

Cloud-Based Learning Solutions

Making the Right Choice for Your Enterprise



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Introduction

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Learning is a *business* process, but for a very long time it has operated inefficiently. The time to take advantage of the benefits that technology-based learning can provide is *now*. Other business functions have figured out how to exploit the natural benefits of technology for many years. Imagine a marketing department that didn't maximize the use of electronic media to reach its audience, track clicks on websites to identify high-interest electronic real estate or use search optimization in their demand-generation strategies. Imagine an organization's operational processes without supply-chain intelligence, production automation or instant-delivery tracking software.

The reality is that the inherent advantages of technology have not been fully exploited within key HR

functions, especially in learning. When technology is applied to how an organization learns, it can scale farther, decrease costs and drive a much more productive and agile workforce. It truly unleashes the potential within human capital, unquestionably the most expensive and important type of capital within any organization. Now is the time for learning functions to truly run like any other business process.

When the right learning is embedded in an organization, it has the capacity to make deep and positive business impact; to spur innovation; to raise the bottom line and reduce turnover; to increase engagement and lessen inefficiencies. The right learning fuels behavioral change, greater outcomes and organizational agility. In essence, the right learning

program will grow individuals who in turn, will grow their organization.

2X

The world's information is doubling every two years.¹

50X

By 2020, in the course of a single decade, the world will generate 50 times the amount of information that exists.²

50B

By 2020, there will be 50 billion devices connected to the internet.³

The pace of change is accelerating at an exponential rate, yet the information overload causes frustration, lost time and stagnant business performance.

How is your organization helping employees weed through information clutter to get *what they need when they need it*?

¹ Extracting Value from Chaos by John Gantz and David Reinsel. IDC View, June 2011.

² Extracting Value from Chaos by John Gantz and David Reinsel. IDC View, June 2011.

³ The Internet of Things How the Next Evolution of the Internet Is Changing Everything by Dave Evans. Cisco, 2011.

Introduction

Why read this?

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Why read this?

We have compiled all the relevant information needed to understand the types and benefits of learning programs within an organization; how to influence stakeholders; how to build a business case; how to select the right partner and much more. This is a convenient, all-encompassing guide to help you navigate the path to bring a learning program to your organization and ultimately, behavioral change resulting in improved outcomes for individuals and the organization. Educate yourself, share with others in your organization and lead them to an informed decision.

Who should read this?

If you can initiate change and garner purchase agreement; if you are responsible for researching, purchasing and/or influencing colleagues on an effective, affordable learning program, this is for you. Specifically, if you are a manager, CLO or work in departments such as procurement, IT, HR or L&D and are looking for an effective, affordable learning solution to drive business impact in your department or organization, this is for you. You may be someone who is trying to scale learning across a global organization, cut costs with your current learning programs or want to affect the bottom line of your organization with improved efficiencies and business outcomes.

Learning is experiencing a powerful transformation. No longer limited to instructor-led events and static eLearning, technology has enabled a dynamic mix of interactive experiences where individuals can learn at their own pace and get the information they need, exactly when they need it. This provides new horizons for business performance for organizations willing to invest in learning technology to empower their employees.

Mike Cooke
Chairman and CEO, Brandon Hall Group



Section 1

Why cloud-based learning?



Section 1

What is cloud-based learning?

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To best answer this question, we should explore a number of terms that have similar connotations in the learning industry:

- **Classroom-based training:** This is the traditional desk-and-chair environment that takes place in a physical location. It falls under event-based learning.
- **Elearning:** Short for “electronic learning,” it’s learning that can be accessed synchronously (at the same time as others, also called event-based learning) or asynchronously (at a different time than others) via electronic means.
- **Instructor-led training (ILT):** Similar to classroom-based training, this training is led by an instructor and typically takes place in a physical classroom. It falls under event-based learning.
- **Massive Open Online Course (MOOC):** MOOCs are free, lecture-based courses designed to enroll tens of thousands of learners and have concrete start and end dates (about 6-12 weeks in length).
- **Online learning:** This term is interchangeable with “elearning.”
- **Technology-enabled learning:** Any type of learning that requires technology such as learning that is accessed via tablets, computers, smartphones, portals, etc.
- **Web-based training (WBT):** Any type of training that is accessed via the internet on a computer.
- **Virtual ILT:** Traditional classroom-based, or instructor-led training that is available online, synchronously. It falls under event-based learning.
- **Cloud-based learning:** Online learning, or elearning, that is available in the cloud; meaning that resources are stored in a virtual environment, accessed from various forms of web-enabled devices.

Some people use these above terms interchangeably. In taking the terminology one step further, there is a recently coined term called cloud-based learning.

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Whitepaper:
***Learning in the Cloud:
10 Factors to Consider***

www.skillssoft.com/LearnCloud

Section 1

Features of common learning types



There are many different types of learning modalities as mentioned earlier in this section - each with its own advantages and disadvantages. This handy chart compares the main modalities across several key features.

| | Cloud-based learning | Classroom-based learning | Virtual classroom learning | Internally developed elearning |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Cost-efficient | X | | X | |
| Portable | X | | | X |
| Low carbon footprint | X | | X | X |
| Curated | X | X | X | X |
| Variety of learning modalities | X | | | |
| Embedded into daily workflow | X | | | X |
| Enterprise-scalable | X | | | |
| Quickly deployed | X | | | |
| Aligned to business objectives | X | X | X | X |
| Automatically maintained | X | | | |

Buyers beware

Free assets online are often:

NOT guaranteed

NOT curated

NOT maintained

NOT aligned

NOT embedded in workflow

NOT held to quality standards

Section 1

Common benefits of elearning

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Elearning offers a wide-range of benefits to organizations. Chief among these is the ability to reach more people at more points in time resulting in the increased transfer of learning to job performance. In addition, organizations tend to save time and money with an elearning investment.

IDC⁴ states that knowledge workers spend approximately 30% of their time searching for data to bridge knowledge and skill gaps, yet about half of that time is wasted because the tools available aren't able to adequately bridge those gaps. The quantitative savings obtained from the reduction in expenses, either actual or forecasted, usually offset the initial costs involved in bringing elearning into an organization. The qualitative results provide an increased focus on work processes, customers and overall productivity.

Benefits of elearning

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Increase sales | 10. Accelerate productivity |
| 2. Increase customer service | 11. Increase agility & flexibility |
| 3. Increase quality | 12. Increase content deployment |
| 4. Increase output | 13. Increase availability |
| 5. Reduce travel time & costs | 14. Shorten development cycles |
| 6. Reduce employee turnover | 15. Increase onboarding content |
| 7. Reduce lawsuits | 16. Recruit better employees |
| 8. Reduce time away from work | 17. Retain high-potential employees |
| 9. Reduce scrap learning rate | |

⁴ The High Cost of Not Finding Information by Susan Feldman and Chris Sherman. IDC, July 2001.

Section 1

Myth: Event-based learning is sufficient as a stand-alone learning program offering

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Truth: Continuous learning heightens skill transfer to the job

Event-based learning programs are those that have a general start and end date or time such as instructor-led training (ILT) and workshops. More often than not, industry leaders question whether these event-based learning programs are sticking and creating desired behavior changes. Event-based programs certainly are not scalable. With the rapid need for skill development and transfer, organizations need learning solutions with enterprise-wide scalability.

We've all experienced it. We go to a great class or conference. We get a ton of incredible information. We get motivated and charged up about everything we learned. Then, we get back to our job,

get sidetracked with day-to-day responsibilities and don't take the necessary opportunity to reinforce what we learned while we were away. And because of that, we forget.

The Forgetting Curve (see page 10) shows us that most of what we learned is lost very quickly – that includes the investment we made when sending employees away for training events.

Because of this, learning should not be viewed as an independent event; rather, learning should be infused in the day-to-day and available anywhere and everywhere employees need it. Leading organizations embrace a continuous learning model where employees have access to a constant flow of succinct on-demand resources to support their development.

Companies can face obstacles by being too event-centric and by not addressing the skill gap challenges posed by the talent crisis. Learner expectations have shifted and most organizations have not adapted appropriately or with enough speed to accommodate the pace of change in the world around them.

Watch Now



Learn how an organization converted one ILT course to an elearning course and saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in doing so.

www.skillssoft.com/Areva

Section 1

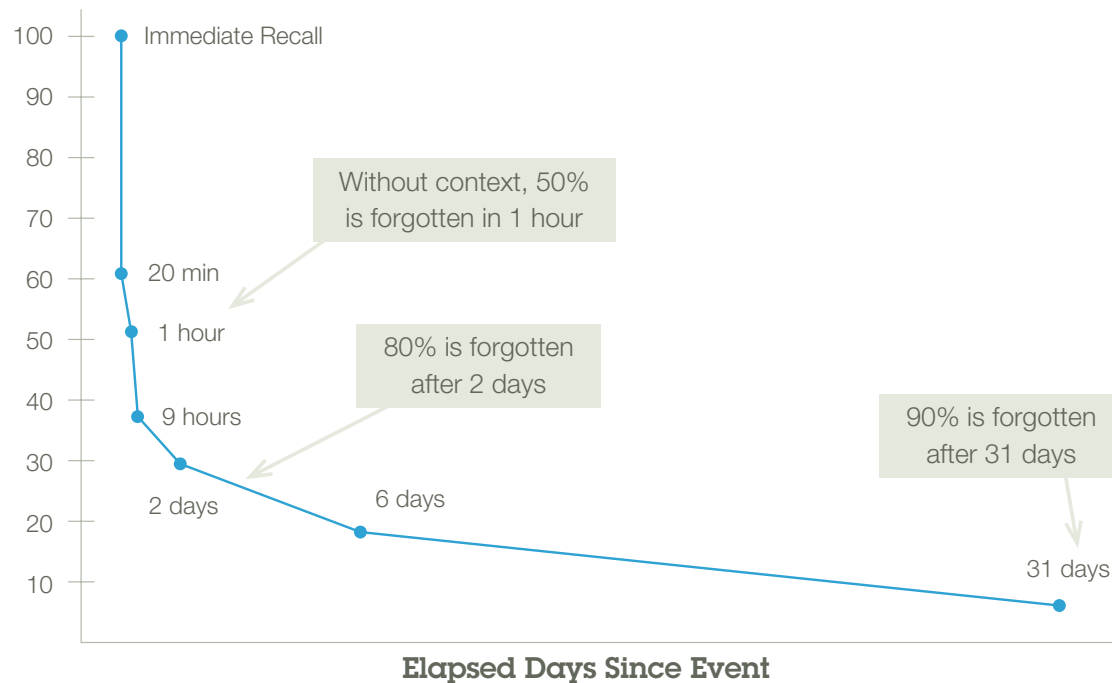
Myth: Event-based learning is sufficient as a stand-alone learning program offering

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The Forgetting Curve

Retention (%)



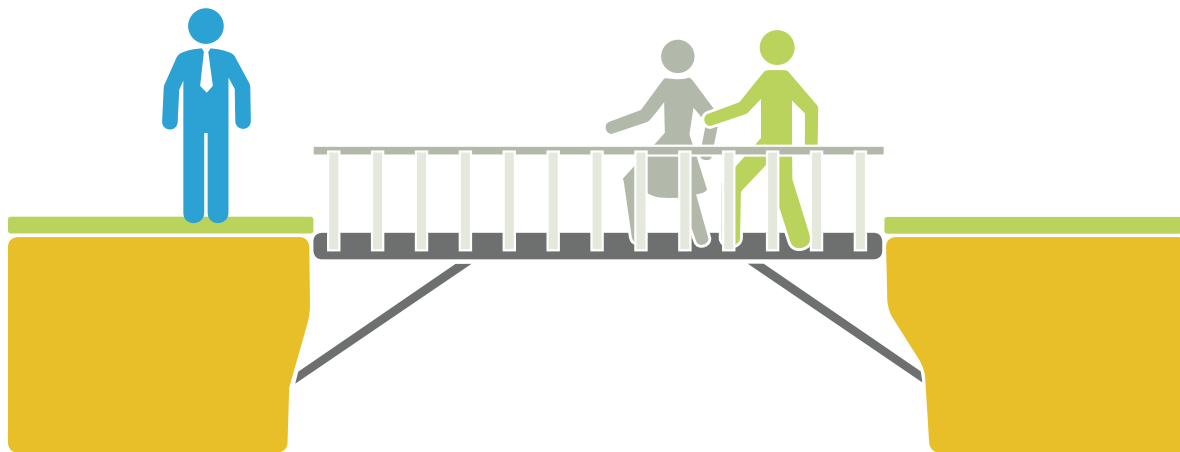
This graph is available as part of a downloadable business case template on page 43.

