



# **LMS Consideration Guide: How to Get the LMS You Need to Meet Your Goals**

eBOOK



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# Introduction

Have you outgrown your learning management system? Is your current system becoming more of a burden rather than being an innovative, flexible platform that supports optimal learning experiences for your learners and delivers a good return on investment? Or, maybe you are thinking about adopting an LMS for the first time for your organization.

Studies done by [MarketsandMarkets](#) indicate that the LMS market will grow from \$5.22 billion to \$15.72 billion by 2021. So it's probable that many organizations will invest their L&D dollars into a new learning management system, or get into the online learning game for the first time.

Choosing an LMS is an important and strategic decision, similar to selecting a home for your family. And getting it wrong can be very frustrating and costly, both in terms of time and budget spent. Particularly if the very people you want to be on board with your decision end up feeling alienated and become detractors instead of supporters. Not a recipe for a smooth transition!

## 12 CONSIDERATIONS

With hundreds of learning management systems to choose from, it is crucial to adopt a strategy that will help you sort through the myriad of options to select the system best suited to your organization. We start with looking internally at a number of factors that must be taken into consideration, including getting everyone in your organization on board for the journey, and determining present and future needs.

In the second half of this ebook, we pinpoint the factors involved in being able to set up your system to deliver engaging content to your learners. We walk you through how to integrate other business systems and how to get the most out of your LMS by digging deep into your learning data to gain profound insights and run reports. Our final step identifies the items to add to your LMS expense sheet to create a realistic budget.

This guide is the starting point for making this process as painless and effective as possible.

Happy LMS Shopping!

**Online learning is not  
the next big thing, it is  
the now big thing.**

DONNA J. ABERNATHY



# 1 Company's Past Experience

We touched on how choosing an LMS is similar to selecting a home for your family. This kind of decision depends on many factors. For example, where are you currently living and what isn't working about the living arrangement? Maybe a renovation to your current home will do the trick, or your family has simply outgrown your space and a new one is in order. Get specific about your family's situation.

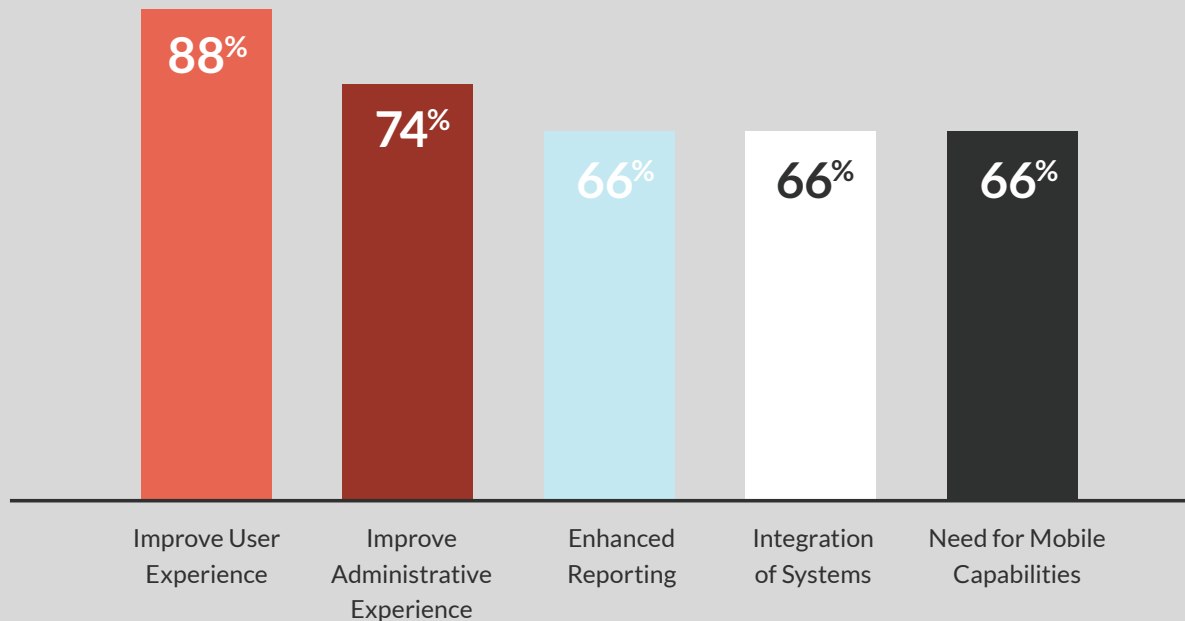
Choosing an LMS also depends on your organization's past experience. Is it your first LMS or third generation that you are looking for? Already having an LMS should help in identifying desired features and also what is lacking from your current system. Two of the biggest reasons companies have for wanting to switch their LMS are:

- a) poor user experience and
- b) insufficient reporting.

A study done by research and analyst firm Brandon Hall Group found nearly half of the companies surveyed in 2016 were considering replacing their learning management system (LMS) for the reasons depicted in the chart below.

Document your company's current situation and complete history as it relates to learning programs.

## Top Reasons for Switching LMS



## Business Objectives

Sandler Training embarked on a year-long journey to find a new system to replace its proprietary LMS that had become too complex and cumbersome for people to use. The discovery exercise started with taking stock of where they were currently at and building cases to identify missing gaps in the current system. And most importantly, defining business objectives and goals.

