its value within your industry.

Why Implement a Learning Management System?

For organizations that want to build their workforce's skills, strengthen their core competencies and gain new ones, implementing a Learning Management System is the best way to roll out a company-wide initiative.

Make a Project Plan

Prior to adding a LMS, it's important to plan out a strategic competency-based development plan. By creating a project plan that establishes development needs, learning objectives and delegating tasks, you'll be sure to have a guide for success.

Establish Learning Objectives and Measurements for Success

If you don't currently have any kind of continued learning initiatives in place, it might be difficult to know each staff member's current skill set, which in turn, makes it hard to know how your company needs to improve as a whole. Before deciding on which platform to use, consider doing some competency-based assessments to better understand where your workforce is in terms of skills.

It's also essential to establish how you'll measure success. Will your success mean roll-out, adoption and follow-through from one part of the company, half of the company, or the entire company? Are your goals short-term or long-term? How quickly will you expect your workforce

to gain new skills and are your goals realistic? These are all critical questions to answer prior to deciding on a new eLearning platform and this exercise should be part of your overall project plan.

Strategic planning can be hard work. Take a breath, because now the real work begins. It's time to articulate the results for which the organization will hold itself accountable — along with the actions it will take to get there. Now your plan can begin to have impact. This is often where teams stumble, so be sure the Implementation phase is just as strong.

Assemble an Integration Team

Implementing an eLearning solution isn't going to happen overnight. You need to plan and strategize to establish the big picture and you'll need dedicated staff members who will take that on and champion it.

In order to have a successful LMS integration, it's key to assemble a team of people who can work together to establish a timeline and goals, delegate tasks and begin to integrate all aspects of your new eLearning system into "business as usual." In addition to rallying an "integration team," you'll also need buy-in from upper management who will take the plan and run with it to meet the milestones your team has mapped out.

Choose the Right Type of Platform: Academic LMS vs. Corporate LMS

Depending on your organization's specific needs, it's appropriate to weigh the pros and cons to decide which platform is right for you. Not all LMS platforms are right for every kind of learning environment. Before you begin compiling lists of learning management systems for comparison, remember to clarify what's included in an academic LMS compared to an eLearning solution geared toward a corporate environment.

While both academic and corporate eLearning platforms allow users to gain access to courses at their own pace, the structure of the courses may differ between the two. Academic courses may have a larger load per course and users may be expected to complete lessons in a shorter amount of time. An LMS geared more toward a corporate environment might have courses segmented into shorter lessons without constricting completion date requirements. This type of LMS structure lends itself well to those who are full-time employees with little time to spend on each lesson.

Understand the Features You'll Require

Once the type of LMS you want to use is established, it's important to do some research and understand the features that are needed by your organization. Several key questions you'll want to ask are:

- Should the LMS be hosted by the provider (accessible online from anywhere) or should it be installed on our company's computers/servers?
- Can the LMS integrate with third parties, existing eLearning Portals and other systems?
- Is the eLearning platform's courseware up-to-date? How often will it be updated?
- Does the platform allow for staff skill tracking and certification management?
- Can you make edits or customizations to courses quickly and easily?
- Are templates available for all courses that my organization requires?
- Is the eLearning platform user friendly?
- Does the platform have good reporting capabilities?
- Will the LMS vendor offer access to service and support?

By answering these questions, you'll be able to narrow down your options and better understand the eLearning platform that's right for you.

Factor in Time for Implementation

Integrating a new LMS can be quick and easy. But if you start adding on new required features, customizations, training, etc. after spending months of planning, the implementation process may be extended. Factor in this additional time and make note of it for your overall timeline. There's nothing like extending a timeline to crush motivation company-wide.

Through these LMS implementation best practices, your organization can begin taking steps to research and choose an eLearning platform with confidence. Find out more about Avilar's WebMentor LMS™, our high-value, easy to integrate eLearning solution. With over 1870 courses in 102 subject areas, Avilar's WebMentor LMS™ has your organization covered.

Custom Content Development

Avilar also offers additional course development services should you require custom content. Our consultants can assist you with everything from instructional design, graphic design, writing/editing, broadcast-quality audio and video production, repurposing instructor-led training and more. To learn more and find out if Avilar's WebMentor LMS™ is right for you, contact us today or visit our website www.avilar.com to schedule a demo.