

How to Choose a Learning Experience Platform

Theresa Decker



HOW TO CHOOSE A LEARNING EXPERIENCE PLATFORM

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Technology is no longer just about functionality; it's about tailoring experiences to individual users. A focus on personalization and user experience is transforming technology solutions from one-size-fits-all to curated environments that cater to end users' unique needs.

That paradigm shift affects the learning technology landscape, where the demand for engaging and effective training solutions continues to rise. Learning experience platforms (LXPs) drive effectiveness through training delivery and user engagement.

In this issue of *TD at Work*, I will:

- Describe different types of learning platforms.
- Present a business case for choosing an LXP.
- Offer guidance for selecting a platform.
- Unpack a framework for implementing an LXP.
- Present change management strategies for user adoption.
- Explain how to plan for future success.

Types of Learning Platforms

The evolution in learning technology mirrors a foundational change in how L&D professionals work. The rise of the modern workplace—characterized by remote work, rapid technological advancements, and the need for continuous upskilling and reskilling—requires a more agile, learner-first approach to training delivery.

While learning management systems have long served as the cornerstone for delivering and tracking training programs, various platforms are now available to meet corporate learning needs.

- A traditional LMS prioritizes administrative efficiency and compliance.
- LXPs prioritize the learner's journey, fostering a more engaging experience through features such as personalized learning recommendations, a robust user interface with customized environments, curated content from diverse sources, and social learning functionality.
- A learning destination site acts as a hub for curated learning content from different providers and offers a diverse library of resources to explore.

- Learning content management systems equip instructional designers to create, manage, and distribute a wide range of training materials, often with advanced authoring and collaboration tools, content repository capabilities, and content tracking and analytics.

Other types of learning platforms include massive open online courses; skill-based platforms; and content platforms that specialize in different delivery methods such as e-learning, live training, microlearning, immersive learning, and mobile learning.

Organizational Readiness

Before selecting and implementing an LXP, assess the organization's readiness by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the current learning ecosystem, stakeholder needs, as well as risks and constraints. Then, align the learning ecosystem with company goals. The assessment's overarching purpose is to determine the needs that an LXP will meet and what success looks like. The evaluation results help to build a business case and, later, develop an implementation plan.

LXPs and the Future of Work

A December 2024 report by Business Research Insights projects the global learning experience platform market to increase by 38 percent from 2024 to 2032. LXPs have grown in popularity due to the adoption of cloud-based technologies and rapid advancement around artificial intelligence and machine learning as well as the following key trends.

An emphasis on personalized learning experiences. Modern workplaces seek to foster an environment where all employees belong and can bring their whole selves to work, including their diverse learning preferences and career goals. LXPs cater to individual needs by providing personalized learning paths; relevant, skills-based content recommendations; and a more engaging training experience that leverages a variety of learning modalities.

A shift toward workplace flexibility. This requires that learners be able to access learning resources

anytime, anywhere. LXPs, with a mobile-first design that promotes accessibility, empower employees to learn at their own pace and convenience, whether in the office, at home, or on the go.

The need to minimize time to readiness and maximize learning agility through peer networks. Integrating social learning features such as comment streams, Q&As, resource sharing, tagging, discussion forums, and user feedback within LXPs fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing among employees. By creating communities of practice, LXPs encourage continuous learning within organizations.

A growing focus on data-driven decision making. This drives the adoption of LXPs with robust analytics capabilities. Such platforms provide valuable insights into employee training behavior, enabling organizations to identify skills gaps, evaluate learner progress in more meaningful ways, and predict future learning trends.

Current Ecosystem

Take stock of the existing learning infrastructure.

Identify the strengths, weaknesses, and requirements of current systems, including learning platforms; internal content libraries; third-party content subscriptions; and other learning instruments such as content authoring tools, virtual meeting and collaboration applications, and internal or external intranets. Consider how those systems support learning activities and identify potential integrations.

Look holistically at all aspects of the learning ecosystem, beyond technology and tools to the people, processes, and tacit or explicit knowledge that contribute to employee development. For example:

- Who are the subject matter experts? How do they share knowledge with others?
- Which delivery mechanisms are most common? Most effective?
- Which roles manage learning content and make it available to learners? That may include roles outside of a centralized training team, because some organizations have multiple teams responsible for content.
- What governance strategies are in place to provide structure, oversight, and accountability around training initiatives and content?
- How and where do learners consume, engage with, and reshare training materials?

Based on the evaluation, ascertain the needs an LXP can address such as gaps in peer-based knowledge sharing, learner engagement, centralized content curation, or learning analytics. Clearly define the problems and how an LXP implementation will help achieve the learning function's desired outcomes.

Stakeholder Analysis

During a stakeholder analysis, pinpoint whom the new LXP will affect and seek to better understand their roles, vested interest, and level of influence in the implementation process.

Stakeholders include learners, whom L&D may divide into different learner groups such as new-to-role staff, technical learners and specialists, managers, instructional designers, internal experts, process owners (in other words, teams that will directly support implementation

such as procurement, legal, project management, IT, and talent development), and senior leaders. The organization may also have specific SME groups that contribute to internal knowledge sharing or content creation whose members will be LXP superusers—think HR or compliance, sales, customer support, technical groups, and customer-facing training roles.

Partner with stakeholders prior to the launch by integrating the LXP into organizational processes. Those could include onboarding, performance management, and TD. Anticipate change resistance among stakeholder groups and develop strategies to address concerns and foster buy-in. It's never too early to create a communications strategy for the upcoming change that states the benefits of an LXP and pursues stakeholder engagement in decision making, which encourages ownership and support.

Collaborate with key stakeholders and champions to identify opportunities for leveraging the LXP to support their initiatives and goals. That may involve developing training programs using new engagement features, creating personalized learning environments or communities of practice for stakeholders' teams, piloting system functionality, or integrating learner engagement within a team's culture.

Successful stakeholder partnership ensures that the platform seamlessly embeds not only within the employee life cycle but also into key business processes and organizational culture from day one. Decide which stakeholders will work directly on LXP adoption and what their roles will be at each stage. Depending on the size of the organization, different teams may own different stages. For example, procurement may own the selection process but hand off the implementation to a project manager who will then work with TD or the customer-facing training team.

Risks and Constraints

Factors that may affect LXP implementation success include risks (uncertainties that may have a positive or negative impact) and constraints (known, existing limitations).

Risks include data and content migration complexities, compatibility and integration with existing technologies such as third-party content platforms, customer relation-