

# EMBRACING THE MOBILE FUTURE:

Aligning L&D with  
the Rise of Enterprise  
Mobility in Corporate  
eLearning

**Paul Leavoy**  
Senior Content Manager, Docebo

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## Introduction

Mobility. It's practically a substratum of life and business in a post-millennial age, embedded right into the framework of everyday existence. Did I lose you there? Maybe you're viewing this on your mobile device and some notification popped up. Or maybe you're on a web browser, and your smartphone vibrated on the side of your desk. Or maybe the leading sentence was simply too boring to follow.

In any event, one thing is clear: mobile devices and mobility in general dominate the conversation these days. It's inescapable in our personal, day-to-day lives, and, increasingly, Mobility is inescapable in our business lives.

Remember when BlackBerry (among others) launched the first versions of personal digital assistants (PDAs) and what we now refer to as smartphones around 2002? While many believed the devices had potentially revolutionary qualities, it was hard for us to imagine that the trend they helped launch would radically reshape business only a decade later. That transformation has been enormous, and it continues to take shape.

For example, over one billion smartphones ship around the globe every year, according to Statista, and analysts at Gartner, Inc. predict that nearly 70% of working professionals will execute work-related functions from their personal devices by next year.

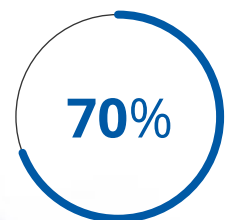
In so many avenues of business, leaders and learners are learning that smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices will only gain increasing relevance, and this plays out considerably in learning and development (L&D).



**1 BILLION+**

**SMARTPHONES  
SHIP EVERY YEAR  
GLOBALLY**

*Source:  
KPCB, Zogby Analytics*



**PROFESSIONALS  
WHO USE  
PERSONAL  
DEVICES FOR  
WORK BY 2018**

*Source: Gartner Inc.*

## Learners are Already Mobile, and That Won't Change

Smartphones continue to dominate the global market. Almost everyone and their dog (as the saying goes) has a smartphone. Just recently Gartner, Inc. estimated that global sales of smartphones the fourth quarter of 2016 grew seven per cent over the fourth quarter of 2015, amounting to nearly 1.5 billion units sold throughout 2016.

Although growth in smartphone sales could slightly slow over the next five years according to Business Insider Intelligence estimates, that doesn't mean people will stop using smartphones. It simply means fewer might purchase smartphones. That could be the result of many factors, including economic impacts, income levels, and the fact users are happy with their existing devices.

### LEARNERS LOVE THEIR DEVICES

But what's currently a key issue is the fact users – in general, but particularly among millennials – are rarely parted from their smartphones. These devices are always at our sides, and smart L&D leaders have caught on to this and learned to leverage these devices in a way that encourages self-paced, ongoing learning.

Once upon a time L&D leaders viewed learning as mutually exclusive to managing and monitoring devices. In the old model, if employees were on their devices, they were interacting with friends or family, browsing the web, playing games, or watching videos. And, for a while, this might have been true.

Then, all of a sudden, learners had the capacity, through their devices, to accumulate job-related knowledge, onsite, and at the point of need. Things changed. In this sea change -- courtesy, in part, to the huge advancements eLearning providers managed to accomplish in delivering learning management system (LMS) portals -- learning leaders began to understand that handheld devices could actually be used to help learners learn more efficiently, wherever, whenever, and at the point of need.

### MILLENNIALS = LOVE THEIR SMARTPHONES...



**87%** = "Smartphone Never Leaves My Side"



Source: KPCB, Zogby Analytics



Global smartphone sales of smartphones in the 4th quarter of 2016 grew **7%** over the fourth quarter of 2015, amounting to nearly **1.5 billion** units sold through 2016.

# Mobility: From Nice-to-Have to a Part of Doing Business

Mobility in eLearning spent the early 2010s moving from the “nice-to-have” comfort zone to becoming an absolutely essential quality for any company seeking a comprehensive eLearning software vendor worth its weight. In the same way the “cloud-based” offering was an exciting idea in the early 2000s but is now commonplace among most software vendors, a credible mobile offering is now a must-have for any LMS software vendor under consideration.

