

Gyrus Systems

Learning Management System (LMS) Switching Guide



Gyrus Systems

5400 Glenside Drive Suite B, Henrico, VA 23228

Phone: (888)-464-9787 | <http://www.gyrus.com>

Table of Contents

Introduction: Evolving Learning Management Systems3

Identifying the Reasons To Switch Your LMS.....4

The Process of Switching.....6

Selecting a New LMS.....9

The LMS Switch Success Story.....10

The Switch and Maximize ROI.....11

Gyrus Resources.....12

Final Thoughts.....13



Evolving Learning Management Systems

Learning Management Systems have evolved alongside with the entire concept of learning. Learning no longer only takes place in classrooms—now it can take place online, from a Cloud-based software, from a mobile phone—the possibilities are seemingly endless. Take a second and consider the following questions:

- Is my LMS making all of the latest technology tools and resources available to me as a customer?
- Does my LMS have social capabilities and features?
- Am I investing too much time and resources into an LMS that is rarely upgrading or improving?

Is Your LMS Keeping Up With Emerging Technologies?

Identifying the Reasons To Switch Your LMS

If you answered 'Yes' to any of the three questions on the previous page, it may be the time for you to switch your LMS. The reasons behind switching an LMS are *more important* than the actual decision to switch because they can be extremely helpful in deciding what you want from your new LMS vendor. Common reasons for switching include scalability issues, outdated features, complicated interface, and poor customer support.

The decision to switch can be narrowed down into three main factors:

1. The product

- feature
- function
- integration

2. The vendor

- service
- support
- continuity

3. The cost

- annual/licensing
- maintenance
- overhead

According to a January 2009 survey conducted by Bersin & Associates, *one quarter* of customers were dissatisfied with their current LMS and said they were likely to switch vendors *within the next year*.

Key Reasons

The Product

LMS products are constantly changing: more features, implementation of dashboards, additional automations and reporting functionalities, and so on. If you're using a software that is years old and you can't even remember the last time you saw a significant upgrade, you're probably using an outdated software. However, it's also important to remember that the newer vendors may not have as much experience in the LMS industry or worked out all the kinks yet.

The Vendor

The ideal vendor provides a consistent experience year after year (this includes both the quality of their product and their customer support). Some vendors are bought out, causing you to become acquainted with a company you did not originally agree to work with, or even choose to discontinue products that many customers rely on for success.

The Cost

What exactly are you paying for? Do you have to pay more for the experience you feel you deserve? Perhaps you're spending more for features you have no use for? Regardless of your situation, transparency is important. Customers deserve to know where their money is going and trust that the vendor will give them the biggest bang for their buck.

The Process of Switching

Not so fast. Before switching your LMS, it's important to create a list of requirements. This will allow you to easily distinguish between vendors during the shopping process.

These 7 components can help you during the process of switching to a new LMS:

1. Problem Description
2. Team
3. New Requirements
4. IT policies
5. Data migration
6. Use case scenarios
7. Future readiness

7 Components

1. Problem Description

Pretty simple. What's the problem that you need to solve? Identify likes and dislikes of your current LMS system and the reason(s) for wanting to switch. This component is important because it will help steer you in the rest of the process, but be sure to include factors not only related to the product, but also the vendor and cost.

2. Putting A Team In Place

Having one key team member who understands the problem clearly can help the process go smoothly. Perhaps an administrator or human resources member who has had experience using and managing your pre-existing LMS software.

3. New LMS Requirements Specifications

Create a document with your requirements for your new LMS. This document will include features, budget information, user information, etc. This will also help you choose which LMS is right for you.

4. Review IT Policies

Make sure you're familiar with your own IT policies, and what other vendors have to offer, such as hosting options.

7 Components

5. Scope and Plan for Data Migration

If you ask us, this is the most important component, and it involves migrating current data into a new LMS software. How easy is it? Will it cost you more? Is there any chance you'll lose any data or important information? These are some questions you'll want to ask up front and in the beginning, because nothing would be more disappointing than finding an LMS you love and then finding out that you cannot import your information into it. Be sure to consider overall content, training records, user generated content and miscellaneous information.

6. Use Case Scenario Demonstrations

Choose the top two or three LMS vendors and participate in use case scenario demonstrations.

7. Future Readiness Of The New LMS

When choosing an LMS, you have to consider the future. Will it be able to grow with your company? Look for any information on upcoming or expected updates that could confirm that this vendor is staying up to date and modern. *Scalability* is key with an LMS software because you if your organization grows, you'll want your LMS to be able to grow with you.

Selecting a New LMS

This process is different from the first time you adopted an LMS. You already know what to look for, you know the value of an LMS, and so on. Nevertheless, it's important to invest time, cost and human resources into choosing the right one (your users and business will thank you later for it).

LMS selection is done best by a committee or board, not one single person. It should also be a decision across departments—be sure to include several departments such as marketing, sales, human resources, and so on.

Remember: your product isn't the only thing changing—your vendor is too. What is their implementation process, client support, and security policy like? Research is very important in many aspects. Make sure you receive what you are promised from the vendor.

Don't forget the web is a great resource to compare and select a new LMS.

The LMS Switch Success Story

So you've successfully switched your LMS. Did you make the right decision? Here's some things to consider:

1. Does your new LMS meet all of the main needs that your old LMS was lacking? This should be an ongoing process as you may not see changes immediately. Set a timeline of evaluations of your new LMS to ensure not only it is effective immediately, but also over time.
2. Collect feedback from your team and user base. Do users enjoy using the new LMS compared to the old one? Is your team satisfied with the user roles and controls? This is also a good time to discuss reporting and metrics at an administrative level.
3. Communication with your vendor is key. Make sure you are aware of any software or version updates that are available, as well as any future plans the vendor has for the LMS product that you are using.

The Switch and Maximize ROI

One significant way to determine the effectiveness of your new LMS is to calculate the Return on Investment (ROI). When calculating your ROI, we suggest considering these five factors:

- The Introduction of the LMS
- The User's Experience
- Social Media Capabilities
- Content the LMS offers
- Learning Effectiveness

Gyrus Resources

Available at www.gyrus.com:

- Blog posts
- Case Studies
- Customer Testimonials
- White Papers
- Polls
- On-Call: Give us a call, we are available to consult on your LMS needs

Final Thoughts

We hope that this has provided you with a useful resource on switching your LMS. It is important to understand both current and future training requirements for your company and, even further, your industry. Please feel free to contact us to learn more about switching your LMS or our Learning Management System product, GyrusAim.

Phone: 1-888-GO-GYRUS
customer-care-team@gyrus.com
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