

Analysis of E-learning Platforms – Training & Development of Organizational Employees in IT/ITES sector

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Abstract: Online training and development of employees are essential in today's rapidly evolving workplace to keep skills and knowledge current. The convenience and accessibility of online training enable employees to engage in learning activities without geographical constraints or time limitations. IT/ITES sector of Gujarat, India is rapidly adopting online e-learning platforms for these trainings. It empowers employees to take control of their learning paths, allowing for self-paced modules and personalized content that caters to individual needs. Continuous online training enhances employee performance and job satisfaction enabling organisations to reap the benefits in a beneficial way for both the parties. This paper aims to discuss these trends and determine the factors affecting the selection of LMS portal for employee training and development.

Keywords: Online Training, E-learning Platforms, Employee Training, Training & Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the ongoing pursuit to achieve efficiency and effectiveness, both large corporations and small to medium enterprises (SMEs) seek avenues to acquire and sustain a competitive edge in the market. The cultivation of intellectual capital, encompassing know-what, know-how, and know-why, emerges as the main factor for achieving desired outcomes. The ability of organizations to impart education and training to their workforce on the job holds paramount significance. E-learning emerges as a channel empowering employees to acquire and update the knowledge essential for task performance.

This paper aims to discuss the current practices of e-learning applications usage within organizations. The continual advancements in information and communication technologies, coupled with the ongoing evolution of e-learning, usher in novel modes of learning. These modes prove appealing to small and medium-sized enterprises, transcending traditional barriers like financial constraints, time limitations, expertise shortages, and facility constraints. The paper underlines the importance for corporations to embrace learning by merging into the current landscape and future potential of e-learning in fostering employee skill development. IT/ITES sector in Gujarat, India is a flourishing sector where the government is promoting to strengthen the Information Technology ecosystem of the state. The researcher interviewed the HR managers of leading IT/ITES sector firms to understand the usage of LMS platform and determine the factors for selection of the LMS platform.

The findings underscore a positive relationship among respondents toward leveraging e-learning for personal training and development. Despite this favourable attitude, it is noticed that organizations suffer from a lack of actual implementation of such training programs. Furthermore, the study reveals an underutilization of information and communication technologies, emphasizing the need to actively train, motivate, and encourage employees to harness these tools more frequently.

2. TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT: EMPLOYEES

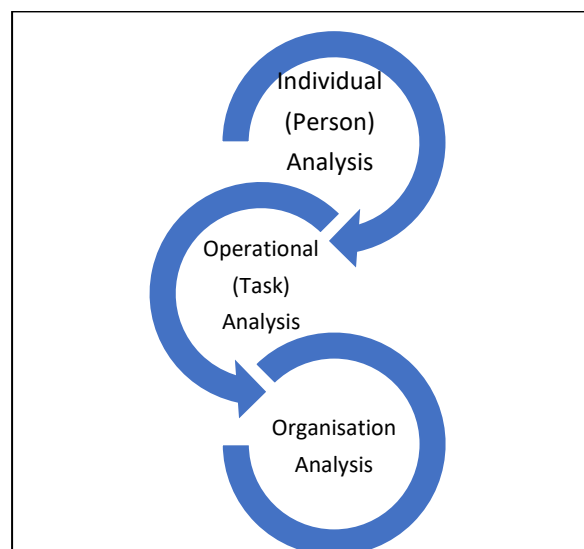
Employee training and development helps organizations achieve their objectives. One academic study reported, “Employees who receive talent training in organizations are 75 percent more likely to succeed in senior positions and future leadership roles”. (Louai Damer) Rapid advancements in technology impact various industries. Continuous training ensures that employees stay current with the latest tools and technologies, enhancing their efficiency and productivity. Training programs help employees acquire new skills and refine existing ones. This is vital for employees to meet the changing demands of their roles and contribute effectively to the organization. Employees who receive training opportunities often experience higher job satisfaction. Knowing that their employer invests in their professional development can boost morale and motivation.

In many cases, talent training starts with an individualized training plan. Training plans serve as instrumental tools in fostering individual and operational success by furnishing a coherent roadmap for the attainment of goals. By doing so, they facilitate both individuals and organizations in maintaining focus and adherence to their predetermined trajectories. A meticulously crafted training plan offers a methodical framework for the overarching objective, strategically dividing it into more digestible and manageable components.