Now, nearly half (47%) of organizations use mobile devices as part of their training and eLearning activities, according to Towards Maturity. Also, in 2015, mobile learning was a more than five-billion-dollar industry, a number that is expected to exceed \$12 billion by the end of 2017, according to Ambient Insight.

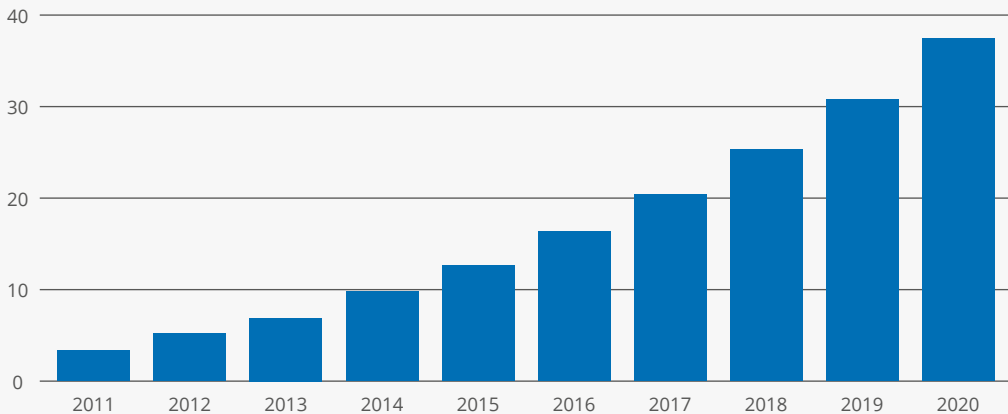
Further, the research firm MarketsandMarkets has forecasted that the global mobile learning market will grow from \$7.98 billion in 2015 to \$37.60 billion by 2020, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 36.3%. North America is expected to represent the largest market in terms of size, while Europe and Asia-Pacific are expected to experience an increase in market traction during the forecast period.

What’s notable is that Asia is the most vibrant and unique mobile learning market on the planet. There, mobile learning revenues reached \$4.5 billion in 2014 and are expected to increase to \$7.7 billion by 2019.

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## MOBILE LEARNING MARKET BY 2020

**\$38B**



Source: Transforming learning through m Education. McKinsey

## THE INCEPTION OF ENTERPRISE MOBILITY IN ELEARNING

Mobility as a use case became more apparent in other industries before it was realized effectively in eLearning. For example, in environment, health, and safety (EHS), many realized that audits, recordable incidents, and inspections -- all of which require checklists -- could be executed on the spot with tablets and smartphones whenever EHS incidents and accidents occurred. After all, it was a lot easier to have the information inputted into a system from a device at a point of collection, as opposed to on a piece of paper, which would then be pulled into a spreadsheet, which would then be printed out and put into a binder to collect dust. The paragon of inefficiency.

eLearning took a little longer to jump on the mobility train. But in the last few years -- especially with the advent of microlearning -- it has become increasingly evident that mobility improves our capacity to get the right information to learners right at the point of need. Also, it helps facilitate what is widely deemed as the most successful mode of approaching L&D in general: the 70:20:10 approach, whereby 70 per cent of knowledge is accumulated through experiential circumstances, 20 per cent is accomplished through social interaction, and 10 per cent resides in the tried and true approach of instructor-led, classroom-based environments. Mobility is assisting the middle component, the 20, enabling learners and experienced folk in the workforce to interact with one another not just at the water cooler, but across social channels as well.



