

What Would You Do Differently?

If you could choose your learning management software again, what would you change, or do differently? An informal survey of corporate and government trainers who purchased a Learning Management System (LMS) reveals some interesting observations. The ad-age, "hindsight is 20/20" applies here. Improve your vision as you read the following quotes.

Buy for Tomorrow

"I bought our LMS last year for how I was doing business then, and it was great for that. But I'm a big believer in change and our system doesn't allow me to implement my vision for my training department because it doesn't have the power to adapt."

"If I could do it again, I would have looked at the product's future potential."

Understand LMS Strategically

"To be honest, I underestimated the use of training software. I thought of it more as a utility like a calendar system or PDA, but now after using the product for a few months, I realized that my LMS is to a trainer what an accounting system is to an accountant. I want to use it for everything I do. Would I have bought the same product? I don't know. There is probably a better product out there that I didn't take the time to find."

"If I could do it again, I'd strive to better understand the strategic importance of an LMS."

Know the Company Behind the Product

"I looked at four LMS products. They all had their strengths and did all the basic functions, so I bought one based on price. But, I never thought to check out the company, and I learned later that the programmer developers double as support and trainers! I don't program, and I don't want their programmers training! They seem to have questionable business practices too; accounting difficulties, the phone was answered by a service. Sometimes I think that they just wanted us to hurry up and buy their software. They are nice people and honest, but small time and I question their staying power."

"If I could do it again, I'd look hard at the company behind the product."

Be Flexible to Improve Training

"We were so interested in finding an LMS that was a close match to how we run our training department now, that we completely ignored the logic in seeing how the LMS could improve the department. What a mistake! We could have better controlled our resources, automated more of the work, and produced better management reports even charts."

"If I could do it again, I'd look at how a good LMS could improve our training department."

What Would You Do Differently?

Buy Adequate Hardware

"We bought a great piece of software that does everything we needed, but I heard complaints that it was too slow. It turns out that our administrator didn't have enough horsepower in her computer, so our software vendor talked us into upgrading the hardware. It made a big difference and we could have saved headaches had we done this all sooner."

"If I could do it again, I'd have analyzed and upgraded the hardware before we had complaints!"

Integrate with Other Applications

"I took the job of Training Director after we installed our LMS. We are pleased, except for one thing, it does not interface with Excel. I have always liked to chart trends in training and Microsoft Excel has a great ability to print a wide variety of charts."

"If I could do it again, I would have selected a product that has a built-in interface with Excel."

Remember the Trainers

"My LMS doesn't even check for trainer's conflicts. How could I have missed such an important feature?! This system allowed me to schedule the same trainer, not just in two classes at the same time, but in two classes at the same time IN TWO DIFFERENT BUILDINGS!"

"If I could do it again, I would have looked closer at the details."

Calculate the Pay Back

"When I proposed to my management that we automate our training administration, I built a small business case to justify the purchase. Based on my calculations we decided to buy an inexpensive one. Needless to say, we got what we paid for. Next year, if I get the nerve up to ask for more money for another system, I will build a stronger business case that shows how a better system will decrease errors, provide better controls, and help plan the training function."

"If I could do it again, I would have built a stronger (more realistic) business case."

Plan Time to Implement

"We blew this one! We spent too long deciding on which product to buy. Our deadline was approaching quickly, so we made the decision a mere week before our schedule to convert. We never planned the implementation process. To be honest, I blame the software vendor for not explaining what is involved in this process. After all, aren't they supposed to be the experts?"

"If I could do it again, I would have made the purchase decision much sooner and had more time to convert our existing data and get the hardware set up."

What Would You Do Differently?

Test Support Lines

"I never called the vendor before buying the product, I didn't need to, but a couple of months after using the system, I had problems getting something to print right. So I called the vendor's support line. Busy. I called again and it was still busy. I finally got through and was placed on hold for what seemed forever. And then a young lady that I talked with just told me that she had never heard of that problem so it must be something wrong with my printer. She didn't even care!"

"If I could do it again, I'd find a software company that treats support as a key service."

Learn from the Vendors Trainers

"You know, you can learn a lot about an LMS vendor by their training staff. Consider it a barometer to see how well the vendor understands the training market. If they don't understand how to present an excellent training class, they don't understand the training industry. If their internal procedures for training management are suspect, what about their software? If they don't understand training, how can they produce good training software?"

"If I could do it again, I wouldn't change a thing. Gyrus Systems has the best training staff in the business, and we are delighted!"