⁵ Memory: Contribution to Experimental Psychology by Herman Ebbinghaus. 1885/1913.

Section 1

Myth: Yes, we have skills gaps, but it's not that serious of an issue.

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Whitepaper:
***Challenge the Status Quo
with a Smarter Approach to
the Global Talent Crisis***

www.skillsoft.com/TalentCrisis

Truth: There is a global talent crisis and most HR leaders are underprepared.

By 2020, the global labor market faces a shortage of 38-40 million college-educated workers and 45 million secondary educated workers⁶. According to the PWC⁷ 17th Annual Global CEO Survey, 63% of CEOs are concerned about the availability of key skills. In that

same report, we learn that 50% of CEOs plan to increase headcount over the next 12 months. Despite many HR leaders thinking that the talent gap is not a serious problem, it truly is.

How do you know what skills your employees have, which ones they need and where the gap exists? Defining the skills they already have versus the skills they need is the first step to surviving the

talent crisis. Offering a culture of continuous learning aligned to goals and closing those gaps is the next.

The good news for HR functions is the emphasis being put on securing and keeping good talent. According to *The 2020 Workplace*,⁸ “the increased focus on talent is making the human resources function within organizations more integral to an organization’s success.”

⁶ The world at work: Jobs, pay, and skills for 3.5 billion people by Richard Dobbs, Anu Madgavkar, Dominic Barton, Eric Labaye, James Manyika, Charles Roxburgh, Susan Lund, Siddharth Madhav. McKinsey Global Institute, June 2012.

⁷ 17th Annual Global CEO Survey. PwC, 2014.

⁸ The 2020 Workplace: How innovative companies attract, develop, and keep tomorrow's employees today by Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd. Harper Business, 2010.

Section 1

Myth: A single LMS/TMS is the be-all-end-all solution

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Truth: More than one system may be needed to achieve your desired results

While many strive to have a single, unified platforms, be it a Learning Management System (LMS) or a Talent Management System (TMS), the reality is that most organizations need multiple tools and platforms to achieve integrated talent management. One platform can't be good at everything.

Consider how the learning landscape is changing with the adoption of social, mobile, generational learning and emerging technologies. Learning is becoming more interactive and often relies on a sophisticated platform to serve it up. A contextual and engaging user experience is expected but often requires the blending of corporate

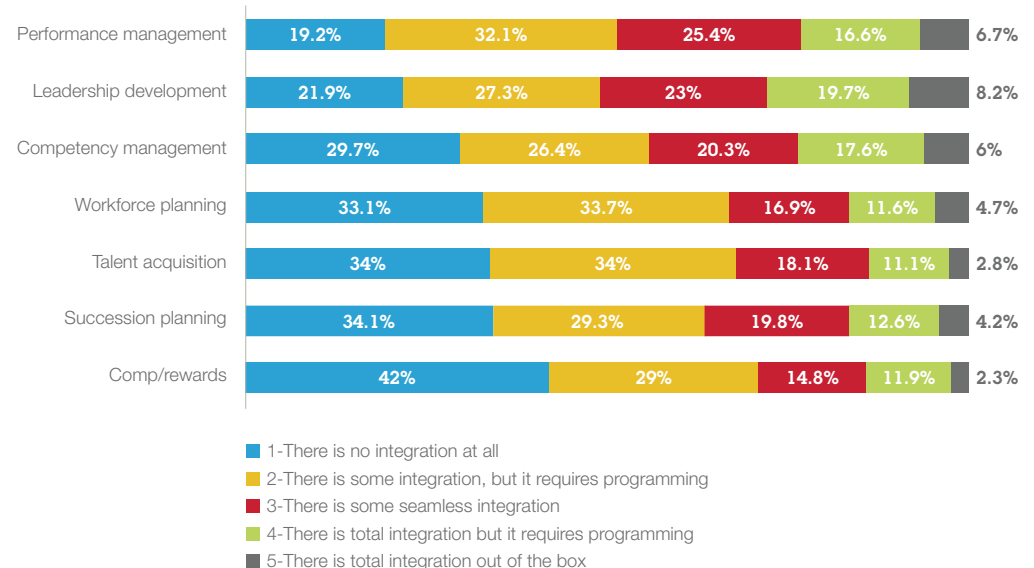
portals, enterprise applications, learning portals and more. As a result, Brandon Hall Group shares that the third most important requirement for an organization's LMS is its ability to integrate with enterprise applications.⁹

If you aren't leveraging multiple platforms, you may be making unnecessary compromises and the end-user experience could be suffering.

The cost of a new LMS solution is approximately two to three times the cost of maintaining a current solution.⁹

Integration Between Learning and Talent Management Elements¹⁰

How much integration exists between learning and the following talent management elements?



⁹ The Race to Replace: Results from the 2012 LMS Trends Survey by David Wentworth. Brandon Hall Group, December 2012.

¹⁰ Integration Between Learning and Talent Management Elements. Brandon Hall Group State of Learning and Development, 2014. Used with permission.

Section 1

Trend: Mobile learning

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With smartphones and tablets becoming more and more commonplace in enterprise environments, the interest in mobile learning is heating up. Many organizations see the promise of mobile learning; is now the time to take the plunge into mobile learning or should you wait for a more stable mobile landscape to emerge? It's important for organizations to focus on some basic issues before making this important decision.

The evolution of the mobile market will play a key role in whether you decide to move forward with building content geared specifically around a single device (such as the iPad) or if you want to take a more flexible approach. The devices you support may be largely dictated by your organization's IT decisions, including whether they will purchase tablet devices for employees, or

their level of support for Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). Today the trick for content providers and consumers is to "future-proof" their mobile-learning strategy which means including options for new developments and devices in the rapidly changing mobile market.

5 questions to ask when developing a mobile learning strategy

1. What does "mobile" mean?
2. What problem are you trying to solve?
3. What devices will you support?
4. Do you have the necessary organizational support?
5. How does it fit into your existing learning strategy and ecosystem?

Download Now

Download the full white paper to learn more, ***Five Calls to Make When Developing a Mobile Learning Strategy.***

www.skillsoft.com/5Calls

Section 1

Trend: Social learning

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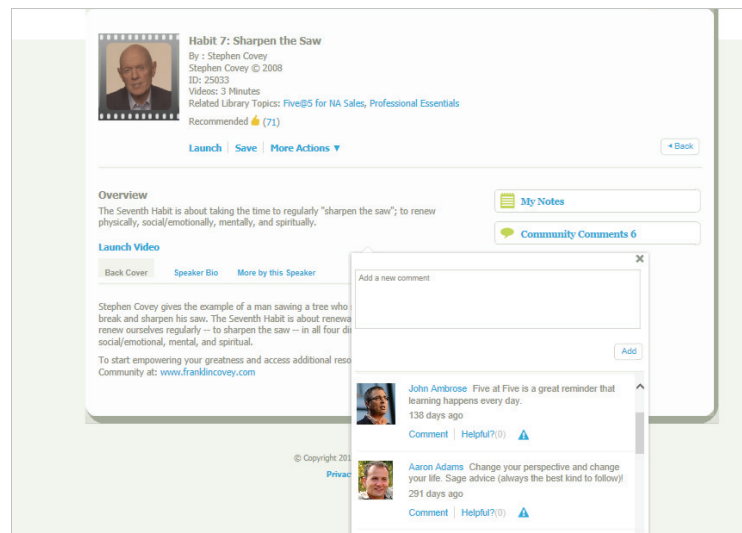


With geographically dispersed workforces and employees perpetually on the go, social media is at the heart of keeping people and teams connected. Facebook has a billion active users and it's no longer a question of whether or not you've heard of it, it's a question of what your last post was about.

Because employees likely have social media behaviors either on the job and/or off the job, the idea of social learning is taking hold. It's important, however, to apply social learning in the right context.

Cloud-based learning naturally lends itself to collaboration via social media. Social learning layers that are built as a feature set within an LMS can enable learners to create public notes and discussions related to online assets, follow colleagues of interest and

view an up-to-date news feed of activities and content generated by other users in their organization.



Social learning enables employees to collaborate and share ideas.

Download Now

Whitepaper:
The Eight Truths of Social Learning. Now.

www.skillssoft.com/8Truths

The 2020 workplace: An organizational environment that provides an intensely personalized, social experience to attract, develop, and engage employees across all generations and geographies.¹¹

¹¹ The 2020 Workplace: How innovative companies attract, develop, and keep tomorrow's employees today by Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd. Harper Business, 2010.

Thought-leader insight

Dan Pontefract

Dan Pontefract is author of FLAT ARMY: Creating a Connected and Engaged Organization and is Chief Envisioner of TELUS Transformation Office where he helps organizations and leaders improve employee engagement, leadership development and organizational culture.

Skillsoft: What does an organization without social learning look like? What COULD it look like?

Dan: The water cooler has been both a figurative and literal location of exchange. So too has the break room, the lunch room, the elevator ... heck, even smokers' alley outside the building. Social learning has always been a part of organizations. It's the exchange of knowledge, intelligence, ideas and feedback through non-formal means. The 'new' social learning — where the utilization of collaborative technologies aid and abet the exchange — is a new must. Why prevent it? Why stop it? An organization without social learning is an organization without its soul ...

without its culture. It's a draconian stance to take, one that ensures disengagement will flourish (an oxymoron, I know) and learning will be trapped in a classroom and LMS forever.

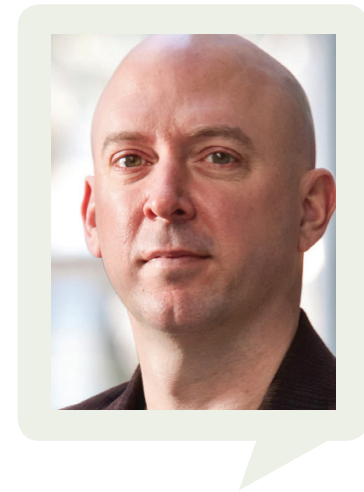
Skillsoft: How would offering social learning benefit employee engagement?

Dan: To make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, one first must start with two pieces of bread. Let's refer to this as formal learning. The peanut butter makes the bread stick together, something I like to refer to as informal learning (e.g., coaching, mentoring, job shadowing, books, etc.). But it's the sweet irony of the jelly that makes the sandwich complete. That sweetness comes in the form of social learning, and it's necessary if one wants an engaged organization and improved operating culture. Social learning not only connects and unites one another in the

exchange of knowledge, content and ideas — through collaborative technologies — it breaks down the barriers of hierarchy. Imagine a Senior Vice President who begins a weekly internal blog, discussing important "executive" topics with her team or the organization, while using it as a platform to solicit feedback and ideas on said topics. How is that not a good way in which to both learn and increase employee engagement at the same time?

Skillsoft: Is mobile or social the next hot thing for organizations to offer employees as part of a learning program? Why?