One of Sandler's key objectives was to reignite sales that had flattened over the past three years due to the ineffectiveness of the company's learning platform.

Rather than just comparing feature lists of LMS vendors that looked practically identical, Sandler stepped back and identified the business objectives that an LMS would support. They carefully thought through the outcomes they wanted to achieve in terms of improving efficiencies, having more robust analytics and reporting, re-engaging learners and increasing worldwide sales.

**WANT MORE INSIGHT?** Read the full [Sandler Training case study](#) to learn how they were able to free their learning programs to gain user adoption and increase revenues. Read our [case studies](#) of how other organizations have solved their learning challenges with the right LMS.

**TIP!** Starting from the end and defining where you want to be will provide the roadmap to getting there.



## Stakeholders

Would you go out and choose a house that the rest of your family had never seen or had any say in selecting? That may not be the best recipe for good family relations and a happy life.

LMS projects often touch on all parts of an organization. The most successful LMS implementations are the ones where diverse stakeholder groups have been engaged, kept in the loop along the way, and where they have had some involvement in the initial gathering of requirements, right through to testing and rollout. Go back to your business objectives to identify your core goals and then use the data gathered from stakeholders to create targeted objective statements. This step allows you to determine which LMS platforms will meet your needs now and in the future. For example, you can create a list of LMS features based on learner preferences and stakeholder requirements. Identify the features you absolutely need and the functionalities that are merely nice to have.

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO ENGAGE

#### End Users

Sometimes overlooked, this group should always be top of your list. Back to Sandler Training, both their staff and learners had all but given up on trying to use their old platform. The LMS selection team embarked on a one-year investigation into their users' experience to determine deficiencies and define a strategy. Conduct surveys and ask your learners why they're not using the LMS to its full advantage. Is the content relevant? Non-engaging? Is the system hard to navigate? Are there technical issues? Understanding what your users/learners are experiencing can spell the difference between a successful LMS implementation and one that is not.

iMedX, an integrated medical document management and health information solutions company had similar challenges. Before adopting a SCORM-compliant solution, staff spent hundreds of man-hours each year monitoring exam completions, hand-generating certifications and struggling with reporting.

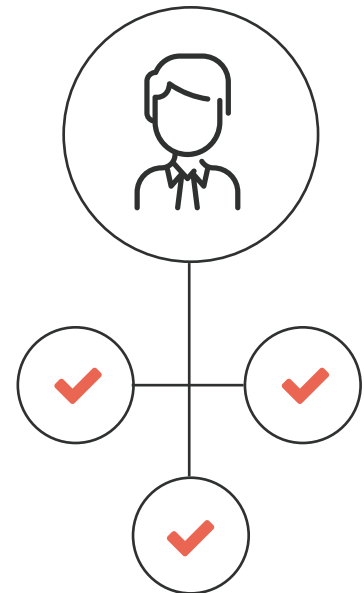
Rachel Jorgensen, iMedX Coding Support Manager says of their new solution, "Not only are the learners getting more out of their training, but the education team can now know which questions may have something wrong with them." Read the [full iMedX case study](#) to learn more.

#### Administrators

Who will be responsible for managing the LMS once it is up and running? It is often the Administrator's ability to drive the system efficiently that makes the biggest difference to productivity and performance improvement. It is important to assess the technical expertise of the internal staff overseeing the LMS. Factors to consider include:

- How tech-savvy are the LMS administrators?
- Is the LMS intuitive enough for them to easily upload content and run reports?
- Does the vendor have an easily accessible support centre I can call on when needed?

**TIP!** It is just as important to speak to the individuals who use the current system the least or are the loudest opponents of the LMS implementation project.



## IT/IS Department

Consult your IT/IS department to determine the infrastructure you have in place to support an LMS. Your IT/IS team will care about factors such as robustness, security, interoperability, support and technical specifications. They will be responsible for:

- Identifying a range of system issues that may include installation and hosting (if you are hosting your LMS on-premise)
- Security, user account management and authentication
- Data migration from legacy system to the new LMS or installation of a new one
- System integration with other business systems such as customer relationship management or ecommerce software

**TIP!** Have at least one designated point-person within your organization who is knowledgeable and dedicated to the system. Take full advantage of demonstrations or free trial periods. Work with LMS providers who listen to your needs, and who are patient and dedicated to supporting you, from the first time you call them, right through the entire sales process. This service will be a good indication of how you will be supported post-implementation.



## Instructional Designers

Content is King. Content that keeps your learners engaged (and productive!) plays one of the most important roles within your LMS. Many learning management systems contain tools to help you create content, but more sophisticated solutions are also available if you want polished, interactive content that will make a high impact on your learners and keep them coming back for more.

LMS applications often have built-in or plugin-based content creation tools that enable content to be uploaded or created within the LMS itself. Many systems include quiz functionality or surveys to gain valuable user feedback. Glossaries and wikis can be used to organize content into easy-to-navigate files. Videos and other media are also popular content formats.

Make sure you know what your instructional designers (either in-house or contract) need from an LMS. Keeping them involved in the process can ensure they can leverage features that help with the design process.

