How to Choose an LMS:
The Complete Guide

Choosing the right LMS for your organization is a big deal. If your content is not delivered and absorbed properly, your company can risk being non compliant, left behind market standards and with inefficient processes.

Selecting the right LMS for your training initiative shouldn't be overwhelming, however. We have identified 6 crucial areas to assess when making an LMS purchasing decision, and put them in a step-by-step guide designed to help you identify the right training platform for your specific needs.



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1. Establish Goals and Objectives

The first step in finding the right LMS to fit your unique needs is determining the goals and objectives of your training program. This will help guide you towards the platform that matches the characteristics you need. Consider:

- Why are you looking for an LMS right now?
- Are you looking for an LMS for a specific project or multiple?
- How will the new LMS transform your organization? Will it make you more compliant? Will it cut back on customer support requests?

Avoid vague, unclear and general goals such as:

- Increase sales
- Train employees more frequently
- Reduce training costs

Your e-learning initiative goals should be clear, measurable and achievable. For example:

- Complete and store with easy access 100% of the required compliance related training
- Reduce new hire onboarding from 15 to 5 days
- Reduce customer support inquiries by 40% with the implementation of a customer onboarding program
- Increase sales by 20% by training CSRs to input data more efficiently and use their new found time to upsell and cross-sell

2. Identify Your Audience

Who are you looking to train? Is this a company wide initiative or restricted to a specific department?

Having a sound understanding of who specifically you need to train will help your decision making process. Just like your content, your LMS needs to resonate with your employees. Ask yourself:

- **How old are your employees?**

  Millenials are famous for loving their phones so if your trainees are in that age bracket, a good idea would be to opt for a mobile-responsive platform.

- **What are your trainees' skill levels?**

  If your trainees are not very tech-savvy, this will affect the way they learn and how they use the LMS. You'll want something easy to use and intuitive in order to prevent disengagement.

- **How many employees are you looking to train?**

  If your organization is growing and you're looking to train a large number of employees, you will need an LMS able to scale with your business.

  You may also want to train partners, franchisees and customers. This will require a different approach as they will view your training as optional (unlike your employees who are mandated to complete training) and will only engage with content they feel is worth their time and effort.

3. Determine Essential Features

Features are important but you should never base an LMS purchasing decision on features alone, otherwise you risk paying too much for bells and whistles you will not need.

Carefully assess what features are necessary to achieve your specific goals. For example:

- If your goal is customer onboarding, you will most likely need your LMS to allow branding and customization
- If you need to use an LMS for compliance training, you will need to look for certificate reminders and recurring training features
- Most companies, regardless of size and industry need a few core features:
- **Enterprise grade security**
- **Robust reporting and analytics**
- **Integration with 3rd party applications**
- **Easy user management**
- **Intuitive interface**

4. Select the LMS Type

What LMS system is a better fit for your needs? There are two types you can choose from:

- Cloud, SaaS or Hosted LMS: a web-based LMS. Your data is safely stored in the cloud and your vendor is responsible for maintenance. It takes minimal work to set up and there are no extra upgrade costs for you as the user.You do not need advanced technical skills to setup and use it.
- Deployed or Installed LMS: hosted internally on your company's server. It can be highly customizable, allowing for improvements and edits with the use of add-ons. Maintenance, upgrades and other fees will be your responsibility and if you opt for this route, you will need a very technical individual (and sometimes team) to install it and offer the required support.

5. Evaluate Vendors

(Not to be confused with comparing lists of features side by side)

Think of your LMS provider as your partner. You should evaluate everything that is important to you in your selection process:

- **Testimonials and case studies**: what do others say about the platform? Have they solved problems similar to the ones you are looking to solve? Can you identify use cases that resonate with your projects? How is the vendor interacting with the reviewers?
- **Support**: does the vendor you are evaluating offer customer support? Implementing an LMS is a big undertaking and your team will have questions. Do they offer platform onboarding? Do they connect you with a dedicated account manager? Is phone and email support available?
- **Knowledge base**: does the vendor you are considering have a comprehensive knowledge base page where you can easily access information and answers to product related questions?
- **System uptime**: maintenance and

updates are necessary but how often and how long are they? Make sure the LMS vendor you choose has an uptime of over 99% to not disrupt your initiative. Most LMS platforms have a system status page like SkyPrep's here: https://status.skyprep.com/

- **The company**: your LMS vendor will become your partner for the next few years. Evaluate their company culture, their experience on the market and any awards or recognition they have received.

6. Test Drive

Choosing an LMS is a big step and you will need to see it in action. Ask the prospective vendor to give you a product demo where they will go over the platform, the features most relevant to you, and answers to any questions you will have.

If that is not an option, ask for a free trial in order to get a feel for the platform and how well it integrates with your e-learning projects.

Conclusion

Finding the right LMS to suit your organization is a big deal but it doesn't have to be a complicated one. If you still have questions about choosing the right training platform for your e-learning projects get in touch with one of our team members and they will be delighted to guide you through the process: http://demo.skyprep.com

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