

A woman in a yellow hard hat and green overalls is looking towards a man in a yellow hard hat. They are in a warehouse or industrial setting with metal shelving units. The woman has her arms crossed and is looking intently at the man. The man is partially visible on the right side of the frame, wearing a yellow hard hat and a white shirt. In the background, another person in a yellow hard hat is visible, working with a large wooden pallet. The overall scene suggests a collaborative work environment.

Why content management is a game changer for any successful training program

Increase efficiencies, reduce costs and free up more time and resources with SharePoint

Now, more than ever, organizations are focusing on full spectrum talent development in order to stay one step ahead of the competition. Training plays a key role in this initiative and many turn to learning management systems (LMS) to streamline the process.

With the LMS market expected to grow 23 percent by 2018, so will eLearning. This year alone, the global eLearning market is expected to reach \$107 billion and over 57 percent of organizations are utilizing some form of online and blended learning. In fact, the need for eLearning content is so great that companies are putting together entire teams of people that include instructional designers, editors, graphic designers and authoring tool specialists.

Content management will play an increasingly important role in training and could be the game changer between success and failure for companies. This white paper will explain the importance of content management as it relates to training initiatives, tips to effectively organize content and streamline processes and why connecting your CMS with an LMS is a smart training solution.

Without the right pieces in place, training efforts will fall flat

There is no question that content is king and the backbone of any learning program. Trainers spend hours putting together learning material in preparation for a class, whether in-person or online. Often, this includes multiple people and several versions of documents.

To put it in perspective, companies can produce in upwards of hundreds of eLearning modules each year from PowerPoint presentations to video, webinars and reading material to name a few. And, of course, these courses need to be updated regularly.

As you can see, content creation can be a complex process which is why it's so important to have a good document management system in place. Because, as we know all too well, the more a document is moved the more it leaves the door open for errors. Remember the telephone game? Someone tells the person next to them a piece of information from which they tell the person next to them and so on and so forth. By the time it reaches the last person, the message is completely different. This is very much what happens when crucial training information goes from computer to computer, file to file, email to email. Uploaded into this system and that system.

Putting the horse before the cart never yields great results. You can have the best LMS and eLearning in the world but if you can't find the right content or have problems loading it onto your LMS, you've wasted your time and efficiency is down the tube.

Content management reigns supreme in eLearning



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HISTORY OF CONTENT MANAGEMENT

In 1996, out of a need to streamline the complexity of publishing news came the modern day content management system. C|Net, the Internet news publishing company was at that time one of the Web's first high-volume publishers and faced some serious production challenges.

The process was daunting. An author first had to submit an article, an editor would review it and make changes, possibly even sending the article back to the author for editing. Next, it went to the copy editor. Multiple versions of the document could be flying back and forth among the author, editor and copy editor. Once the content was finalized, it needed to be put into layout and posted to the Web.

C|Net needed to be able to collapse the entire process for publishing an article down to a matter of hours while simultaneously handling a huge number of articles. They created a system that would eliminate most of the painful issues of paper passing, logistics and scheduling. C|net quickly realized that the tool they had built for themselves would be valuable to anyone who had large quantities of content and needed to be published and kept up-to-date online.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT AND ELEARNING

Fast forward 20 years and companies utilizing eLearning face many of the same challenges that C|Net did and are tasked with producing and maintaining a daunting amount of custom e-learning content.

CMS's were generally not being used in online learning because the return on investment was not there. A CMS is usually an expensive piece of software both to buy and to set up. But, Microsoft's collaboration platform, SharePoint, changed the entire training landscape. With one in two Fortune 500 companies already using Microsoft SharePoint, it was natural for training managers to expand its usage for content related to the entire employee lifecycle: recruiting/onboarding, connecting, learning, performance management and succession.

A good content management system should:

- Offer a streamlined, workflow automation process – versioning, tasks and roles.
- Include a searchable database
- Enable you to get your content to the Web faster

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CONTENT MANAGEMENT BENEFITS

There are many benefits to a content management systems, including:

- Learning content creation workflow management, including program/project management, team workflows and version control.
- Controlled access to learning objects to ensure integrity and authenticity.
- Data Security (encryption) over the entire content lifecycle to maintain privacy.
- Integration with enterprise LDAP (Active Directory) and Single sign-on platforms to categorize and authenticate users.
- Content Authoring tools to generate the reusable learning objects.
- APIs for integration with LMS and other enterprise systems.
- Ability to co-manage content with enterprise LMS and ECM
- Compatibility with SCORM and ExperienceAPI in order to track and report user interactions, including testing and evaluation.
- Reporting tools (stand-alone) and the ability to transfer experience/interaction data to the LMS where necessary.

RISKS OF POOR CONTENT MANAGEMENT

- Misinformation or duplicate content. Misinformation can be worse than having no information at all. It can give your end users a false sense of confidence that they have the answer when it may be months — or even years — out-of-date. It not only leads to performance issues but also to possible compliance issues that can be particularly difficult to solve.
- Hard to find and inaccessible content. You've spent time and resources creating (or fixing) content, but now no one can find it. Or it may be that they can find it but they just can't open it from the device at hand.
- Inefficient use of learning resources. Think about your internal team of content creators. They can spend anywhere from 40 to over 1,000 hours creating an hour of training. Giving them solutions that make it easy for them to share their knowledge with your organization makes sense, but it's easily overlooked.