**WANT MORE INSIGHT?** Watch our popular recorded webinar [How to Easily Create Interactive Content in Your LMS Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) and start creating content like Kings and Queens. Download the ebook [Getting Engaged: How To Make Your Learners Fall in Love with Learning](#) for even more insight.

## Managers & C-Suite

Learning management systems are data goldmines that are continually busy at work collecting and housing a wealth of information about learners and their activity. In fact, looking at the diagram below, an astounding 6.7 million records are generated from just 4,000 learners!

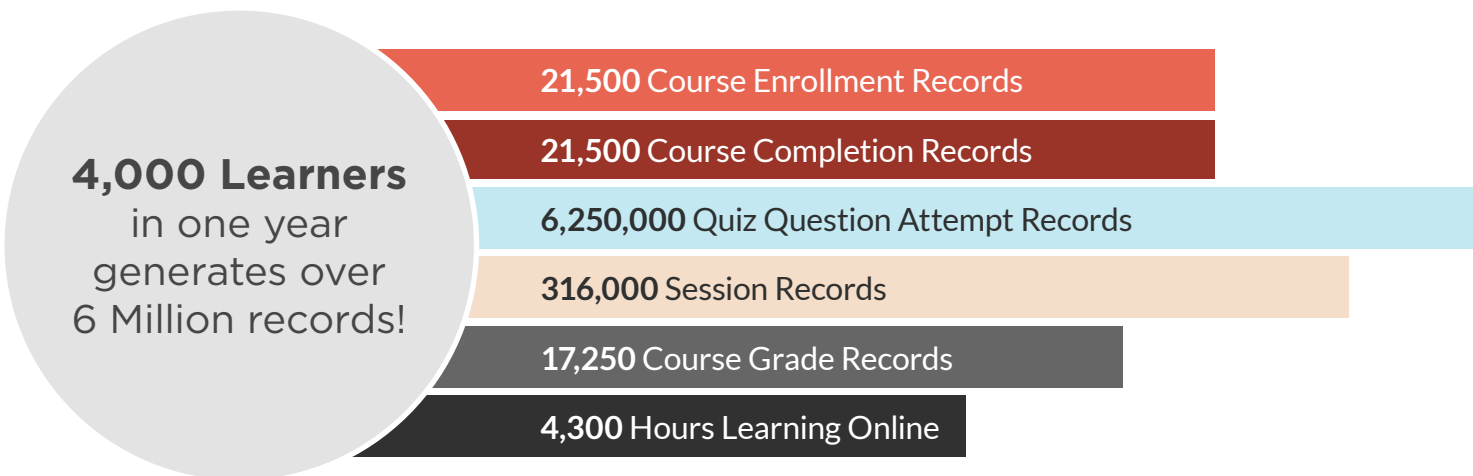


Diagram: Graph depicting typical amount of LMS records generated by just 4,000 Learners





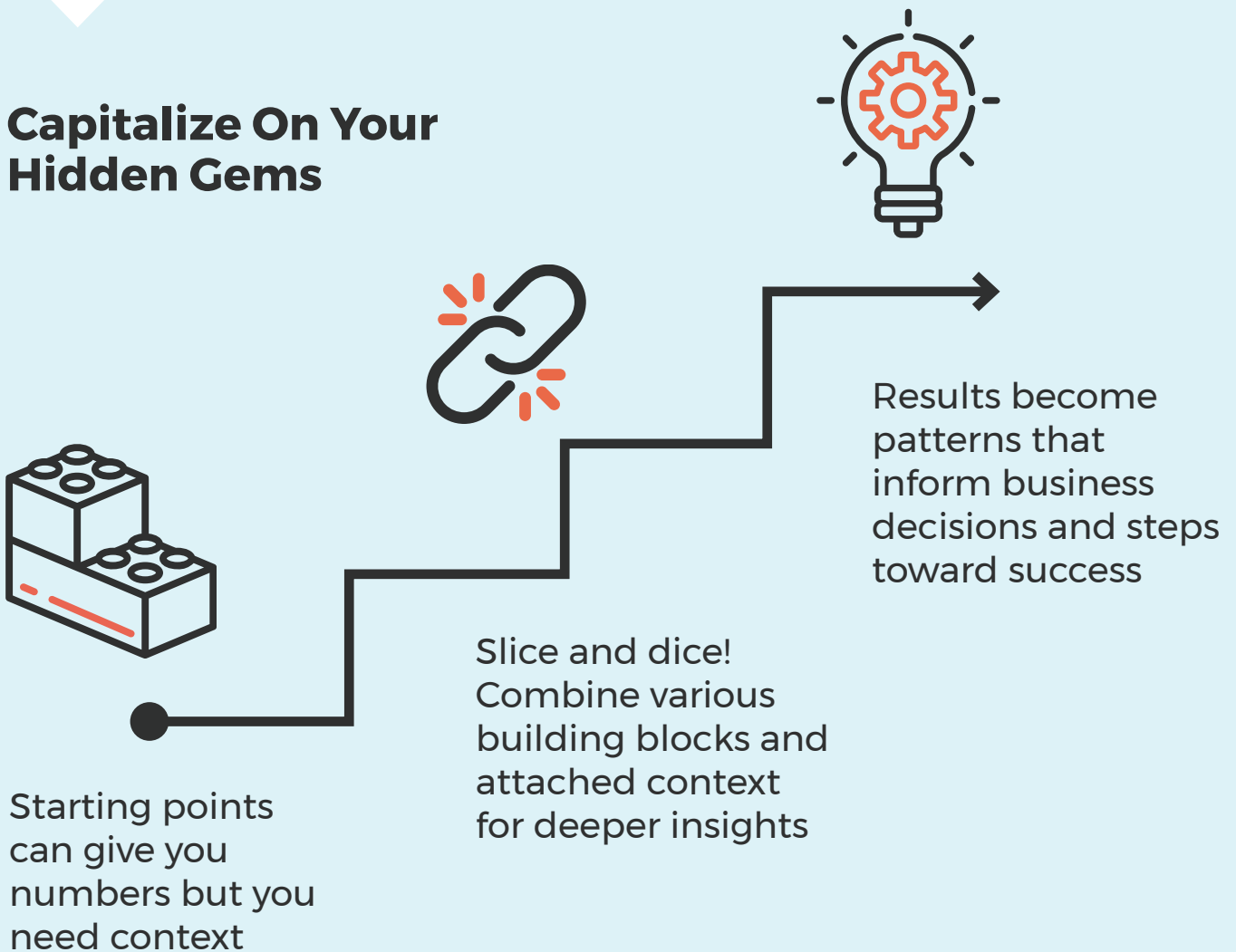
Having an effective way of getting access to this information is imperative for managers and C-suite executives to track progress, monitor completion rates or control access. They want to be able to run reports and dashboards that show whether objectives are being met and determine the return on investment.