Dan: I read with disdain a recent report from Proskauer entitled *Social Media in the Workplace Global Study*. They found 36% of employers actively block access to such external social media sites, compared to 29% in 2012 and 43% of businesses permit all of their



employees to access social media sites, which is actually a fall of 10%. This is not a good trend. Social, mobile wearables and whatever is next are part of our human condition. We invent to survive. We ideate to thrive. We create to exist. Everything is the next hot thing for organizations to offer employees as part of a learning program. It's not limited to social or mobile. A true learning organization should be listening to its employees (as well as industry) to determine how these new forms of technologies (and ideas) can assist the employee to become better engaged, better educated to, in turn, perform better in their role for purposes of the customer they serve.

Section 1

Should you build or buy?

Share On



As a general rule of thumb, half of all learning within any organization is generic, meaning that the same general content and learning objectives apply across the industry, while the remaining half is unique to the personality of that organization and needs to be custom-developed either internally or externally.

For learning assets that need to be created, the options include customizing off-the-shelf learning and building. So, how do you know when to buy and when to build?

- **Buy** everything that is general knowledge not specific to your organization such as the following: industry certifications like the PMI® Certification Program; technology certifications from Microsoft®, Oracle®, Cisco®, CompTIA®, etc.; desktop applications; and standard business practices

like time management, leading teams, productivity, etc.

- **Buy and customize** off-the-shelf content for instances in which your organization requires specific branding, examples or content alignment.
- **Build** only when you need company-specific content (such as a specialized internal procedure, company proprietary information, training on custom/proprietary software applications).

Watch Now



Hear how Hitachi made the decision to build or buy.

www.skillsoft.com/Hitachi

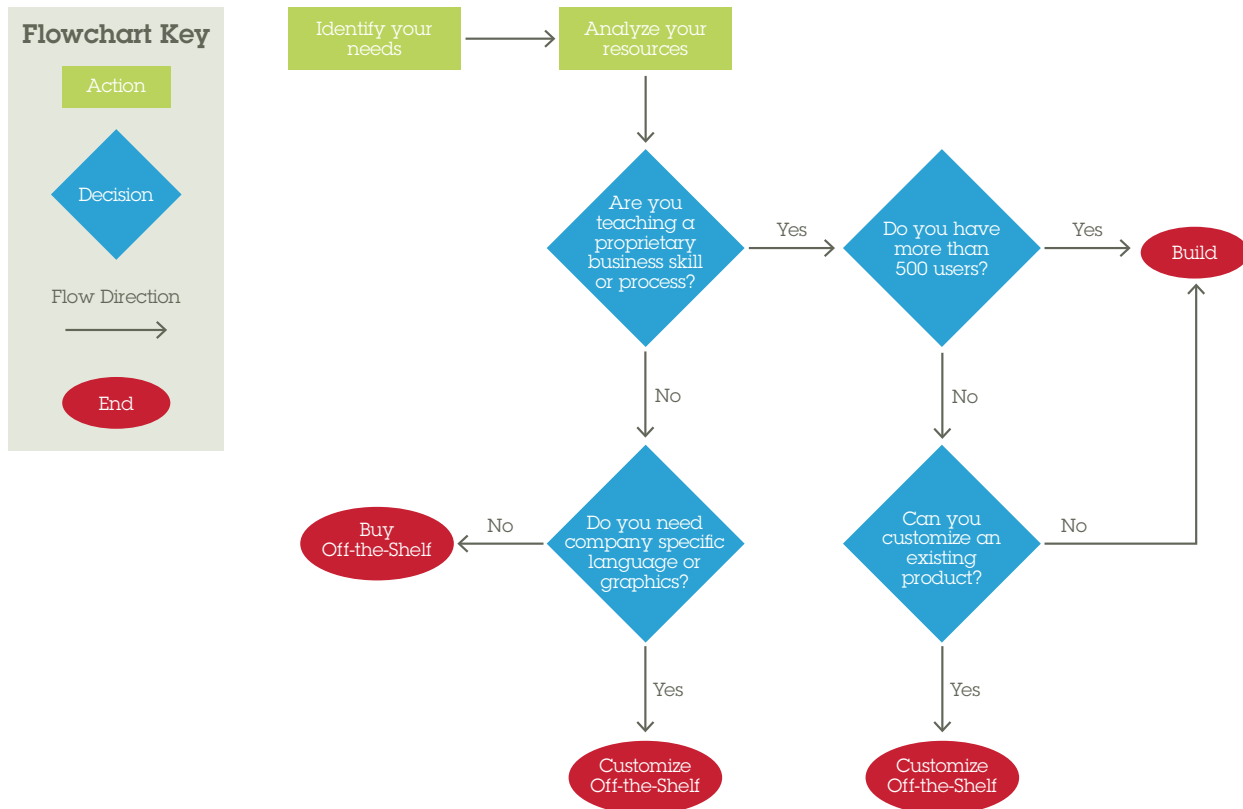
Section 1

Should you build or buy?

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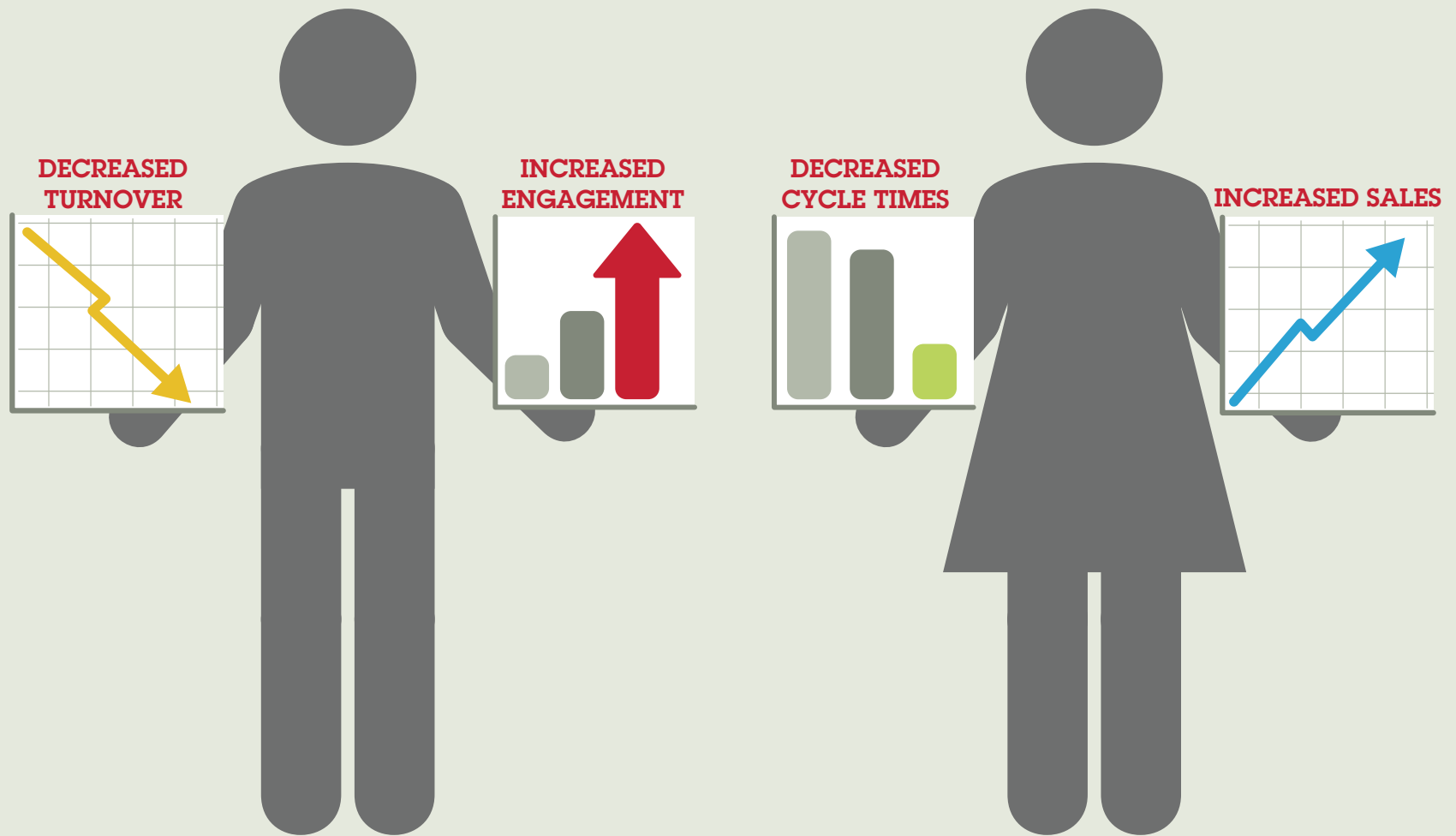
Buy Versus Build Flowchart¹²



¹² "Buy versus build" flowchart, *Learning Circuits* by Laura Francis. January 2002
Reprinted with permission of the American Society for Training and Development.

Section 2

What cloud-based learning success looks like



Section 2

What cloud-based learning success looks like

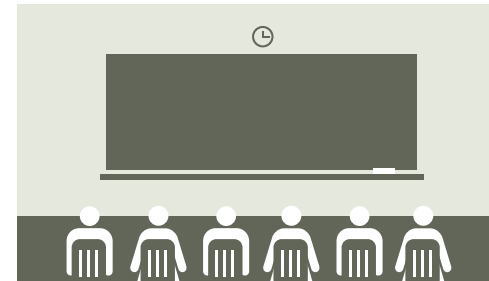
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As in all parts of a healthy enterprise, success is no accident. New products are not put into the market in the hope that someone will buy them because they exist. Improved operations and cost structures are not achieved by simply putting new technologies or controls in place. Success is created through intentional leadership, making the right tools and resources accessible and putting defined business processes in place to deliver real-time information to the workforce, so employees can solve business problems and achieve results.

Real breakthroughs in performance are realized only when organizations move away from a “usage equals value” mindset to an operating model that perpetually promotes continuous learning through effective engagement and tight

alignment. This leads to adoption of tools enabling employees to deliver an added value to the enterprise. Online solutions are ripe for delivering this type of value; value grounded in efficiency and effectiveness leading the tangible business outcomes.



Usage alone \neq Value



Business outcomes = Value

Section 2

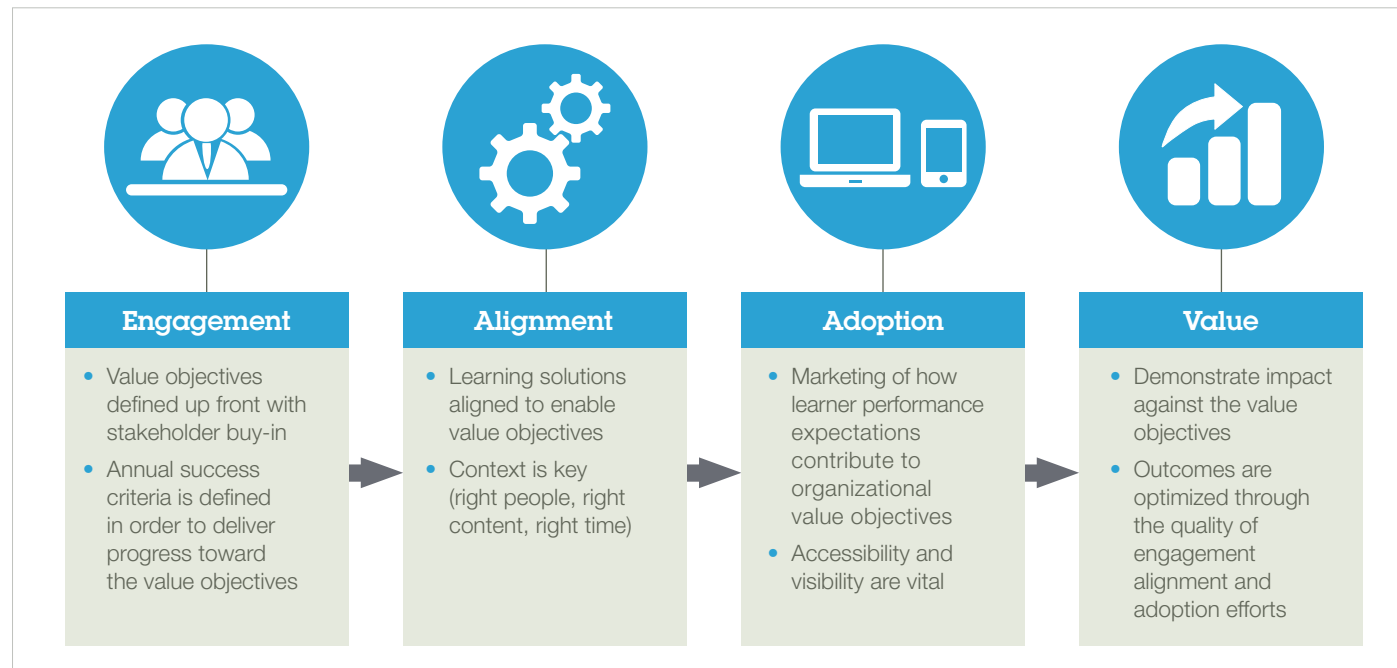
The four building blocks to success

Share On



The most successful companies using elearning apply a complete operating model covering four essential building blocks.