This systematic breakdown serves the purpose of optimizing the utilization of time and resources by prioritizing tasks and activities in a logical sequence. Furthermore, well-structured training plans incorporate mechanisms for tracking progress, thereby providing a means to ascertain and guarantee that the training endeavors yield the anticipated and desired outcomes. In essence, these plans contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning process, ensuring a purposeful and outcome-driven approach to skill development and goal accomplishment.

3. E-LEARNING PLATFORMS

Educational platforms are virtual environments specifically designed to facilitate and improve the teaching and learning process. These platforms provide an online space where participants can access educational materials, participate in interactive activities, collaborate with their peers, and receive feedback from others. At the same time, instructor can use these platforms to organize and deliver educational content, assess student progress, and foster communication and interaction in the virtual classroom. One of the main advantages of educational platforms is the flexibility offered by them. Learners can access materials and resources anytime, anywhere, allowing them to tailor their learning at their own pace and needs. Furthermore, the digital tools embedded in these platforms, such as interactive videos, educational games, simulations and online assessments, make the learning process more engaging and motivating for learners, thus encouraging their active participation and development of key skills.



4. E-LEARNING PLATFORMS FOR EMPLOYEE TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Learning Management Systems (LMS) play a crucial role in employee training and development. Implementing an LMS can lead to significant benefits for businesses. Studies have shown that companies using employee training solutions through an LMS experience higher income and profit margins. An LMS allows for cost reduction associated with in-person training, while also enabling easy monitoring of employee progress. It enhances communication and collaboration among employees and provides customizable content for personalized learning experiences. Additionally, an LMS facilitates faster time-to-productivity for new employees. When choosing an LMS, it is important to consider factors such as user-friendliness, security, scalability, detailed analytics, customization capabilities, and integration with existing systems.

5. SOME COMMON E-LEARNING PLATFORMS

Some of the top platforms for employee online learning include:

- a) 360 Learning: It is an all-in-one learning platform that combines the capabilities of an LMS, LXP, and Academies. It offers social learning features, automated tasks, collaboration tools, AI-powered question generation, streamlined user management, SCORM integration, and more.
- b) Absorb LMS: This cloud-based learning management system allows organizations to store and deliver virtual training content to employees. It provides customization options for user groups, personalized learning experiences through AI-powered recommendations, and a mobile app for on-the-go training.
- c) Talent LMS: This platform focuses on simplicity and usability. It allows users to create customizable training portals for different audiences and facilitates human interaction through discussion boards and messaging.
- d) Percipio: It is an AI-powered learning platform offered by Skillsoft. It provides learners with access to a vast library of learning content tailored to the skills needed by leading global companies. The platform uses AI to personalize learning for each user, helping them progress quickly and efficiently from one point to another. It also improves search and discovery by utilizing AI models from Google and Meta. Percipio offers curated learning paths called Channels and role-based learning paths known as Aspire Journeys, which connect learning to development and help learners advance in their careers. The platform supports various learning formats such as videos, books, audiobooks, and live events. Learners can also earn certifications and digital badges through the platform.
- e) Cornerstone OnDemand: This platform provides a comprehensive suite of learning and talent management solutions. It offers personalized learning paths, content management, social collaboration, and analytics.
- f) SAPLitmos: A cloud-based learning management system that offers a user-friendly interface and a wide range of features. It includes course creation, assessments, reporting, and integration with other HR systems.
- g) Docebo: A powerful and scalable LMS that supports employee training and development. It offers features like gamification, social learning, mobile learning, and AI-based recommendations.
- h) iSpring Learn: iSpring Learn is a cloud-based learning management system (LMS) that ranks as the top platform for employee training. It offers an intuitive interface, interactive content creation capabilities, real-time analytics, and easy-to-follow learning tracks. While it has limitations on content storage and certain features, it is recommended for small businesses and enterprises.
- i) LearnWorlds: LearnWorlds is an online platform primarily designed for creating and selling online courses. It provides tools for creating video courses with interactive elements, making it suitable for employee training purposes as well. While it is not specifically an LMS, it offers features that can support employee learning and development initiatives.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY- OPEN INTERVIEW WITH MANAGERS

IT/ITES sector is a majorly expanding sector in India. With their staff varying at various levels from Junior most staff, a sizable mid-level managers and Leadership Team which is guided by Senior Leadership Team, it is challenging for these companies to recruit trainers or Hire consultancy firms which can develop Trainings for multi-level employees. Hence, they prefer an Online LMS which can provide various trainings like Communication Training, Technical Training, Non-Technical Training & Refresher courses. These courses are assigned to employees on their Login Portal with a defined

structure of courses to be completed for the quarter. A structured questionnaire was used to understand the selection criteria of e-learning platform for organisational employees. HR managers and Training & Development Managers were interviewed for this survey who were using E-learning platforms for companies having a staff of more than 500. The researchers interviewed a total of 10 managers to dig in deep about their evaluation techniques and factors affecting decision making while selecting the E-learning Platform. The interview was conducted in an open format to let the managers express their mind freely while using structured questions as a base.