Most LMS systems give access to only certain datasets, but not all data. If the built-in reporting functions of your LMS isn't sufficient for your requirements, seek out vendors who can provide a reporting and analytics solution with enhanced capabilities.

**WANT MORE INSIGHT?** [Lambda Analytics](#) enables you to connect to and analyze ALL of your learning data stored in Moodle, Totara Learn or any xAPI compliant LMS, not just parts of it. Create compelling visualizations, including tables, charts and cross-tabs. Bring your views and reports together into stunning, filtered dashboards, or work from over 30 pre-configured views. Reports and dashboards connected to your LMS can be run and easily scheduled and shared with whoever needs to see them.

The best part of this solution is that this can all be done in minutes, not days or weeks.

## Capitalize On Your Hidden Gems



## Compliance/HR Team

This group is likely to want a role-based assignment of content and a granular level of reporting showing certifications in progress and still needing completion, and monitoring mandatory, regulatory training.

Current compliance environments in almost every industry are increasingly onerous, more complex and continuously shifting—particularly in highly regulated industries like finance, insurance, healthcare and oil and gas. Executives and HR professionals struggle to interpret regulations and turn them into business practices that meet requirements.

## Competency vs Compliance

And what does competency training have to do with it? Actually, everything. Ensuring your organization is covered in all areas of compliance, starts with monitoring the competency levels of your team and building training programs to fill gaps and fulfill compliance obligations.

By training workers for compliance, organizations get the added benefit of aligning individual employee performance to meet corporate goals—resulting in added business value and a serious competitive advantage.

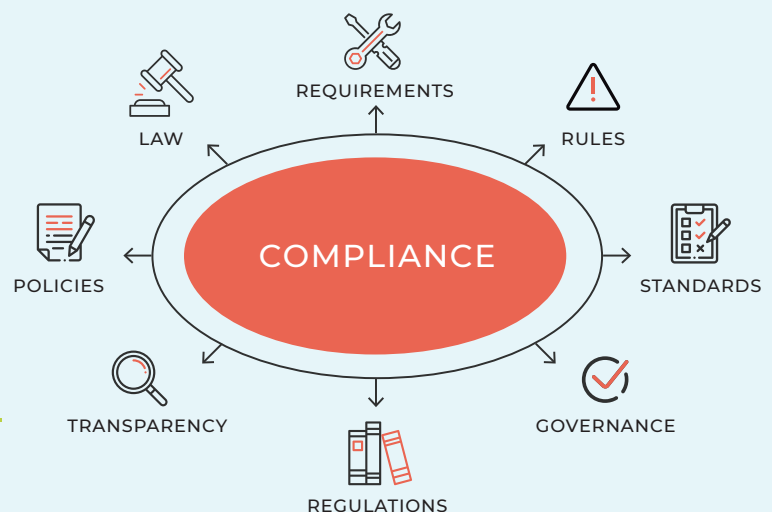
**WANT MORE INSIGHT?** Watch our popular recorded webinar [How to Make Compliance Simple Yet Effective](#) and download the ebook [Compliance and Competency Training Made Easy with LMS](#).



## Marketing Department

Your marketing team will be able to help with the branding and look and feel of the LMS, as well as any internal marketing communications campaigns that are essential for a successful launch.

**Compliance Training** is the process of educating employees on laws, regulations and company policies that apply to their day-to-day job responsibilities



## Open Source

There are two options to consider when purchasing a LMS: proprietary or open source. Proprietary systems will have licensing costs, and usually additional costs for extending the software, upgrading and maintaining the system. Open Source LMS's have distinct advantages. With an open source ecosystem, the community members themselves provide a significant amount of research and development by contributing ideas and information on user priorities, problem solving and in many cases, actual code into the core product. As participation and momentum build around a software product, the rate of innovation accelerates, and value is delivered to all participants.