1. Engagement
2. Alignment
3. Adoption
4. Value



Section 2

Engagement

Share On



Successful engagement begins with committed leaders setting the direction and tone.

- Value objectives defined up front with stakeholder buy-in
- Active sponsorship of executives/stakeholders
- Regular strategy sessions to ensure alignment to critical organizational priorities
- Annual success criteria defined and monitored ongoing to deliver progress toward the value objectives
- Continuous improvement is top of mind

Best-in-class have executive/management sponsorship¹³

84% manage programs with executive support

93% with executive support have goals or success criteria in place

87% commit internal resources

Check It Out →

According to David Vance, author of *The Business of Learning: How to Manage Corporate Training to Improve Your Bottom Line*, “measurement strategy flows from the management strategy.”

[Read Dave's blog post on the topic.](#)

www.skillssoft.com/Measure

¹³ The Skillsoft Impact Analysis, by Laura Rexford. Skillsoft, 2014.

Case study snapshot: Ingersoll Rand

Enhancing a learning culture through focused objectives



Challenge

- Improve processes
- Improve blended learning solutions
- Improve internal program marketing
- Implement competency mapping
- Impact business through strategic initiatives



Solution

- Work with Skillsoft to improve content offerings
- Utilize Skillsoft services for competency mapping



Results

- Promote and link learning content through LMS ads
- Develop search and feedback programs that raised learning awareness
- Higher employee engagement and course completion statistics
- Improved awareness of content availability throughout the organization
- A learning culture driven by employees and managers
- Development tied back to organizational goals
- Learning initiatives are more targeted and focused in their content

Ingersoll Rand applied the Skillsoft Learning Growth Model to identify areas where its learning programs could better leverage resources to meet critical needs. This resulted in developing strategies that could increase performance and accelerate business results of which, five primary areas of focus were identified.

The university set out to improve the internal communication, implemented a catalog maintenance process and improved the user experience. It also mixed Ingersoll Rand-specific content with Skillsoft professional development resources to create a comprehensive approach to manager training that aligns with their overall strategy.

Skillsoft assisted Ingersoll Rand in mapping content back to learning resources to add relevance and value to the development process that motivates learners and drives engagement.

We have leveraged the resources of IRU and Skillsoft to create a standard for project management development and change our culture for execution excellence.

Manolo Caballer
Director of Engineering Excellence,
Ingersoll Rand

Download Now

Read more in the full
Ingersoll Rand case study

www.skillsoft.com/IR

Section 2

Alignment

Share On



According to the UK-based research organization Towards Maturity¹⁴, seven habits emerge when describing top learning companies exhibiting tight strategic alignment. Well-aligned L&D organizations:

1. Actively involve business leaders in learning decisions
2. Use strategic business objectives to determine learning priorities
3. Focus on the end results
4. Integrate with HR and talent strategy
5. Demonstrate business value
6. Ensure staff members understand their contribution
7. Enjoy proactive management commitment

In its 2013 benchmark study, Towards Maturity¹³ found those organizations scoring well in the Alignment Index are more likely to report that managers in top organizations agree that online learning delivers a range of business benefits. Compared with those in the bottom quartile, those in the top quartile are at least four times more likely to deliver:

- Increased organizational revenue
- Improved productivity
- Improved staff engagement
- Reduced staff turnover
- Decrease in their training costs and delivery time

Watch Now



Hear how Micron aligned its training to goals to increase business performance.

www.skillsoft.com/Micron

Download Now

Read the full Towards Maturity research report: ***Aligning learning to business***

www.skillsoft.com/Align

¹⁴ Aligning learning to business, Towards Maturity In-Focus Report. Towards Maturity, 2014

Case study snapshot: ACTIVE Network

Bento box learning for a global organization



Challenge

- Build a financially viable learning program for a growing workforce.
- Develop talent to fill succession pipeline.
- Implement learning that is consistent and accessible globally.



Results

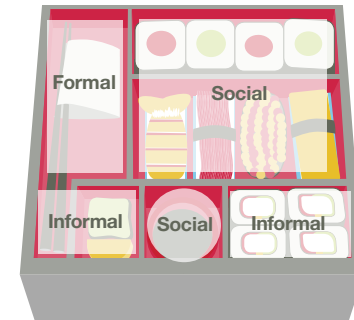
- Higher adoption among employees across the globe.
- Flexible learning program that adapts to needs of employees.
- Effective and easy tracking of learning application.

Due to global expansion and growth, traditional live classroom training was no longer a scalable economic option. The head of the talent development team knew that a blended talent development program with a strong elearning component would be the most effective way to reach a diverse set of learners across geographic locations.

After finding an LMS and elearning content provider, the team soon realized just offering resources wasn't working. The employees had too many choices and they were overwhelmed.

To combat the problem, the team developed short, focused, custom portals they referred to as bento boxes; each containing bite-sized learning assets.

The team piloted the new bento boxes in the creation of the company's high-potential leader program portal and uses the model for any specific skills that need to be developed.



The Bento Box approach to learning.



Solution

- Provide employees with a variety of learning resources.
- Bundle content into targeted learning packages.

Download Now ↓

Read more in the full
ACTIVE Network case study

www.skillssoft.com/ActiveNetwork

Thought-leader insight

David Vance

David is the executive director of the Center for Talent Reporting, an industry-led, nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement and standardization of human capital measurement, reporting and management to deliver significant business value. The Center is the home of Talent Development Reporting principles (TDRp). Prior to launching the Center for Talent Reporting, Dave was Chief Learning Officer at Caterpillar, Inc. where he also served as Chief Economist and Head of the Business Intelligence Group.

A lot of emphasis is placed on learning measurement. That's good, yet it's vital to not lose sight of why we measure. After all, metrics are a means to the end, not an end in themselves. Their purpose lies in the decisions they inform and the story they tell about the value an investment or business unit is contributing to the organization. You not only have to have the right data, but the right approach when compiling and communicating

key metrics. Approach can make or break your efforts to engage stakeholders to build credibility, demonstrate alignment to the business, agree on plans and targets and get credit for the value your team delivers. Fortunately, a consortium of thought-leaders, business leaders and financial experts collaborated to establish a set of principles, standards and defined measures called the Talent Development Reporting principles to guide you so you can run training like a business by measuring, reporting and managing what is really important to your organization. Hundreds of organizations around the world are now using TDRp as their framework to deliver greater business value and demonstrate their value.

TDRp is a defined set of principles providing guidance

for both operational reporting and executive reporting across a number of talent disciplines. For L&D, three foundational statements summarizing efficiency, effectiveness and outcome metrics are recommended. While the approach is standards-based, the statement line items can be tailored to your business or industry as needed providing an essential framework that's flexible. Similar guidance for executive reporting is included as part of TDRp as well, which will help you present meaningful business data in a language and format familiar to executives who do not understand complex L&D terminology and evaluation models.

As you consider elearning and the value it will create in your organization I highly recommend applying the Talent Development



Reporting Principles (TDRp) in your practice. You will easily find efficiency measures worth planning and reporting, and you will also want to report effectiveness measures and your contribution to critical business outcomes.

For more details about the Center for Talent Reporting and the Talent Development Reporting Principles, visit www.centerfortalentreporting.org.

Section 2

Adoption

Share On



How important are completions in an elearning adoption strategy? Well, it depends. In some cases, completions are essential. With compliance training or other mandatory training, completions are typically valuable. Yet, in cases of behavioral or technical skills development the value of completions is quickly eroded.

Adoption success looks like:

- Many individuals consuming elearning repeatedly over time
- Embedding the learning into the workflow
- Actively communicating relevant content options and promoting consumption to individuals and groups
- Highly accessible and visible across the enterprise
- Broad management buy-in

Just as elearning is not measured in the same manner as classroom learning, it's vital to also recognize that they are not consumed in the same manner either. One of the primary attractions to elearning is that it's "just for me," meaning individuals can participate in just the learning related to their unique needs and invest time reviewing only the material that is relevant to their needs. Technology enables this high degree of personal tailoring and allows experienced adults to get what they need and refocus more quickly on the task at hand.

In addition to the idea of personalization, key to elearning's value is the opportunity to scale, to reach the masses. It's only when you are effecting change across the entire organization that you achieve meaningful performance gains.

Check It Out →

Read David Vance's take in
Are Completions a Good Measure for eLearning?

www.skillsoft.com/Completions

Case study snapshot: Sprint

What gets measured improves at Sprint



Challenge

- Deliver measurable continuous talent improvement efforts and hard-hitting business results across more than 37,000 employees globally



Solution

- Leverage the long-standing partnership with Skillsoft to adapt and align targeted learning solutions to changing business requirements
- Apply the KnowledgeAdvisors measurement platform to automate learning analytics so Sprint can manage its Skillsoft program with rigorous datasets and industry benchmarks



Results

- A \$90 impact benefit from Skillsoft for every \$1 invested; almost five times more than the classroom impact benefit
- An average annual rate of program improvement of 14% compared to the industry benchmark of 4%

Sprint University, the L&D entity within the world-class telecommunications firm of 37,000 employees, expertly engages with the business, aligns the right solutions, drives learner adoption and measures outcomes.

Sprint ensures that the learners that want to participate in the Skillsoft offerings can get to them easily through their LMS.

Since Metrics that Matter® holds millions of inputs from a wide spectrum of industries and modalities, it also provides Sprint with a way to gauge itself against how other organizations are performing.

When the Skillsoft content was evaluated across multiple years, Sprint experienced a 14% average improvement in effectiveness and improvement, namely:

- How learners are developing new knowledge from the Skillsoft solutions
- How learners are applying skills they developed from the Skillsoft training to their jobs
- How much Skillsoft training improved learner job performance
- How worthwhile the Skillsoft investment was for Sprint

Year after year, the Skillsoft improvements on these metrics are significantly higher than the benchmark. According to KnowledgeAdvisors, the average increase for these measures is typically 4%. That means that the Skillsoft rate of impact is over three times higher than the industry benchmark.

Download Now ↓

Read more in the full
Sprint case study

www.skillsoft.com/Sprint

Section 2

Value

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Outcomes are optimized through the quality of engagement, alignment and adoption efforts. The ultimate test for any learning metric is whether it helps the organization deliver peak performance. Does the metric help monitor agility or other key organizational characteristic required for success? Does the data help identify high efficiency or over-investment? Does it allow decision-makers to compare performance quarter to quarter? Does the data help identify strengths and opportunities? Can outcomes be forecasted?

For decades, the limiting belief that value derived from learning cannot be measured has left too many organizational leaders with no data for decision-making and less confidence in the power of technology-based learning.

