Learning Management System Pros and Cons

New ways of learning and communicating are constantly emerging and traditional methods are being challenged everyday. For example, a Learning Management System, or LMS, has become an integral tool for online learning and an extremely powerful tool for businesses and employees alike. Not only can an LMS distribute training to your staff quickly and easily, but it has the ability to track their progress, generate reports, and much, much more.

The LMS emerged out of the eLearning concept that began in the 1990's and has steadily become more sophisticated with the growing popularity of online learning. And with the ease of access to online platforms, learning new skills and competencies has never been more achievable.

And here's the thing – an LMS doesn't just relay information; an LMS keeps people safe. Increasing safety in an organization saves lives and valuable resources for a company. Did you know that a single accident, on average, costs $120,000 to a company in lost productivity and downtime' Whereas implementing a system to improve workplace safety actually returns an average of $4.41 per dollar invested, a no brainer when it comes to safety.

But is using an LMS right for you' Companies have been using their own systems for years, working with printed forms and delivering in class training since well before computers were a thing. Is now the right time to switch to an LMS' There are hundreds of options for Learning Management Systems, ranging widely in features and price, from basic forms to full featured systems. Whether you are still unsure if you need an LMS, or if you are planning to try one out, read on for a full discussion of the pros and cons of using a Learning Management System.

Advantages:

- Flexibility

A traditional classroom course forces students to be available during a specific time and date. With eLearning, students can take a course whenever it is convenient for them. An LMS provides great flexibility to its users. Instead of having to schedule a large number of students into one day, you can simply assign a course to them and have them complete it on their own time. The flexibility of an LMS is one of the most attractive things about it – it helps

make learning easy and engaging, and students don't need to wait to start developing their skills.

- Less Expensive

Have you ever sat down and calculated how expensive traditional classroom learning costs' Travel costs, pausing work for a day course, overhead costs for instructors and classrooms, the list goes on' Although an LMS is not free, it certainly mitigates the costs that tend to pile up when using classroom training. Plus, the expenses of items that are complementary to the course such as physical paper and administrative work for training record filing disappear when you have a fully online solution. Most Learning Management Systems can track and record employees' progress and certificates to lower the amount of administrative work that goes on behind the scenes'a great, and often forgotten side effect.

- Accessible

Taking an online course now looks different than it did even a few years ago. Before, an online course may have needed to be taken on a desktop computer with hard-wired internet. Nowadays, courses have become more compatible with a variety of different mediums. Courses can be loaded onto mobile phones, tablets, or laptops and completed when time permits. By having accessible education, employees and students are more likely to complete their training due to the sheer convenience.

- Pace control

Not everyone has the same learning styles. Some catch on very quickly while others may need to take their time to deeply understand the content. In a classroom it can be difficult to cater to everyone's unique learning styles and paces, which can be frustrating for students. With an online course delivered by an LMS, each learner can take as little or as much time as they need on any given topic. Employees will be able to retain much more information when they can work through it at their own pace which will result in better training and a safer workplace.

- Reporting and analytics

As a company, you cannot measure what you cannot track. Having robust reports and analytics is the key to measuring how your company is doing in terms of training progress and where each of your individual employees are at in their training program. You could see at a glance where your employees are missing valuable training regardless of the location, company role, or department. On the other hand, viewing what training your employees have makes it easier to create a succession path for further development as well.

Deploying an LMS into your organization provides countless benefits and it can be the difference between good safety, and great safety. However, an LMS is not a one-size-fits-all solution, and it is important to weigh the pros and cons of a system before investing and integrating it into your business.

Disadvantages

- Scope Limitations:

Most courses can be delivered with an LMS, such as WHMIS 2015, TDG, or any soft skills course. However, some courses require a practical component or a competency assessment, like you would find in a heavy equipment operator course. The physical experience of operating the equipment is something that cannot be replicated with online learning. While a student may be able to complete the theory online, it's clear that online learning cannot replace every type of learning situation.

- Technology issues

Technology is an integral part of our world and used widely across every industry, although it is not error-free. Technology can absolutely be a limiting factor in education. A slow internet connection or glitches in the software can render a course unplayable or create problems submitting test answers. An IT team may be necessary to ensure your employees are able to complete their courses with any hiccups.

- Hands-Off Approach

While some people prefer to learn at their own pace without any extra help or instructing, this is not the reality for all learners. The hands-off approach could be challenging for learners who require extra help or want an instructor present to dive deeper into material. The impersonal nature of online training may lead to lower retention with some subject matter. It is a great idea to integrate virtual learning practices with Zoom calls or video conferences to make sure learners have all the resources they need to be successful.

- Employee Accountability

Online learning can provide employees with a temptation to slack off, no matter how honest and trustworthy they are. Most Learning Management Systems are secure and have measures in place to help mitigate the risk of inappropriate behavior or cheating. However, there will always be instances of students attempting to skirt the system and falsify their participation. There are additional tools and techniques to improve integrity such as virtual or remote proctoring or competency exams, but it is something that management should be aware of when looking into an LMS.

The Verdict'

Education in any fashion is never wasted, and while there are advantages and disadvantages to any system, a LMS can do more than teach your employees skills to help them perform better at their job. A Learning Management System can enable your employees to facilitate learning and help nurture the development of their skills. It can help empower your employees to work towards goals and collaborate with upper management to continually develop their skills and ultimately, their careers. These pros and cons of an LMS can help you decide whether the LMS is something that would fit in with your company. By weighing the options of different Learning Management Systems, you will be well on your way to finding a solution that increases the employee experience as a whole and helps to develop future leaders.

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