### MOST POPULAR OPEN SOURCE LMS'S

Moodle LMS was officially released in 2002 and is a flexible, open source and free to download learning management solution. With 100 million users (and growing) and over 100,000 Moodle sites deployed worldwide, this user-friendly LMS serves the learning and training needs of educational institutions and all types of organizations in more than 225 countries worldwide. Moodle's open source project is managed by a dedicated team at Moodle HQ with a head office in Perth, Australia and satellite offices around the world. Being an open source project, Moodle is a collaborative effort and is supported by a strong global community.

Totara Learn is an extension of the Moodle LMS that evolved from the needs of community members who needed more robust features for their corporation. Essentially, Totara is Moodle's corporate cousin. It enables the freedom and flexibility to operate training programs and customize them to exactly suit a company's needs. The Totara code base is supported by a partner network and the efforts of Totara HQ, who act as the guardians of the code and manage feature development, along with bug fixes. Totara offers organizations complete freedom and flexibility to alter the code in a cost-effective manner and is hosted as a packaged SaaS cloud solution backed by professional partner organizations.

#### Choosing an open source LMS can help you:

- Keep up with the rapidly changing learning technologies market
- Have access to more options available to expand functionality through contributions from the open source community
- Have more direct influence over the future path of the product
- Have complete freedom and control over your learning platform

**TIP!** Opting for an open source platform like Totara Learn or Moodle gives you a flexible, portable solution that can be moved from vendor to vendor or managed in-house, keeping you in control. The ease of switching means you won't get tied in with a vendor who no longer supports your requirements or does not offer the service you expect.





- > Multiple competency frameworks
- > Assign competencies to courses
- > Assign competencies to users via position, organization and audience
- > Learning plans
- > Scales to mark off competencies
- > Can add evidence items
- > Can pull into appraisals
- > Moodle's Corporate Cousin



- > Multiple competency frameworks
- > Assign competencies to activities and courses
- > Learning plans
- > Assign learning plans to individual learns or cohorts
- > Scales to mark off competencies
- > Can add evidence items
- > Originally Built for Education

**WANT MORE INSIGHT?** Check out the full feature comparison to see which LMS is the best fit for meeting your goals: Moodle vs Totara: Which LMS is Right for Me?

## 5 Future Growth

Just as you would do with the family home, there are lots to consider in terms of assessing future needs. Are you planning to have more children? Need space for aging parents? Want to supplement your costs with a rentable suite? Downsizing?

Make sure to examine your immediate LMS needs, but also plan well into the future. This comes back to clearly defining your business objectives to identify future growth. Here are some things to consider:

- Will the system easily support scaling user levels?
- Do we have integrations with other business software?
- Can the LMS be opened up for partners, suppliers and customers if need be?
- Does the LMS provider continually update their system for new learning and technology innovations and plugins?

Get everything you need to grow your eLearning business with the Lambda Suite.

### eLearning + eCommerce + Analytics

Flawlessly working together to grow your revenue, audience, and the impact of your eLearning.

[Book A Demo](#)



## 6 The Cloud

The software as a service (SaaS) model in the cloud can be a great way to get started with an LMS without the expense of a full-scale commitment. The flexibility, speed and lower cost of getting set up can be an attractive prospect to many organizations while leaving the option open to bring the system in-house or move to alternative hosting support.

Also, consider hosting options for your LMS. Managed cloud hosting for your LMS can be unparalleled for security and reliability. Look for a vendor that can:

- Take care of servers, operating systems, applications, databases, security, backups and upgrades.
- Monitor, tune and scale the performance of your system to make sure it stays in the best possible shape to deliver courses, quizzes, lectures and videos.
- Provide fast response rates (at least 99.9% uptime) and 'always on' learning, in addition to having access to expert application support.
- Reduce initial capital costs and provide savings over time.

**WANT MORE INSIGHT?** Let our team of LMS experts help you sort through the options to choose a system and hosting solution that suits your operation best.



## 7 Personalization

Many learning management systems allow you to integrate your own branding elements, such as your company logo and colours, as well as customize certain aspects of the user interface. This enables you to develop online training content that aligns with your image and enhances credibility. Customization also makes the LMS platform more functional for your team, thanks to the fact that they can fine-tune the user interface to suit their personal preferences and workflow.

- Other personalization/customization factors to consider are:
- Do you need to customize by role, remember preferences or personalize learning intelligently based on previous interactions with your LMS?
- Which devices will your learners be using, and how many of these must your LMS support?
- How will you ensure you are only paying for features you will use?

**WANT MORE CAPABILITIES?** With a custom theme, you can brand your learning management system to match your organization's unique brand. Our mobile friendly and optimized theme ensures your site looks great on every device, including tablets and smartphones. By updating the point-and-click options, you can create and publish rotating banners, special offers, alert messages, social media links and partner spots for your homepage without engaging in expensive custom work.



## User Experience

User experience (UX) is a term used in web and software design to describe the interaction between a user and a device, website or program—including an LMS.

**A good user experience can be defined as providing:**

- Fast system access
- Easy navigation
- Accessibility, both on and offline, and on any device
- Design elements that demonstrate your organization's trustworthiness, so learners believe that what they're learning in the LMS is useful, applicable and accurate

Finally, your LMS should be appealing, engaging and even fun to use.