Based on their discussion with respondents, the author has identified the following crucial factors that determine the selection criteria of an e-learning platform for a corporate organization.

7. RESULTS & FINDINGS

During discussions with the respondents, it was ascertained that the selection of a Learning Management System (LMS) portal for their employees will be influenced by two distinct categories of factors. The first category comprises fundamental considerations, which are deemed as basic factors. These factors predominantly dictate the selection process based on existing dynamics and demographics. They pertain to internal factors that are inherent and must align with the LMS. The second category encompasses factors that can be tailored or determined based on specific needs. These are external factors that ultimately govern the selection of the LMS by organizations.

A. BASIC FACTORS (INTERNAL)

1. Cost:

The cost of a Learning Management System (LMS) is influenced by several key factors. The abundance of features within an LMS directly correlates with its cost, as more advanced functionalities, including course creation tools, gamification, social learning, and reporting, contribute to a higher overall expense. The chosen deployment method, whether cloud-based or self-hosted, also plays a significant role in cost considerations. Cloud-based LMSs tend to have lower upfront costs, although recurring monthly or annual fees may apply. On the other hand, self-hosted LMSs require a substantial initial investment in hardware and software but may alleviate ongoing fees. Additionally, the number of users is a crucial determinant, as most LMSs charge on a per-user basis, meaning a larger user base results in increased costs. Furthermore, LMS vendors may provide supplementary support services such as training and implementation for an additional fee, contributing to the overall cost assessment.

2. Data Security:

Corporate Learning Management System (LMS) platforms may store personal employee information such as HR records, performance evaluations, training records, or payroll data. To protect this sensitive employee data from unauthorized access or misuse, strong data security measures are implemented. This ensures that employee privacy is maintained and data protection laws are complied with. LMS platforms may also host valuable corporate training materials, proprietary content, or copyrighted resources. To prevent unauthorized distribution, unauthorized use, or piracy of these intellectual property assets, data security measures are put in place. This preserves their value and protects the company's investment. In addition, corporate LMS platforms may contain confidential information such as trade secrets, financial data, customer lists, or strategic plans. Therefore, data security measures are essential to safeguard this information from unauthorized access, leakage, or theft. This helps protect the company's competitive advantage and reputation. Overall, implementing data security measures on LMS platforms helps protect the integrity and availability of learning materials, assessments, and certifications. This ensures that employees receive accurate and reliable training resources.

3. Integration with Other Tools:

Many organizations use different software tools like MS Teams, Slack, and other related products to stay connected. It is essential for these organizations to integrate their Learning Management System (LMS) with various other software tools to create a seamless and interconnected digital ecosystem. This integration helps to enhance the overall functionality and effectiveness of the LMS by leveraging the capabilities of other specialized tools. For instance, integrating Human Capital Management (HCM) systems streamlines workforce management and training coordination, ensuring a cohesive approach to employee development. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools can also be integrated to synchronize training

efforts with customer engagement strategies, fostering a holistic approach to organizational growth. Moreover, integrating web conference platforms facilitates real-time collaboration and interactive learning experiences. Integration with content libraries also ensures easy access to a wealth of educational resources.

4. Scalability:

The individuals concerned in this paper belong to a dynamic sector where the number of employees and the design of the organization are prone to fluctuations. Scalability is a term that describes a system's ability to manage an increasing workload without compromising its performance or functionality. In the context of a Learning Management System (LMS), scalability refers to its capacity to accommodate a growing number of users, courses, and data, while ensuring optimal performance. When discussing LMS scalability, there are two important aspects to consider: horizontal scalability and vertical scalability. Horizontal scalability pertains to the ability to add more servers to the system to handle increased demand. On the other hand, vertical scalability involves upgrading the existing servers to handle the additional load.