Perhaps causal relationships cannot be defined easily without deep scientific evidence, however most organizations operate

Outcomes are optimized through the quality of engagement, alignment and adoption efforts.

successfully every day by applying “roughly reasonable” estimates in decision-making. Are revenues not forecasted? Are budgets not based on estimates? Is office space not sized based on projected growth? Business decisions involving hard dollar commitments are made routinely based on estimates. Leaders today demand analysis and evidence of value. Thankfully, several worthy evaluation options are available both for free and for fee.

Leading learning analytics providers

KnowledgeAdvisors www.knowledgeadvisors.com

The ROI Institute www.roiinstitute.net

Vestrics www.vestrics.com

Center for Talent Reporting www.centerfortalentreporting.org

The Skillsoft Impact Analysis www.skillsoft.com/Analysis

Thought-leader insight Elliott Masie

Elliott Masie is a provocative, engaging and entertaining futurist, analyst and speaker focused on the changing world of the workplace, learning and technology. He heads The MASIE Center, (www.masie.com) a Saratoga Springs, NY think tank focused on how organizations can support learning and knowledge within the workforce.

Skillsoft: We know that before we can be successful with elearning we have to look at the culture of an organization. What do you see as a challenge to culture?

Elliott: There are four generations coming to work every day, ranging from our new hires, who we might call next gen, all the way up to folks who perhaps are now in their 70s, and are semi-retired, but still coming to work. Each of these generations bring a rich set of experiences, and they also bring a unique set of both opportunities and challenges.

Our opportunity is to understand that each of these generations has a valuable role to play in our organization, and each requires some special sauce in order to be successful.

Our opportunity is also to recognize that each individual that comes to work brings with them wisdom that can best be harnessed if we figure out how they can best learn and function within their own generational profile, but also to spend serious time working across those generations, because the ultimate style is the success style of the culture of your organization, and that is ageless.

Skillsoft: How do you see learning changing in the near future?

Elliott: Our field is increasingly focusing on learning personalization. As content and learning options expand, our learners and their

managers want to have more personalized slices of learning resources just for them, in their ideal styles.

Outside of work, learners are living lives steeped in media personalization. Today we watch very little live TV, instead choosing on-demand, on-device and on-our-schedule viewing of what we want, when we want, in the format we want. It's not surprising that learners are asking why they can't have that same flexibility at work.

Learning personalization will require newer layers of technology, newer design models and even new language for learners and managers to communicate their preferences. We have found it helpful to look at learning personalization through a four-tiered model: Chosen by my preferences; driven by big and small data; shaped by social



collaboration; and designed by the organization.

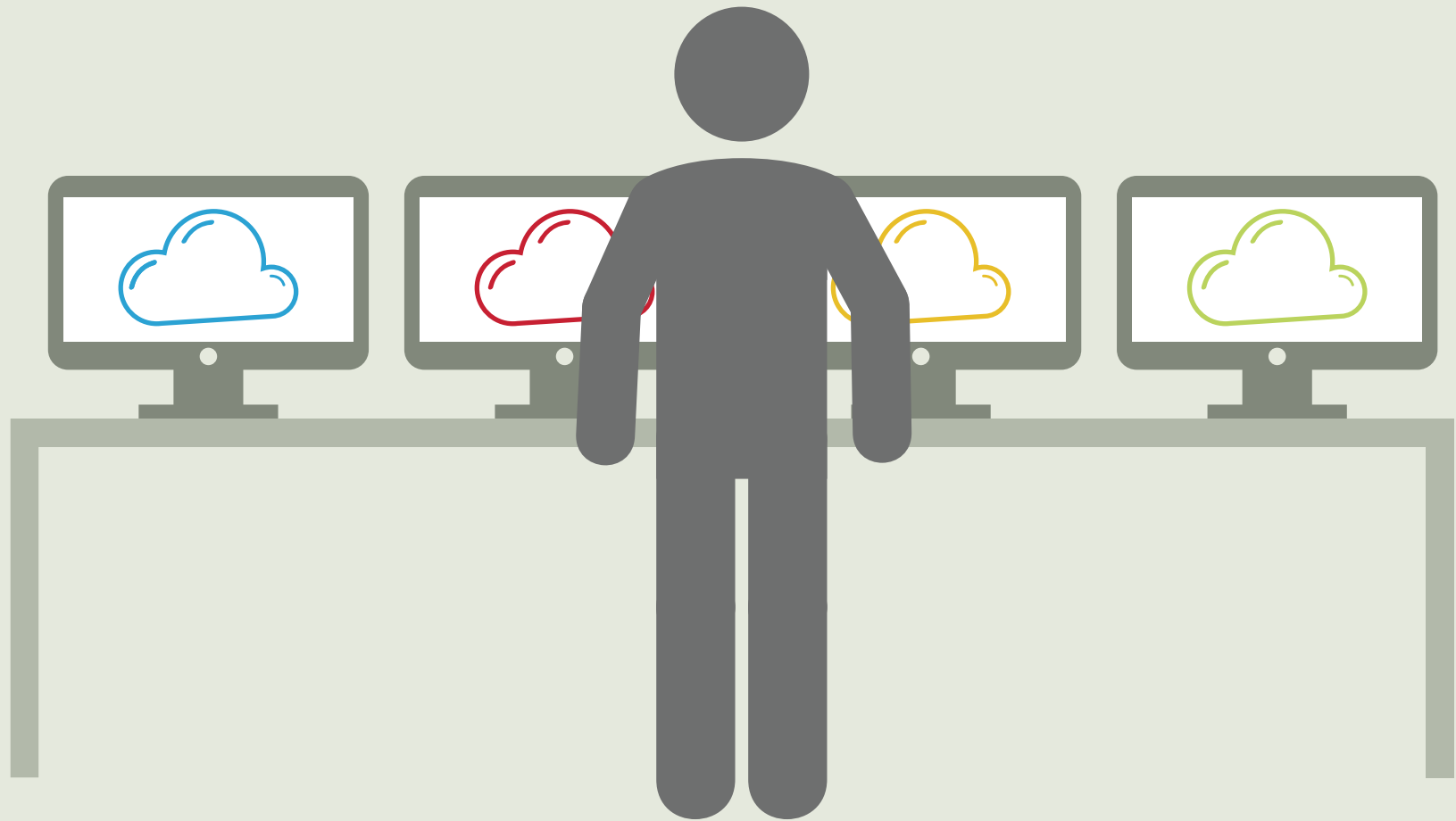
We foresee combinations and even competition among these forces to create the right, most effective styles of learning personalization.

Share On



Section 3

Selecting the right cloud-based learning partner



Section 3

Selecting the right cloud-based learning partner

Share On



There are many Requests for Proposal (RFP) templates available on the internet for you to download. Keep in mind that there may be a number of features listed within the templates that your organization may not need. In other words, it's not the number of features you should be concerned with; rather, it's whether or not the employees within your organization will realize behavioral change as a direct result from selecting the right learning provider based on the unique needs of your organization.

Another point to watch out for is that some departments are trying to fit their learning strategy within the confines of an LMS versus having the LMS enable their learning strategy. Research from Brandon Hall Group¹⁵ indicates that 48% of organizations that have an LMS are looking to replace it. In addition,

according to their analysis, the cost of a new LMS solution is approximately two to three times the cost of maintaining a current solution.

The following pages list a number of typical criteria you may want to consider when selecting a cloud-based learning solutions partner.

Download Now ↓

Download a print-friendly, easy-to-use **RFP checklist**.

www.skillsoft.com/RFPChecklist

¹⁵ *The Race to Replace: Results from the LMS Satisfaction and Spending Report 2014* by David Wentworth. Brandon Hall Group, February 2014.

Section 3

Content

Share On



Suggested content checklist

Content is available in a wide variety of modalities sure to appeal to every type of learner. Regardless of the modalities you select, first and foremost, consider the effectiveness, quality and consistency of content. Some learning vendors create and/or curate their own content, while others subcontract one or both of those functions out.

- ☐ Variety of modalities offered:
 - ☐ Online, self-paced courses
 - ☐ Books
 - ☐ Audio/podcasts
 - ☐ Book summaries
 - ☐ Videos
 - ☐ Simulations
 - ☐ Test prep
 - ☐ Mentoring
 - ☐ Webcasts
- ☐ Virtual classrooms
- ☐ Gaming
- ☐ Social
- ☐ Topic-specific content curated into easy to use portals
- ☐ Instructional and informational content
- ☐ Depth and breadth of topic coverage
- ☐ Ownership/control of learning products
- ☐ Localized content
- ☐ Support for continuing professional education & college credit
- ☐ Support for professional certifications/accreditations
- ☐ Blended learning resources/tools
- ☐ Accessibility/Section 508 compliance

Download Now ↓

Download a print-friendly, easy-to-use **RFP checklist**.

www.skillsoft.com/RFPChecklist

Watch Now 🎬



Watch a video:
Increase Agility with Skillsoft IT Solutions

www.skillsoft.com/ITSolutions

Section 3

Technology

Share On



Suggested technology checklist

Below are common LMS features to consider:

- **Engaging user interface:** A great interface will give learners an inviting experience with all their formal, informal, social and mobile learning content in a friendly, intuitive and highly visual format.
- **Search & discovery:** Advanced filtering and curated catalogs allow learners to narrow broad results to specific needs.
- **Targeted learning:** Learners can select portions of learning content such as a topic within a course or pages from a specific book and either take them, assign them to learners or groups of learners or combine them into meaningful learning programs.
- **Learning programs:** Choose a platform that has the ability to create custom learning programs that blends content modalities – even those from external sources like a MOOC – and aligns with your business needs, corporate culture and your training style.
- **Social learning:** Choosing an LMS with a social learning layer allows you to best empower your employees to find, create and share knowledge and expertise with their colleagues.
- **Instructor-led training support:** If you also utilize classroom or virtual training, choose an LMS with that combines elearning and ILT within a single system, enabling delivery of blended learning programs.
- **Customer content creation, packaging and publishing:** If you create your own content, look for the LMS to have easy-to-use tools to build, test, package and deploy.
- **Catalog content integration:** Choosing a provider that deploys its content for you will save you a significant amount of time and resources, and also ensure that the latest content releases are available for your learners in real time.
- **Mobile access:** A platform that is available via tablets and smartphones allows you to learn when and where your learners need to.
- **Reporting capabilities, reporting automation and flexibility in report templates:** Administrators should have a large number of reporting tools available to them that will analyze learner activity and content utilization.
- **Integration capabilities:** The ability to integrate with Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS), talent management platforms and general enterprise software applications allows for richer experiences, more contextual access and more meaningful reporting.
- **Infrastructure:** Select a cloud-based platform that provides the security, scalability and reliability that you need.
- **Localized user interface:** Multiple geographies may mean a need for a platform in multiple languages.

Section 3

Service

Share On



Suggested service checklist

Turning content and technology into a learning program isn't always easy. Having a reliable system and access to your provider's tried and true processes and support team is critical. Important factors to consider:

- **Scope of customer service and support:** Understand which services are part of the license and which require an additional fee.
- **Integration support:** If you need to integrate the LMS or content with other systems, is someone available to help? Does the partner offer single sign on services? Are these services available as a core service or additional charge?
- **Training:** What product training and other resources are available? Is the product documentation comprehensive? Are there live SME's that you can turn to if you have product-related questions?
- **Implementation services:** What resources/expertise will help in deploying your program? Does the provider have an implementation methodology? How long do the provider's implementations typically take?
- **Consulting services:** What services are embedded to help you align learning programs, map content and ensure your programs are impacting your business? What optional/extended services are available on a for-fee basis?
- **Custom content services:** What kind of custom/bespoke content development does the provider deliver? Does the provider enable clients to customize its off-the-shelf content? Are self-publishing services available? Does the supplier offer custom content hosting services?
- **Conferences, events, user groups:** Does your partner offer opportunities to learn from other customers and share feedback on product innovation?
- **Benchmarking models:** Does your partner have a strategic framework to guide decisions and influence the learning maturity of your organization? Do they have a process for evaluating success and progression?