**A bad user experience can be defined as having:**

- Slow system access
- Slow page loads
- Non-intuitive navigation
- An inconsistent user interface that forces people to learn a new approach each time they take more eLearning

Ease-of-use frustration comes from LMS platforms not behaving in a way that is natural and conducive to how people want to learn. When evaluating learning management systems, spend time assessing the overall experience, through the demonstration and/or trials. Ask questions about the UX capabilities of vendors and what their practices are around this all-important element.

Deliver an online environment that makes it simple, quick, and easy for your learners to learn with technology built to work together and provide the best possible user experience.

See the difference an integrated eLearning solution can make to your learners and the growth of your business.

[Tour The Lambda Suite](#)



**In a study done by the Brandon Hall Group Research Team, an overwhelming 88% of those polled indicate they are switching their LMS because of the need for an improved user experience.**

## Reporting & Analytics

While learning management systems provide basic reporting capabilities, the functionality has its limits and most organizations are left wanting more. In fact, lack of reporting capabilities is one of the top reasons why organizations get on the “time to get a new LMS” bandwagon.

### REPORTING THE OLD SCHOOL WAY

In a standard LMS, the typical reports export LMS data to a .csv file which is clunky, crowded and overwhelming to the eye. Making sense of the raw data takes time and effort, and there is no way to get a quick summary at-a-glance. On top of that, out-of-the-box filters don’t always provide the options you need. If you’re trying to answer a specific question, the native filters might not isolate the data you need. Trying to piece together data using unrelated and data tools is frustrating and non-efficient, especially if your manager is breathing down your neck demanding meaningful reports.

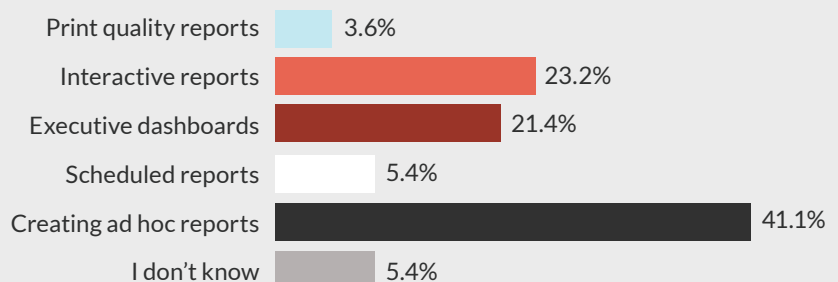
When the Learning & Development (L&D) team at Sandler Training set out to replace their outdated proprietary LMS, one of the biggest challenges they were trying to tackle was poor reporting capabilities. “Because our old LMS was so compliance driven, the reporting output was pretty good but the amount of clicks trainers, managers and administrators had to go through to create reports was frankly, ridiculous. It was such a loss of productivity,” stated Mike Montague, Vice President of Online Learning & Development for Sandler Systems, Inc.

Bad reporting functionality is described as having:

- Limited access to data
- Too many steps to create reports
- Limited visualization (no charts, no dashboards)
- Limited sharing (no embedding or limited scheduler for automation)

In a recent poll, we asked our customers about reporting and they answered:

### What are the most important reporting capabilities to you?



## REPORTING CHECKLIST

When seeking reporting capabilities for your LMS, here is a checklist to follow when reaching out to vendors:

### Evaluate the Ease of Use

Request a demonstration from the vendor, so that you can see the LMS reporting capabilities in action. A good demo should be anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the extent of the solutions' capabilities. Note the ease of use and correlate this with the technical skills of your users. Another thing to take into consideration is how long it takes to build reports using the solution. If it takes more than a few minutes to generate dashboards and reports, keep looking.

### Reports, Lists & Charts

During the demo, make sure you can see the various types of LMS reports (e.g. configurable reports, and/or custom reports), lists and charts that are available. Can you visualize how they would serve the information you need to provide to your stakeholders? Are these reports providing you with all the data you might need: Time Spent Learning, Individual Progress, Completion?

### Out-of-the-Box Reports

These are LMS reports that are automatically created for you. If you already have an idea of the types of reports you will need, see how they align to the reports you will receive. Obviously, there should be a generous overlap here.

### Ad Hoc Reports

Based on our customer survey we conducted during a recent Reporting Webinar, more than 40% of participants indicated that the #1 most important capability of a LMS reporting tool they desired was the ability to create Ad Hoc Reports. Come prepared with a few ideas of LMS reports you would like created, and ask the vendor to walk you through the process of creating Ad Hoc Reports.

### Go For a Test Drive on Your Own

Ask for a trial so that you can explore the solution yourself. Most vendors provide a "sandbox" that will allow you to run reports and interact with the system's functions, so try creating your own custom or configurable reports. If you get stuck, it's a good opportunity to test out their customer support. Even if you don't need help, give their customer support department a call so that you can get an idea of the level of service you will receive.

### Support & Training

Inquire about the resources that will be available to you during and after the implementation processes. Are there any 'How-To' documents or videos that will help you along the way? Do they provide training? These elements are going to be crucial to your LMS reporting success. Ask these questions in advance, so that you are equipped with information to help you make your decision.