SharePoint content management tips and tricks

Trainers spend hours upon hours putting together their learning material in preparation for a class, whether it's in-classroom or online. Often times, it also includes multiple people and multiple versions of documents. With two out of three organizations using SharePoint, it's fair to say that most likely these important training documents have been routed and stored within SharePoint.

Here are a few tips and tricks to better organize your training content in SharePoint.

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Project Management in SharePoint

SharePoint reigns supreme when it comes to collaboration and staying organized is crucial when there are multiple people creating training content. Team sites are a great way for small, specific projects and is highly customizable — upload content, create task lists for team members, use blogs or wikis to share information, gather input with discussions or surveys and establish a team calendar.

For even more convenience, try using SharePoint and Microsoft Project together. By using the sync feature between Microsoft Project and SharePoint, it allows the project schedule to be maintained in Microsoft Project while seamlessly communicating and collaborating around that plan with your team in SharePoint. A team site will automatically be created and team members can view the schedule, update their work status, and make other changes in SharePoint, which will be reflected in Project.

Customized team workflows and version control

Workflows and version control are a necessity when creating content. SharePoint workflows help orchestrate the progress of training materials through the stages of development while versioning helps learning managers ensure content team members are on the same page, both literally and figuratively.

SharePoint Versioning also allows you to use the ability to leverage content approval. This is useful if a document needs to be reviewed before it's published "live." For example, an employee handbook may have quite a few collaborators and editors. However, before being distributed or made available companywide, an HR manager will need to approve its contents.

The first step is to configure the library:

- Navigate to the library and choose the Library tab
- Click Library Settings.
- Under General Settings, click Versioning settings.
- Under the Content Approval section, choose Yes.
- Under the Document Version History section, choose Create major and minor (draft) versions.
- Under the Draft Item Security section, choose 'only users who can edit items.' If you leave the default setting, then only the user who submits the document and the approver will be able to view the document while in draft mode. By setting it to 'only users who can edit items', members of the team can edit the document, but those with read only access to the library will be unable to see the document until it is published.
- Click OK. When you navigate back to the library, you'll notice a new column, Approval Status, has automatically been added.

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So now when a member user uploads a document, it is automatically assigned 'Draft' status. With every save a new minor version is created. After all the edits have been made the document needs approval from a user who has 'Approve Item' permissions. To submit an item for approval, an editor simply has to navigate to the document library, use the edit drop-down for the item and choose 'Publish a Major Version.' Now when a user with 'Approve Item' permissions navigates to the document library they will be able to determine what documents need approval by the pending status. They can either approve or reject the document.

Set permissions for controlled access and data security of training materials

A big benefit of using SharePoint is that it's directly linked to your active directory. As a result, you can set permissions for each training document that will define who accesses what and where in your SharePoint environment. User permissions are a key point of SharePoint security management.

Here's a tip: if you're going to be looking at managing SharePoint Security with groups, it's very, very crucial that you have a healthy, active directory and manage your permissions from one place. Instead of granting permissions individually, create a SharePoint group or Active Directory group which is helpful when there are several people needing the same permissions.

Utilize search and metadata in SharePoint

A huge issue related to content management is disorganization. Training materials are located in multiple locations and nobody can find the most recent file. SharePoint solves this problem with advanced search features and metadata.

With so much training material being created, adding metatags is crucial. Metadata is essentially information about the file so that it's more searchable and easier to find. Another option is to add tags which is a descriptive word that will explain the file, e.g. safety or orientation.

LMS + CMS fusion = Training Success

Having an organized content management system in place is essential for any training manager. Those that take it one step further and utilize a CMS that works in synergy with an LMS receive an unparalleled advantage.

One problematic issue that is very impactful for trainers is difficulty loading content to an LMS? There are a million LMSs on the market that all claim to have the ability to connect with various systems. In theory, this is true, but the process often times is daunting and complicated. There continues to be a usability issue. In fact, an LMS that is too difficult to use is a big reason for switching to another system.

Herein lies benefits that are exclusive to a SharePoint LMS.

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- Trainers don't have to worry about jumping from one system to another. ShareKnowledge is not just integrated with SharePoint but built on top of it, functioning as one of its components. Anything you do in SharePoint is easily and seamlessly translated to the LMS.
- Increased security and compliance. Having one central location in SharePoint to house training documents provides an added level of confidence knowing that only the most up-to-date information is available.
- Better return on investment. One in two Fortune 500 companies are already using SharePoint. Adding LMS functionality is the icing on the cake. Make the most of your organizations existing infrastructure, processes and know-how, resulting in lower overall costs in upfront acquisition, annual per-user license fees and expenses related to support, deployment and integration. Experience up to a 60 percent lower total cost of ownership than other systems on the market.

Conclusion

There is no question that the rate of eLearning will continue to increase in the years to come. With that, comes more and more learning content that will need to be juggled. Having a content management system in place is crucial in order to stay efficient, compliant and cost effective.

A training solution, like ShareKnowledge, offers the best of an LCMS and LMS. A tightly integrated LCMS and LMS solution offers unique benefits that surpass the value offered separately.

- No administrative conflicts
- Seamless, full working solution out-of-the-box with no further investments or delays
- Consistency between all areas of deployment including user interface, functionality, schema, administration and maintenance.
- Integrated security with common roles and privileges honored by both the LCMS and LMS – single logon and uniform access model.
- Uniform search capabilities between the two systems

We hope you enjoyed this eBook and found the information we provided helpful. If you would like to learn more about ShareKnowledge, please click on the link at the bottom of this page.