Download Now ↓

Download a print-friendly, easy-to-use **RFP checklist**.

www.skillsoft.com/RFPChecklist

Watch Now 🎬



See what to expect in **Getting started with Skillsoft: Implementation**

www.skillsoft.com/Implementation

Section 3

Experience

Share On



Suggested experience checklist

Not only do you want the tangibles of the products and services listed earlier, but you should consider a learning partner with deep, proven industry experience as well:

- ☐ Expertise and tenure of staff
- ☐ Size, industry sector and geographic profile of the customer base
- ☐ Track record for profitability and growth/sustainability
- ☐ Client satisfaction and renewal rates
- ☐ Learner satisfaction scores
- ☐ R&D investment level
- ☐ Industry recognition & awards
- ☐ Benchmarking model
(see page 36)



Section 3

Experience

Share On



The right supplier will have deep knowledge about the path organizations take as they evolve their learning strategy. This table illustrates the predictable milestones that organizations encounter as they mature. It is beneficial to define what stage your organization is operating in now and what stage to set your sights on. Then, work closely with your cloud-based learning partner to chart a strategy bridge that helps your organization achieve your target stage.

Learning Maturity Benchmarking Model

| Success factors | Stage 1 Supplement | Stage 2 Targeted | Stage 3 Strategic | Stage 4 Integrated | Stage 5 Optimized |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Stage goal | Initiate learning | Manage learning | Align learning | Integrate learning | Enterprise-wide learning |
| Business case | Reduce expenses & increase scale | Enhance savings & remove redundancy | Align to business goals & increase business impact | Increase talent & organizational agility | Broaden & deepen talent to extend enterprise |
| Learning culture | Learning is operationally focused | Executive support & new learning strategies emerge | Governance & talent management begins | Recognized as a "Learning Organization" | Learning becomes globally ubiquitous |
| Learning's role | Contractor | Consultant | Key player | Architect | C-level role |
| Blended design | Very little blending, mostly formal | Simple blends social & mobile begins | Blending scales to balance multiple modalities | Balanced blends become routine | Sophisticated blends across all portfolios |
| Learning promotion | Traditional awareness marketing | Highlights & success stories | Portal deep linking begins | Active manager-level evangelism begins | Strong learning brand equity attained |
| Learner adoption | 20% + Mostly 'Push' | 30% + 'Pull' increases | 50% + 'Pull' = 'Push' | 80% + Increased 'Pull' | 90% + Mostly 'Pull' |
| Learning evaluation | Efficiency of elearning | Effectiveness of elearning | Business impact of elearning | Targeted ROI studies | Talent management analytics |

[Download Now](#)

Download the **Skillsoft Learning Growth Model** white paper to learn more.

www.skillsoft.com/LGM

Thought-leader insight

Todd Tauber

Todd Tauber leads Bersin by Deloitte's Learning research practice, focusing on workforce learning trends, strategies, organizations, programs and technologies. His thought leadership on learning has been featured by The Atlantic, Business Insider, Yahoo! Finance and Quartz as well as SHRM and ATD.

Skillsoft: What's a common mistake that organizations make with their elearning programs?

Todd: A big one is not understanding their audiences. With an increasingly diverse workforce, a one-size-fits-all approach just doesn't work anymore. Different people want and need to learn in different ways. And yet more than two-thirds of L&D professionals admit they don't know much about their learners beyond basic demographics.¹⁶ They don't have a good handle on employees' knowledge or skills levels, their work priorities or their

habits and preferences. It's hard to engage people if you don't know who you're talking to.

Skillsoft: What does the future of ILT-only learning programs look like?

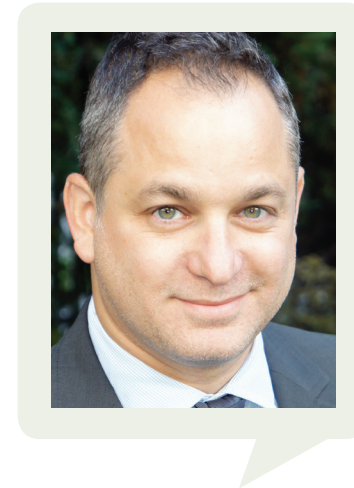
Todd: I see three big shifts. For starters, instructor-led training is being re-shaped to fit into work rather than the other way around – which is how it's normally been. Programs that used to fill up a week or two at a time, for example, are now being broken up into shorter bursts and spread out over months. Second, I think we'll have less one-way lecturing and more active and collaborative learning. We're already seeing some L&D teams put more emphasis on learning through projects and with peers. And finally, there will be more technology. Virtual ILT already accounts for 12% of formal

learning hours delivered at many companies.¹⁷ But we're also seeing more ILT programs leveraging smartphones and tablets to improve the connections between instructors and learners in real-time, though feedback and audience polls.

Skillsoft: What questions should an organization be asking a prospective vendor when considering an elearning purchase.

Todd: 1. How can we align, configure or customize your offerings to address our specific objectives? This is critical because people don't have the time or motivation to learn anything on-the-job "just-in-case" anymore. It has to matter to them.

2. How fresh is the content and user experience? For example, is the material relevant to current challenges and priorities? Is it



accessible on mobile devices? Those things matter a lot because it's gotten harder and harder to keep people's attention. So their learning has to be easy and engaging, too.

3. What support do you offer to help drive adoption and usage? Not many people do that, when L&D teams switch their strategies from occasional, "push" training to continuous, "pull" learning – which they are – they often see demand drop off. Surprise! Learning isn't workers' first priority.

¹⁶ Key Findings: Becoming a High-Impact Learning Organization, Bersin by Deloitte, August 2012.

¹⁷ 2014 Corporate Learning Factbook. Bersin by Deloitte, February 2014.

Section 4

Developing the business case for cloud-based learning



Section 4

Why do L&D business cases fail?

Share On



To understand what business case success look like, let's first look at what failure looks like.

Failure takes place when the business case:

According to CEB (Corporate Executive Board), the average buying team includes 5.4 people¹⁸

- Is not in line with strategic business objectives
- Lacks recognition of what is important to the CEO and CFO
- Requests spend without financial benefit projections
- Uses HR and learning industry terminology that is a “different language”

These failures all have one thing in common; they all relate to an L&D-driven agenda and not a business-driven agenda.

To develop a successful business case, you must consider how it is perceived and how it will impact the greater good of the organization.

Who can tell you how your business case is perceived and how it will impact the greater organizational good?

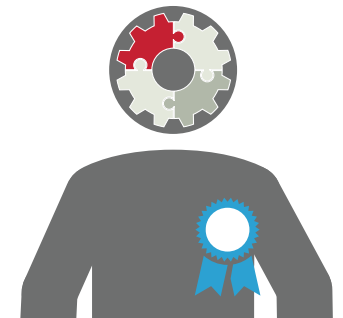
No single stakeholder can. In fact, according to CEB, the average number of individuals involved with today's buying decision is 5.4. This buying team will often have differing agendas. That means that in order to get a cloud-based learning business case approved, you'll need to identify each of the buying team stakeholders and then secure their support by tailoring it to their specific priorities.

L&D driven
Business funded



VS.

Business driven
L&D enabled



Check It Out →



Take a 9-minute course,
Communicating a High-impact Business Case.

www.skillssoft.com/BusinessCaseCourse

¹⁸ www.executiveboard.com/blogs/when-emotions-impact-a-sale, June 2014.

Case study snapshot: PGA of America

Professional growth in a multigenerational workforce



Challenge

- Heighten business development expertise of PGA members
- Help members remain relevant with their clientele
- Develop a multigenerational audience consistently



Results

- An industry-wide initiative called, Get Golf Ready, yields \$58 of benefit to the golf course for every \$1 invested by the consumer
- Overall golf income increased \$1,069 per participant



Solution

- Highly effective custom course curriculum
- Resources aligned to support certification and career objectives
- User-friendly experience that fosters continuous development

The glaring challenge standing in the way of delivering a training initiative that could support growth was a very real generational gap. New members are roughly 30 years old when they join, with an average member age of 45 years. This means there is about a 50/50 split in membership, with half being more “tradition” oriented and the other half being more digitally-focused. In essence, PGA members consist of a multigenerational workforce where some members embrace technology and others don’t.

With a great partnership and careful blend of relevant content, technology, and clever program designs, you stand a better chance of engaging your labor force and improving their performance.

Dawes Marlatt
Senior Director of Education & Employment, PGA America

Because of its desire to pinpoint the impact, the PGA astutely leveraged KnowledgeAdvisors to track learning analytics. KnowledgeAdvisors findings revealed improvements in job impact, business results and ROI from 2012 to 2013. In terms of ROI, the Knowledge Advisors Metrics that Matter® software evaluated that the PGA’s investment in training and development showed for every \$1 invested there was a \$5.14 return.

Download Now ↓

[Read more in the full PGA case study](#)

www.skillssoft.com/PGA

Section 4

Who are the stakeholders and what are their priorities?

Share On



In order to mobilize the needed consensus to get a cloud-based learning solution in place, you must first identify stakeholders and walk in their shoes to understand how best to influence them.

| Stakeholder department | What responsibilities does this stakeholder have? | How will cloud-based learning help this stakeholder? |
|------------------------|--|---|
| HR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving talent strategies • Hiring the best talent to outperform competitors • Reducing turnover (general and due to retirement) • Ensuring the right people are in the right roles • Recruiting • Adapting to generational workforce changes • Addressing employee engagement • Reacting/being proactive to an ever-changing workplace • Establishing leadership development • Addressing a scattered workforce, be it globalization or matrixed employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When learning and business goals are aligned, business performance will increase. • When employees have learning resources readily available, onboarding takes place at a faster pace. • Skills and knowledge gains from a top-notch learning program will lessen the gaps he/she will be facing and help with career progression over time. • Offering a learning solution that is mobile and bite-sized will help with quality of life and work/life balance; there is value in giving employees a better balance. |
| L&D | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing skill gaps • Wanting to decrease employees' total onboarding period • Accelerating employee productivity • Creating succession plans for employees • Ensuring employees are ready for their transition into higher positions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a successful learning program, performance improvements will take place across business units with the potential to make the company money or save the company money. • L&D has the opportunity to be viewed as a business improvement unit and not just a "training center." This perception will influence future business and learning opportunities and decisions. • Having a skilled workforce will encourage positive employee engagement and reduce turnover for the organization. |

Continued on next page

Section 4

Who are the stakeholders and what are their priorities?