### References

Ask the vendor for customer references so that you can get a good idea of what the experience will be like. Was there a steep learning curve? What have the limitations and frustrations been with the tool? You should also inquire about the types of reports they can create. For example, if they were able to make custom or configurable LMS reports, and how easy the process was. You might even ask to see some examples if they are willing to share!

### Enhancements & Roadmaps

Ask about the enhancements and roadmap from the past year, and for the next 1 to 2 years. This will help you understand how the LMS reporting solution will be able to accommodate you in the future. Select a flexible and agile firm that is positioned to develop iterations quickly.

**WANT MORE INSIGHT?** Extracting data into meaningful reports and visualizations that instructors, administrators and managers crave is essential in the LMS ecosystem, but it shouldn't require lots of effort and energy to be spent. [Lambda Analytics](#) allows anyone in the organization to build ad hoc reports in minutes, not days. You heard us right—minutes! We've truly made it that easy.



# Integration & Compatibility

Does your business run on other key software such as Google or Microsoft or do you have a customer relationship management or eCommerce solution? Certain LMS platforms let you integrate your business software with the LMS to increase efficiencies. Integrations like this help to automate and save time by creating accounts and sharing information between key systems. Your employees can log into the central system and go to your online learning site without having to log in again or re-enter their personal information multiple times. Some common integrations include:

## INTEGRATIONS

### Google G-Suite and Microsoft

By integrating your Google G-Suite or Microsoft software with your LMS, users can simply log in to their Google or Office accounts to access and manage Office documents while logged into the LMS. This integration allows you to benefit from the two platforms working seamlessly together. Or, the system can be configured to use your LMS credentials for login.

### Customer Relationship Management

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems such as Salesforce, SugarCRM and InfusionSoft, provide deep value for sales teams and organizations due to the capacity to track, automate and organize interactions with customers. When considering adopting an LMS, make sure you can easily integrate the software you are already using.

### Compatibility

Your LMS should also be compatible with your current resources and that includes your online training materials and software. For example, you may be using 3rd party eLearning authoring tools such as Articulate or Adobe Captive to create interactive scenarios or simulations. Some LMS's include multimedia plugins that transform static courseware into interactive, engaging online learning that hold learners spellbound. They enable you to easily incorporate video, audio clips and podcasts, images and animation.

The LMS should also make data migration a stress-free task instead of having to convert all of your existing data into a new format before uploading it to the LMS platform.

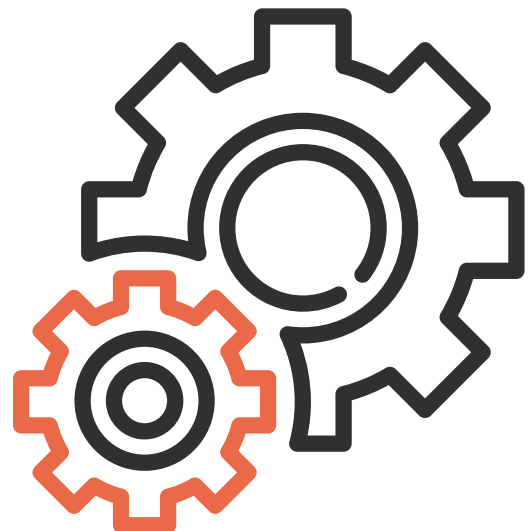
**WANT MORE INSIGHT?** Download our ebook, [The Complete User Guide To Moodle \(Chapter 3: Advanced Moodle Features\)](#) for more detailed information on integrations and compatibility.

Things work best when they're designed to work together. That's why we designed the Lambda Suite's most powerful features to work together to create the only All-In-One Solution For Growing Your eLearning Business.

**eLearning + eCommerce + Analytics**

Discover what the Lambda Suite can do for you.

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## Consider Support

Having a great LMS doesn't do you any good if no one in your company knows how to use the system or you can't get help when needed. When considering an LMS, ask how much training and support you will get and at what cost. Will you have access to ongoing training? Can new staff be trained as new hires come in?

Ask what kind of support you'll have access to. Depending on the platform, you may have live support, email support, a dedicated support representative or the luck of the draw. Some support will be free, and some will be subscription-based. Many organizations underestimate the amount of support they'll need when implementing a new LMS or upgrading from a current one.

**WANT MORE INSIGHT?** Let our team of LMS experts help you sort through the options in choosing a system and support package that suits your operations best.

**TIP!** When it comes to service providers, there is no one size fits all. Do your research and when reaching out to vendors, consider how you are treated throughout the entire pre to post sales process as this will usually be an indication of the level of professionalism and support you can expect throughout the whole relationship. Ask for references and talk to other customers to assess their experience with the vendor.

## Costs

Creating an accurate budget allows you to maximize your resources and deploy personalized online training content without breaking the bank. But what is the real cost of an LMS? Whether you choose a proprietary or open source LMS, there will be ongoing costs for support and maintenance.

There are typically two types of fees to consider with an LMS: licensing (own) and subscription (rent). While licensing has a bigger upfront cost in the first year (compared to subscription), the fees generally include an annual support and maintenance contract in future years. Subscription fees can be monthly, annual, or multi-year contracts.

