Does Your LMS Need a Make-Over?
Keeping Up With the Modern Learner

W e know that implementing a Learning Management System (LMS) is essential to rolling out a comprehensive, company-wide learning initiative. An LMS reliably delivers, records and tracks employee learning against a defined set of core competencies.

However, today's learners are different from those for whom the first LMS was created years ago. The workforce today relies on new technologies, prefers a range of learning styles, and engages in learning opportunities beyond the enterprise.

While the LMS is perfectly poised to support learners today and into the future, it will need a shift in focus from enterprise-driven learning to learner-focused experiences to make the leap.

How can your LMS keep up with the times? Here are five learning experience trends to shape the shift for your LMS:

1) Self-Directed Learning

Today's learners are go-getters. Those who grew up in the digital world are constantly connecting with others to share information or fill in the gaps. YouTube has a video answer to nearly every "How do I…?" question that arises.

Smartphones deliver restaurant reviews, directions to anywhere and 24/7 shopping experiences – at the push of a button. Personal assistant apps like Siri remain diligent to each and every information request. In our impulsive, "instant everything" world, learners are self-directed, seeking and expecting immediate answers to their questions.

Your LMS, then, needs to be an accessible, easy-to-query resource for answers to learning questions. Search functions that smartly deliver relevant eLearning training options are a must. Learners expect excellent access to the LMS and mobile-friendly experiences via their laptop, phone or tablet – including for video content.

For your LMS to keep up, be sure it's optimized for the inquisitive, mobile learner.

2) Personalization

As consumers, we're used to personalized web pages. Looking for a good book? Here are suggestions based on your previous purchases. Thinking of buying this sofa? People like you who bought this sofa also purchased that chair to go with it. Ads for recently searched items routinely appear on other web pages. Today's learners expect that the sites they visit know who they are and what they like.

While most LMSs aren't yet at that level of personalization for learners, we're on our way. In the meantime, your LMS can do some things to reassure learners that they are recognized.

When they log into the LMS, does the page display a dashboard showing progress for learning requirements? Is there a list of completed training or badges to recognize learning milestones? Are there any suggested courses based on skills gaps? Every step an LMS takes to acknowledge an individual learner's accomplishments, goals, and preferences is a step in the right direction.

3) Content Curation

This is a big one. Enterprise learning programs are generally very good at building and procuring content that helps to maximize its workforce talent potential. However, there is tremendous learning content that exists beyond traditional learning libraries.

Gone are the days when your content developers must (or should!) create all learning content from scratch. We're seeing a shift now, toward content curation.

How well does your organization pull in some of the less structured, user-focused eLearning content that's available in the real world? Blogs, news articles, white papers, videos, forums, and more. This rich "library" is enormous and can quickly supplement or be incorporated into custom content to deliver a modern, holistic learning experience to your workforce.

4) User-Created Content

Though similar to curated content, this specifically refers to content created *by* learners *for* learners. Today's employees routinely collaborate across geographies and time zones to achieve project success. Subject matter experts frequently share nuggets of information to advance a project, informally infusing knowledge into the team and individuals involved.

How easy is it for your subject matter experts to share their knowledge with a wider audience? Is there a process and culture to support user-created content? How can your LMS incorporate that expertise into the course catalog – so more people have access to this information and more people get "credit" for learning the information? Enabling learners to become credentialed contributors is a win-win-win.

5) Real-Time Assessments, AR and VR

Measuring what employees learn – and how they apply that knowledge in their work – is an essential element of any successful competency-based assessment.

What's different for today's learners is an impatience with stand-alone assessments conducted at the conclusion of a learning module, just when they feel as though the learning experience should be over.

Instead, today's active learners want continual feedback, woven into the learning experience. "What would you do?" scenarios built into content, for example, help employees transfer what they're learning to their work environment.

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are starting to be used for sales training, providing immersive experiences and feedback to hone associates' skills. How does your LMS manage real-time assessments? Does it record learning results, not just initial assessment responses?

For your LMS makeover, place learner-focused experiences at the front of your corporate learning strategy. Start planning now for how your LMS will drive learning that incorporates technology advancements and learning evolutions. Then, your LMS will be on the right track to actively support your learners today and into tomorrow's work environments.

Ready for a make-over?

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