Share On



Continued from previous page

| Stakeholder department | What responsibilities does this stakeholder have? | How will cloud-based learning help this stakeholder? |
|------------------------|--|--|
| IT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offering safe, efficient, continuous, seamless technology to support employees in the pursuit of business goals• Aligning technology with business goals• Remaining at the cusp of new technology to be agile and competitive in today's market | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is ease of integration with third party platforms, such as talent management platforms.• The threat of complexity with multiple learning vendors would be significantly reduced by selecting a vendor that is all-encompassing. |
| Business unit leader | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Filling skills gaps• Leading productive teams• Accomplishing goals to business plan• Growing team members | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When skill gaps are identified and addressed through learning, the individual will perform better and so will the team.• When a team is operating efficiently, business outcomes improve and organizational goals are met. |
| Procurement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtaining quality goods and services at reasonable costs• Saving the company money• Identifying vendors who meet internal customer needs• Minimizing disputes between internal customers and vendors• Maintaining legal compliance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This person will have the ability to measure ROI and business impact with the right vendor.• Bringing in an off-the-shelf solution is more cost-effective than internally developing training. If he/she has reduction-in-costs quota, an elearning solution is the perfect solution.• The procurement officer has a chance to gain functional credibility by saving/making the company money. |

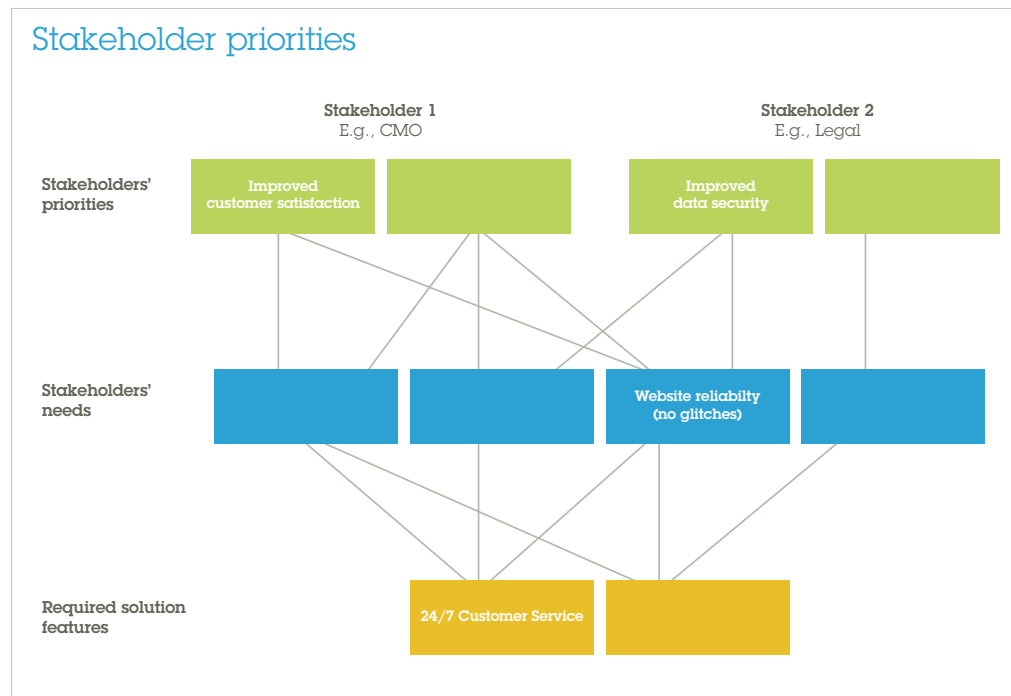
Section 4

Who are the stakeholders and what are their priorities?

Share On



You might consider uncovering these shared goals. Then, arrange a meeting to help the team see the common goals for themselves to enable a stronger, more unified and supported stance.



Download Now ↓

Download this one-page **Cross-Functional Benefits Template** to help you uncover the shared interests amongst your stakeholders.

www.skillsoft.com/XFunctional

Download Now ↓

Executive Summary

- Briefly summarize the proposal
- Executive summaries typically contain the salient points from each of the subsequent sections:
 - Current situation
 - Analysis & Recommendation
 - Conclusion
- Be sure to engage the audience's interest in reviewing the remainder of the proposal

Download a helpful **L&D business case PowerPoint template**. Use it to build your business case.

www.skillsoft.com/BusinessCasePPT

Section 4

Four stages of a business case

Share On



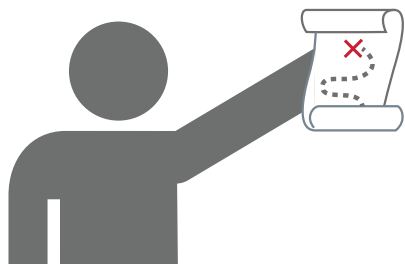
Four stages of a business case

Step 1:
Define the
business issue

Step 2:
Analyze the
alternatives
and select the
best option

Step 3:
Prepare the
business case

Stage 4:
Deliver the
business case



Skipping or not fully addressing a stage will weaken a business case and reduce your approval probability.

Watch Now



Listen to a webinar *Developing a L&D Business Case*.

www.skillssoft.com/BusinessCaseWebinar

Section 4

Four stages of a business case

Share On



Stage 1: Define the business issue

- Identify the business opportunity or problem to be solved
 - Create a succinct description of what your proposal will deliver
 - The objectives should help your organization reach its overall goals and be aligned with the priorities of senior management
 - An example may be “reduce operating expenses” or “increase talent capability”
- Develop an opportunity statement
 - This describes the benefits of solving the problem or seizing the opportunity
 - For example, “Reduce HR budget and expand talent development to more employees.”

Stage 2: Analyze the alternatives and select the best option

- Ask those closest to the issue for their ideas on possible alternatives
- Research case studies of those inside and outside your field that have faced similar challenges and solved them
- Collect information about each alternative
- The goal is to weigh alternatives against one another in financial terms, intangible benefits and risk level
- For the financial terms, a payback period and pro-forma ROI are often used to compare
 - Payback period illustrates how long it will take to recover the initial investment
 - ROI shows the monetary impact your investment is predicted to yield

Stage 3: Prepare the business case

- After analyzing the alternatives you will prepare the written business case
- The template you use to lay out your business case should have a simple and sound structure:
 - Executive Summary
 - Current situation
 - Analysis & Recommendation
 - Conclusion

Stage 4: Deliver the business case

- During this stage you “sell” your recommendations
 - Hone your persuasion and influencing skills
 - Rehearse with an informed, invested colleague
- Plan the forum and format with care

- Select the time, place and approach that suits the stakeholders best
- Keep your presentation focused and concise
 - Avoid going into unnecessary detail and don’t meander off the point
- Be prepared to deal with questions that may arise
 - Have you ever implemented a similar recommendation?
 - What else might be needed that is not articulated in the business case?
 - What assumptions have you made that your stakeholder may disagree with?

Section 4

Objection handling



Inevitably, with change comes objections. Here are some common objections you might face and ideas for how you might handle them.

| Objection | Response |
|---|--|
| Employees don't have time to learn. | <p>You don't have time NOT to learn.</p> <p>"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe." – Abraham Lincoln</p> <p>If Honest Abe knew that it was worth it to take time to sharpen the axe, why do we have such a hard time applying that to today's world?</p> <p>Stephen R. Covey talks about the same concept of "sharpening the saw" as Habit 7 of <i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People</i>. He says that it's necessary to find balance to avoid burnout and that by taking time to sharpen the saw, you will find better balance.¹⁹</p> <p>Imagine the results of an individual, a team or a workforce that is better balanced.</p> |
| We don't need a training program; It's not a priority; The talent situation is an issue but not a crisis. | <p>The talent crisis is very real and imminent. The time to act is now. Learning is a highly efficient and effective component of the talent agenda that simply cannot be overlooked. Read more about this common myth in Section 1.</p> |
| Elearning isn't effective. | <p>Not only is elearning highly effective, but it has also demonstrated better transference rates than traditional ILT. For example, the average learning application rate is 20-50%. But in a recent study conducted by KnowledgeAdvisors, the Skillsoft learning application rate is 86%. This equates to less waste on training budgets, higher application of learning to the job and increased business performance.²⁰</p> |

Continued on next page

¹⁹ www.stephencovey.com/7habits/7habits-habit7.php, June 10, 2014.

²⁰ *The Skillsoft Impact Analysis*, by Laura Rexford. Skillsoft, 2014.

Section 4

Objection handling

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Continued from previous page

| Objection | Response |
|---|--|
| Training budgets are constrained. | When teaming up with the right learning partner, you have tangible potential for positive business impact which can save hard costs. Investing in learning is not discretionary; rather, it's vital to competitiveness and is a direct contributor to strategic business goals. Download a budget checklist: www.skillsoft.com/BudgetChecklist . |
| My culture isn't ready for elearning. | The situation is as much about change management as it is about an enterprise learning program. With the right guidance from an experienced learning partner, you will be more ready than you think. A good partner will help you identify obstacles and give you information that will empower you to remove them. |
| Learning must be customized – your generic learning is not as effective as my learning (proprietary). | As a general rule of thumb, half of all learning within any organization is generic, meaning that the same general content and learning objectives apply across the industry, while the remaining half is unique to the personality of that organization and needs to be custom-developed either internally or externally. Read more about whether to build or buy in Section 1 . |
| The value learning brings to workforce improvement or business gains is highly questionable and hard to measure | <p>According to David Vance, author of <i>The Business of Learning: How to Manage Corporate Training to Improve Your Bottom Line</i>, “measurement strategy flows from the management strategy.”</p> <p>A great learning partner will be able to guide you through a measurement process to determine the impact to the business. The Center for Talent Reporting has defined standard practices for measuring learning's efficiency, effectiveness and outcomes. Learn more at www.centerfortalentreporting.org</p> |
| Why should we pay for copyrighted content when there is so much on the internet for free? | Yes, there is a lot of free stuff out there. There is also a <i>lot</i> of information to sift through and to filter out. There is also no guarantee that it will be available tomorrow, or three months from now. There is no alignment to personal, company or business goals and no formal tracking. In the world of elearning, you get what you pay for and “free” isn't always what it's cracked up to be. |

Thought-leader insight

Laci Loew

As Vice President of Talent Management and Principal Analyst, Laci leads the talent management research practice at Brandon Hall Group and is an expert in all areas of human capital management particularly talent management, leadership, leadership development, career management and succession management.

Skillsoft: What's the most popular business performance improvement that organizations experience with successful elearning?

Laci: Movement on critical business metrics, particularly engagement and retention.

It starts with a reduction in training costs, global reach and scalability. In innovative formats, elearning enables peer-to-peer collaboration, moment-of-need knowledge, and learner-generated content. Elearning that engages learners and goes beyond traditional online page-turner content improves learner retention and engagement — two factors that improve other

critical business metrics including productivity, retention and revenue per head.

Skillsoft: What advice do you have when selling elearning to stakeholders in an organization?

Laci: The value of elearning in the workplace is best measured when its value can be tied to measurable business impact. Whether this link can be made via testing results, assessments, survey questions, key performance indicators or predictive analytics data, the point is that a formal measurement process quantifying the business impact of the elearning is quintessential. This can be defined as a reduction in operating costs, improvement in engagement scores, decreased turnover in key talent segments, increased sales; regardless of the metric, it indicates real and measurable impact on the business wallet retention. Showing how

elearning will have a measurable impact on the business is the shortest path to stakeholder adoption and engagement with elearning as a critical element of any organization's learning architecture.

Skillsoft: What questions should organizations ask a prospective vendor when considering an elearning purchase?

Laci: Acquiring elearning content and services takes careful planning to ensure that the investment returns a measurable impact on the business. There are a number of elements high-performing organizations consider:

- Number of current users
- Estimated number of users over the next 3-5 years
- Geographic location of users
- Critical content needed to drive achievement of business goals
- Approach to elearning content: hands on simulation, interactive



games, or page turner traditional online learning content

- Multi-media platforms – like audio, video, animation – via which the elearning content needs to present itself
- In-house resources needed to manage the content
- Deployment platform – installed versus cloud
- Budget available
- Training required
- System reliability expectations
- Content authoring tools needed
- User interactivity
- Language needs
- 24x7 support

Section 5

Purchasing cloud-based learning solutions



Section 5

Contractual milestones to anticipate

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Once you've narrowed the playing field of supplier options, delivered the business case and secured buy-in from the evaluators and your stakeholders, you have much of the journey behind you. Yet one of the most important parts is still to come; navigating the contract process.

It's common for an organization that is purchasing cloud-based learning solutions to progress through these milestones before the implementation process begins.



Section 5

Understanding cloud-based licensing

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Recently, there has been a dramatic shift in the way both consumers and companies want to do business. According to recent Forrester research²¹, large numbers of software companies have made the shift to a subscription-based business model. Today, subscription licenses are the staple for cloud-based learning and talent management, sales force automation, human resource management and purchasing software. According to the same research, many purchasing authorities²² call our current times the “subscription economy.”

Why? Because cloud-based suppliers provide companies with cost efficiencies and convenience that a cost-of-goods purchasing approach just doesn't satisfy. Cloud-based licensing also provides buyers with greater

agility by offering a wider set of choices so changes can be made as needs and priorities evolve.