B. CUSTOMIZABLE FACTORS(EXTERNAL)

1. Ease of Use:

Evaluating the ease of use and low learning curve of an e-learning platform is key to ensuring effective adoption and efficient use by designers and employees. The ability to quickly and efficiently design courses, with the help of templates and pre-created resources, is an important factor to evaluate. Additionally, it's important to consider if the platform is intuitive and easy to use for anyone, even those with no prior design knowledge. The ability to navigate and use the tool smoothly and without difficulty is essential to ensuring a satisfying experience for designers and employees.

2. Interactivity & Design:

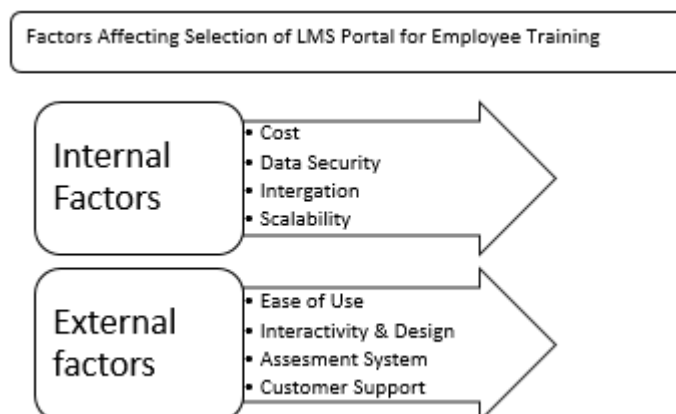
An ideal e-learning platform for an organization should provide a wide range of interactive features. These features could include the option to include videos, animations, and other advanced tools. The availability of these features enables e-learning designers to create engaging and unforgettable online learning experiences. Interactive elements can improve the retention and application of knowledge among learners, catering to the diverse learning needs and preferences of employees. This fosters a personalized and enriching learning experience. Sometimes these platforms offer pre-built templates that designers can use as a starting point to create their interactions. With the help of AI, employees can save their work and use it for future reference or refresh their learnings quickly.

3. Reporting and Assessment System:

A well-designed e-learning platform must have a strong reporting and assessment system to ensure that learning objectives are achieved and the learner's experience is continuously improved. The assessment system should be flexible enough to allow course designers and instructors to easily customize assessments according to their specific needs and learning objectives. The platform should offer a variety of assessment types, such as free-form writing assessments, multiple-choice assessments, drag-and-drop assessments, and other interactive assessment methods. It should also provide automation services that can automatically grade assessments and provide instant feedback to students. Additionally, the platform should offer a wide range of student progress and performance reports, including charts, statistics, and detailed summaries.

4. Quality Customer Service:

Ensuring quality customer support and service is crucial for the seamless resolution of issues and efficient handling of inquiries. It is imperative to verify that the platform provides a dedicated and easily accessible support team capable of addressing technical problems and platform usage queries promptly. When arranging a demo, consider asking pertinent questions such as the available support options (e.g., email, live chat, documentation), the accessibility of support 24/7 or within specific hours, the existence of a comprehensive knowledge base with articles and tutorials, the presence of a dedicated customer support team, the possibility of scheduling a call or demonstration with a support representative, and the availability of video tutorials and webinars to facilitate the learning process. These inquiries contribute to the assessment of the platform's commitment to delivering reliable and effective customer support services.



8. CONCLUSION

Corporate training as a form of developing the professionalism of employees and reproducing the necessary competencies of personnel has a long tradition, methodology and a set of technological educational techniques that ensure high efficiency of in-house training programs. At the same time, the corporate training market, which includes a set of programs, providers, educational and consulting structures, etc., has stable development trends that, regardless of environmental factors, demonstrate the sustainability of demand. According to a report published by Allied Market Research titled "Corporate Training Market", the volume of the global corporate training market in 2019 was estimated at 332.9 billion US dollars and is estimated to reach 487.3 billion dollars by 2030, increasing by an average of 8% from 2021 to 2030.

In conclusion, the paramount consideration in the selection of a Learning Management System (LMS) for an organization lies in the alignment of the platform with the unique needs and goals of the organization. The successful implementation of an LMS hinges upon its ability to seamlessly integrate with the organization's specific requirements, ensuring that it not only addresses immediate concerns but also aligns with long-term strategic objectives. By prioritizing needs and goal alignment, organizations can optimize the effectiveness of the chosen LMS, fostering a conducive environment for learning and development tailored to their distinct operational context. The organizations that are striving to select an LMS can use this research as a base to make their selection amongst various platforms.

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