### LMS PRICING MODELS

#### Pay Per User

*This pricing model involves paying for each person that uses the LMS, which is usually cloud-based.*

In this model, the LMS vendor is responsible for hosting the LMS platform and includes regular updates and upgrades. As a result, you don't have to devote resources to maintaining it. Instead, you can focus on developing and deploying effective online training content for your audience.

#### Pay Per Registered User

*This pricing model involves paying for each registered user who is registered in the LMS.*

In this pricing model, the user must create a login and password in order to access the LMS platform. You only pay for users who voluntarily sign up, instead of every member of your organization. This is also an ideal option for organizations who wish to sell their online training courses.

#### Pay Per Active User

*This pricing model involves paying for users who actively use the LMS.*

Paying per active user is one of the most economical options, as you only pay for users who actively use the LMS. There are two common approaches to this LMS pricing model. The first is to charge for each user who accesses the LMS during the billing cycle. After their initial login, they can access your entire online training course catalog at no extra cost. For example, a corporate learner who signs up in January will appear on that month's bill, but you will incur no costs for them in February. The second approach is to charge for each active user per month. Using the same example, you would still pay for the corporate learner in February, March, and so on, provided that they are still active in the LMS.

#### Get Started With Lambda Learn

Your Fully Customized  
Open Source LMS from as  
little as \$300 USD / Month

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## ADDITIONAL LINE ITEMS TO ADD TO YOUR LMS BUDGET:

### 1. Training

In a perfect world, LMS platforms would be plug-and-play. You'd simply download the software or login to the system and start developing meaningful online training courses. However, it usually takes some degree of training to do this. Your team has to be aware of the key features of the tool to get the most from your investment. Providing training to your staff will enable you to deploy training organization-wide. This may involve creating online training tutorials and walkthroughs. Or even paying the LMS vendor to send out an experienced trainer who can lessen the learning curve, or provide online training. It greatly depends on your team's experience level and the complexity of the LMS platform.

### 2. Creation of Online Training Content

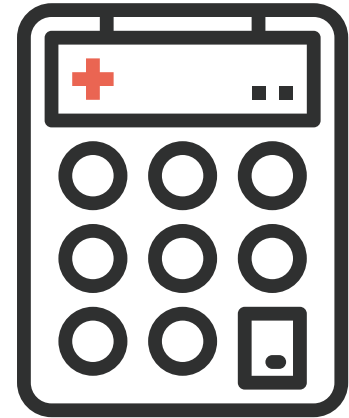
Calculating LMS costs also extends to the online training content itself. After all, your new LMS won't be of any use if there isn't any online training content to upload. Therefore, you must factor in the expense of developing or curating online training content. There are numerous collaborators involved in this process, from subject matter experts (SMEs) and instructional designers to eLearning voice actors. And they all need to be paid for their time and services.

### 3. Additional Support Services

Support services vary by LMS vendor. Some may provide online FAQs and user communities, while others offer more comprehensive support options, such as 24/7 phone assistance or email contacts. Ask the LMS vendor about which support services they include in the package. Then, determine whether it's adequate for your needs, or whether you need to invest in an upgrade. For instance, L&D teams with less LMS experience may require one-on-one support. So it may be wise to pay the additional fee if it allows you to get more from the tool and relieve the burden on your team, particularly in the first few years of operation.

### 4. Upgrades and Updates

This is a cost that many organizations overlook. As is the case with any technology solution, an LMS becomes outdated as time goes on. To stay current, the LMS vendor must incorporate new features and functions to enable more effective online training experiences. However, this comes at a price. Certain LMS vendors include free upgrades and updates in the initial LMS costs. Others offer upgrades for a fee. So, the cost usually depends on the pricing model. For example, subscription-based services typically include free updates, but licensed tools do not.



# In Conclusion

There are many variables to consider when trying to find the right Learning Management System, making it absolutely critical to be thorough with your selection process.

Start with the big picture first: determine the goals your LMS needs to accomplish, your future needs, and understand who all your stakeholders are and what they require.

Finally, consider how those technical requirements mesh with your big picture goals, and consider if it would be in your best interest to have an ad-hoc collection of technologies and platforms, or a single integrated solution designed to work together seamlessly.

With those foundations laid, you can start sorting through the technical details to narrow your list of prospective systems: Proprietary or Open-Source, hosting options, UX, reporting, integration, customer support and, of course, costs.

By following these steps you will be able to create a shortlist of LMS options that have the functionality your stakeholders need, the technology required to meet your goals, and a pricing model that works for your budget.

Once you have an LMS that can adapt with you, quickly and cost-effectively, the sky is the limit for the success of your eLearning programs. If you have any more questions, concerns, or would like an in-depth assessment of your LMS needs, contact our eLearning Solution experts today!

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## About Lambda Solutions

Lambda Solutions is an eLearning solutions company, providing true-cloud Learning Management System (LMS) hosting, learning analytics, and eCommerce solutions for education, healthcare, and global enterprise organizations. Founded in 2002 in Vancouver Canada, Lambda Solutions has been providing world-class, secure infrastructure that is feature-rich, scalable, and backed by result-focused service and support across the globe.

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Conceived as a way to overcome all of the most common and costly eLearning challenges, **Lambda Suite** offers a consistent user experience from course-catalogue to course-completion for learners, along with flexible, scalable, automated systems for administrators, and the ability to prove and improve eLearning impact and ROI for stakeholders.