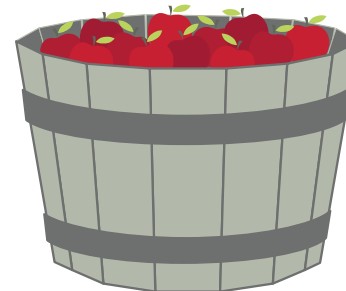
It is important to understand that a subscription-based licensing approach provides employees with a gateway to access content from (a) designated content collection(s) typically for a year. Under a subscription model, the supplier has already taken into account the fact that employees have different learning needs and preferences, so the model assumes that employees will access just a portion of the content from the cloud that is made available.

Subscription-based models also recognize volume advantages; therefore, the more employees under contract, the lower the price per license. To set the right foundational subscription level, consider your target learner

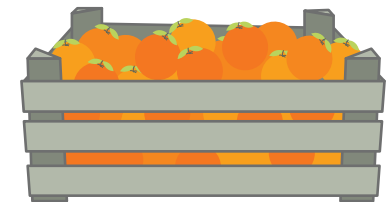
audience and if the training will be compulsory or elective. Most suppliers will enable you to add more licenses over the term at the same price per license so that you don't over invest.

Set your initial audience level at a volume that is realistic so that you leverage the volume discount and then add increments of licensing blocks over the term if/when your needs expand.

Classroom based purchasing vs. cloud-based licensing



VS.



Trying to find parallels between a classroom and cloud-based licensing is like comparing apples to oranges; they have distinctly different business models.

²¹ An Executive Primer To Customer Success Management, A Forrester Consulting Thought Leadership Paper Commissioned By Gainsight. April 2014.

²² An Executive Primer To Customer Success Management, A Forrester Consulting Thought Leadership Paper Commissioned By Gainsight. April 2014.

Section 5

Cloud-based pricing trends

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For the past 10 years, the learning market has seen a gradual shift away from classroom delivery toward cloud-based learning models. During this period, cloud-based learning providers have applied a tremendous amount of investment to expand their topical coverage and the features within their learning solutions. The Producer Price Index (PPI)²³ is a helpful resource to understand the trends of pricing within the cloud-based learning industry. This index is calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and measures the

Anchor your investment in the business value associated with the learning solution.

average change in selling prices received by domestic producers over time.

According to the PPI, the average price in the Computer Training category rose just over 12% between 2007 and 2014. Therefore, any prices you may have researched a few years ago likely won't apply in today's cloud-based learning market. Some cloud-based learning providers have been innovating rapidly to emerge from the global economic crisis even stronger than they were before.

While price must be part of the conversation, in a subscription economy it is typically not *the* conversation. Organizations normally purchase elearning to address issues with scale, speed to market, resourcing, efficiency, expertise or some other capability gap. As you review the proposals offered by your shortlisted suppliers, make sure the pricing proposed is aligned with the value related to

The most popular measures for cloud-based learning's value are often associated with cost avoidance, time savings and increases in skill or capability.

solving these problems, not just listed at the bottom of a long list of products. Ask the provider how they measure value and if they provide a mechanism within their service offering to evaluate that value over the program's duration. The most popular measures for cloud-based learning's value are often associated with cost avoidance, time savings and increases in skill or capability.

While pricing has increased in this field overall, most cloud-based learning providers desire multiple-year contracts and will provide a discount to attract them. Inquire about multiple term price advantages as they often provide

a significant savings that can make the purchase even more compelling. Suppliers will often tier their term discount pricing advantages to correspond with the number of years specified in the contract duration.

Before entering into multiyear term with a supplier, ensure that the supplier has the sustainability to remain in business for the long haul. It is not recommended to enter into multiyear term agreements with brand new startups or companies that have been in business less than five years. The industry has been in existence for approximately 20 years so when entering multiyear agreements, search out providers that have longevity and the financial backing to remain in business well into the future.

²³ www.bls.gov/ppi, July 7, 2014.

Section 5

Navigating the contract process

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While every negotiation has its nuances, there are some best practices to apply toward the purchase of cloud-based learning solutions that will alleviate avoidable time delays.

- **Use the supplier's contracting paper, not your own.** The supplier is accustomed to contracting for their software service on a daily basis. They have already spent much effort in outlining the customary terms and conditions that are acceptable to a vast number of organizations representing a wide range of industries. Enforcing your organizations' contracting paper will inevitably cause many negotiation redlines, hours of legal involvement and it will surely push back your launch date. Even if your organization

has a Software as a Service (SaaS) contracting template, they are rarely adequate to capture the intellectual property elements involved with a learning content solution. Also, suppliers recognize that liability protections are a two-way street so it is common for a cloud-based learning partner to have thought out these provisions in its standard terms and conditions. It is also routine for an organization to assume intellectual property liability when they choose to customize the supplier's material.

- **Get your legal or procurement representatives involved very early in the process.** Inform your internal legal and procurement teams of your required implementation date and the commitments you have made

to your stakeholders in order to get employees trained by a certain time frame. The typical implementation period for cloud-based learning is 4-6 weeks so work backward from that date and anticipate the negotiation of a new supplier agreement to take two to three months. As you engage your legal and/or procurement representatives, keep things simple. Explain that the learning supplier partner hosts proprietary learning content. Outline the license level you require, the content solutions you need to contract for and the term length.

- **Understand the anatomy of the agreement's structure.** Frequently, cloud-based learning suppliers will establish a Master Licensing Agreement (MLA) and then apply order

forms to the MLA that represent the specific solutions under license, the pricing and the contract term beginning and end dates. Since the MLA serves to govern the overall business relationship and legal terminology, it is a good idea to have it reviewed by your legal and/or procurement teams while you conduct your pilot and refine the specific solutions you will license.

- **Avoid unnecessary concerns.** Most cloud-based learning suppliers have provisions and protections against storing any data that is considered sensitive. It is typical for their learning transcript tracking to include name and company email address. All other fields are often optional. Most cloud-based learning providers

Section 5

Navigating the contract process

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also don't need complex Service Level Agreements (SLAs) so pushing to institute them within your agreement is likely unnecessary. Keep in mind that learning partners do not constitute a service that will severely impose on your bottom line if your employees cannot access the training for a brief period of time.

- [Track progress within an action plan.](#) Every process benefits from sound and steady project management. Map out the timelines for contract review cycles, determine who should be the point person for any questions that arise, and institute periodic check points to keep things moving. Keep your business stakeholders involved and apprised so

that they can explain how the learning solutions will be used by employees if your legal or procurement teams have inquiries along the way. Business-level stakeholder involvement will help maintain the sense of urgency to progress through the legal aspects swiftly.

Section 6

Skillsoft: a global leader in cloud-based learning



Section 6

Skillsoft: a global leader in cloud-based learning

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We improve the performance of organizations by improving the performance of their people.

Skillsoft is a pioneer in the field of learning with a long history of innovation. Skillsoft provides cloud-based learning solutions through innovative technology for our customers worldwide, who range from global enterprises, government and education customers to mid-sized and small businesses.

Our courses, books and videos have been developed by industry-leading learning experts to ensure that they build talent and develop a more knowledgeable, productive and valuable workforce. Our customer support teams draw on a wealth comprehensive learning e-library to develop both packaged

and custom learning programs tailored to our customers' needs.

We serve over 6,000 customers and more than 19,000,000 learners worldwide and provide continuing, hands-on support to assist them in maximizing their ongoing success.

To learn more, visit www.skillsoft.com.

Questions?

Contact us to learn more at **866-757-3177** or www.skillsoft.com/Contact-us.asp

Resources at-a-glance

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Section 1

| Title | Asset Type | URL | Audience |
|---|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| <i>Learning in the Cloud: 10 Factors to Consider</i> | White Paper | www.skillssoft.com/LearnCloud | HR, L&D, IT |
| <i>Areva on ILT course-to-elearning course conversion</i> | Video | www.skillssoft.com/Areva | HR, L&D, Procurement |
| <i>Challenge the Status Quo with a Smarter Approach to the Global Talent Crisis</i> | White Paper | www.skillssoft.com/TalentCrisis | HR, L&D, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>Five Calls to Make When Developing a Mobile Learning Strategy</i> | White Paper | www.skillssoft.com/5Calls | HR, L&D, IT |
| <i>The Eight Truths of Social Learning. Now.</i> | White Paper | www.skillssoft.com/8Truths | HR, L&D, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>Hitachi on the decision to build or buy</i> | Video | www.skillssoft.com/Hitachi | HR, L&D |

Section 2

| Title | Asset Type | URL | Audience |
|--|------------|--|-------------------------------|
| <i>Why do you want a measurement strategy?</i> | Blog Post | www.skillssoft.com/Measure | HR, L&D |
| <i>Ingersoll Rand: Enhancing a learning culture through focused objectives</i> | Case Study | www.skillssoft.com/IR | HR, L&D, Business Unit Leader |

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Resources at-a-glance

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Section 2 (continued)

| Title | Asset Type | URL | Audience |
|--|-----------------|--|--|
| <i>Aligning Learning to Business by Towards Maturity</i> | Research Report | www.skillssoft.com/Align | HR, L&D, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>Micron on aligning its training to goals to increase business performance</i> | Video | www.skillssoft.com/Micron | HR, L&D, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>ACTIVE Network: Bento box learning for a global organization</i> | Case Study | www.skillssoft.com/ActiveNetwork | HR, L&D, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>Are Completions a Good Measure for eLearning?</i> | Blog Post | www.skillssoft.com/Completions | HR, L&D |
| <i>Sprint: What Gets Measured Improves at Sprint</i> | Case Study | www.skillssoft.com/Sprint | HR, L&D |
| <i>KnowledgeAdvisors</i> | Website | www.knowledgeadvisors.com | HR, L&D |
| <i>The ROI Institute</i> | Website | www.roiinstitute.net | HR, L&D, Procurement, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>Vestrics</i> | Website | www.vestrics.com | HR, L&D, Procurement, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>Center for Talent Reporting</i> | Website | www.centerfortalentreporting.com | HR, L&D, Procurement, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>The Skillssoft Impact Analysis</i> | White Paper | www.skillssoft.com/Analysis | HR, L&D, Procurement, Business Unit Leader |

Resources at-a-glance

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Section 3

| Title | Asset Type | URL | Audience |
|---|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| <i>Cloud-Based Learning Solutions RFP Checklist</i> | Checklist | www.skillssoft.com/RFPChecklist | HR, L&D, Procurement |
| <i>Increase Agility with Skillsoft IT Solutions</i> | Video | www.skillssoft.com/ITSample | HR, L&D, IT |
| <i>Getting Started with Skillsoft: Implementation</i> | Video | www.skillssoft.com/Implementation | HR, L&D |
| <i>The Skillsoft Learning Growth Model</i> | White Paper | www.skillssoft.com/LGM | HR, L&D, Business Unit Leader |

Section 4

| Title | Asset Type | URL | Audience |
|--|---------------------|--|--|
| <i>Communicating a High-impact Business Case</i> | Course (9-mins) | www.skillssoft.com/BusinessCaseCourse | HR, L&D, IT, Procurement, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>PGA: Professional growth in a multigenerational workforce</i> | Case Study | www.skillssoft.com/PGA | HR, L&D, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>Cross-Functional Benefits Template</i> | Template | www.skillssoft.com/XFunctional | HR, L&D, IT, Procurement, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>L&D Business Case Template</i> | PowerPoint Template | www.skillssoft.com/BusinessCasePPT | HR, L&D, IT, Procurement, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>Developing an L&D Business Case</i> | Webinar | www.skillssoft.com/BusinessCaseWebinar | HR, L&D, IT, Procurement, Business Unit Leader |
| <i>Efficient L&D Spend: Maximizing Your Learning Budget</i> | Checklist | www.skillssoft.com/BudgetChecklist | HR, L&D |

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