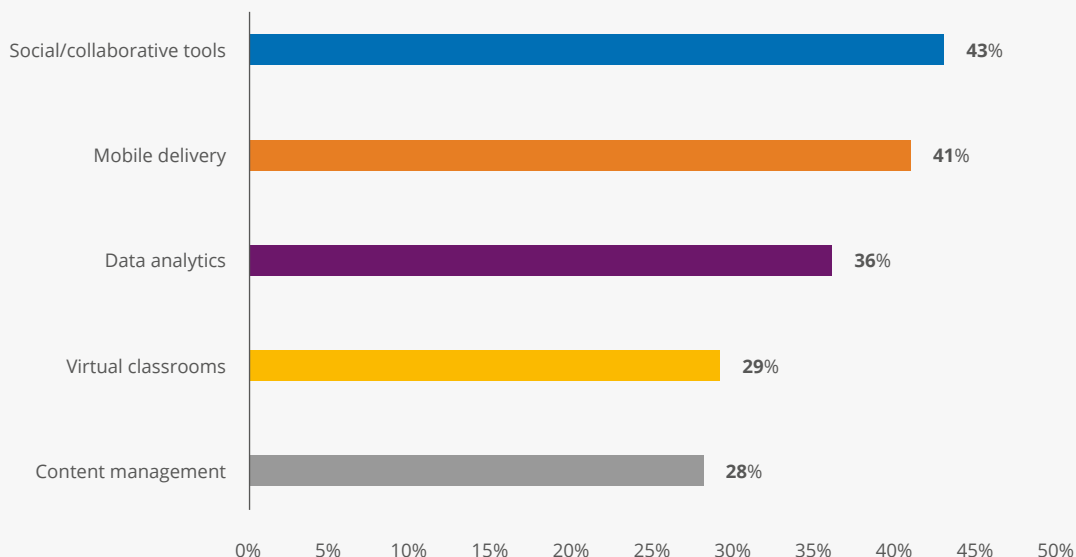
## Why the Massive Growth in Mobile Learning?

This is for a number of reasons, and we have discussed one of them. But the other lies simply in the realm of efficiency. When we have an LMS that is connected not only across its cloud-based enterprise architecture but also across mobile devices in a real-time, live context, then the potential of an eLearning solution explodes to a whole other level.

Suddenly, learners are able to establish and report on progress in real time, and L&D leaders are able to gain visibility into that progress in real time. And, in the right system, it is all recorded and reportable, with real-time metrics that can be assessed and analyzed accordingly.

Leaders in L&D have also caught on, and mobile delivery of learning has become the second largest technology priority in learning (41%), according to a recent Brandon Hall Group study.

### TOP 5 LEARNING TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES



Source: 2016 brandon hall Group Learning Technology Study (n=302)

Remember the days of paper-based systems? Remember when it would take ages to track and report on a learner's journey of progress? Now, through technology, we can grasp where learners are at, and how they are doing, as they progress. That enables us to take proactive measures to ensure not only that our L&D programs are performing optimally, but also that our learners are comfortable, ready, and able to pursue their journey of ongoing learning with within the enterprise.

However, organizations are hungry for new solutions, as revealed in another recent Brandon Hall Group learning technology study. Nearly 50% of organizations surveyed are looking into new learning technologies, and many organizations are dissatisfied with their existing learning technology -- largely due to weak user experience and administrative experience.

## Opportunities in Enterprise Mobility

If your organization has not adopted a mobile model into its framework, that's okay and it is not too late. Some key opportunities and attributes a mobile-forward company enjoys include:

### IMPROVED VELOCITY OF KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Without mobile learning advantages, it can take a while to get knowledge from subject matter experts (SMEs) to learners in the field. When the proper mobile learning solution is provided, learners are at a press or swipe or two away from the key knowledge they need to learn what they need to do. That velocity of knowledge exchange spreads with everyone who is interacting with that individual, and thereby exchanged that much more effortlessly across the organization.

When knowledge exchange between peers or partners is limited by the LMS at hand, all parties lose and the outcomes they hoped to realize will be lost.

### AVAILABILITY OF KNOWLEDGE AT THE POINT OF NEED

Knowledge in a locked-up library doesn't work unless a learner is proactively interested in what the need to learn. When knowledge is contained in a centralized repository and accessible electronically with a few keystrokes, it's a different matter.

When mobile learning is integrated directly into smartphone applications, learners are but an app and a few clicks away from the key lessons they need to know, right at the point of need.

### IMMEDIATE COMMUNICATION

In addition to simply accessing databases of knowledge, consider that connected smartphones also make it incredibly easy for us all to communicate with peers one-on-one or immediately, at the point of need, when we need information.

This is only one of the examples where immediate communication is realized across mobile devices.

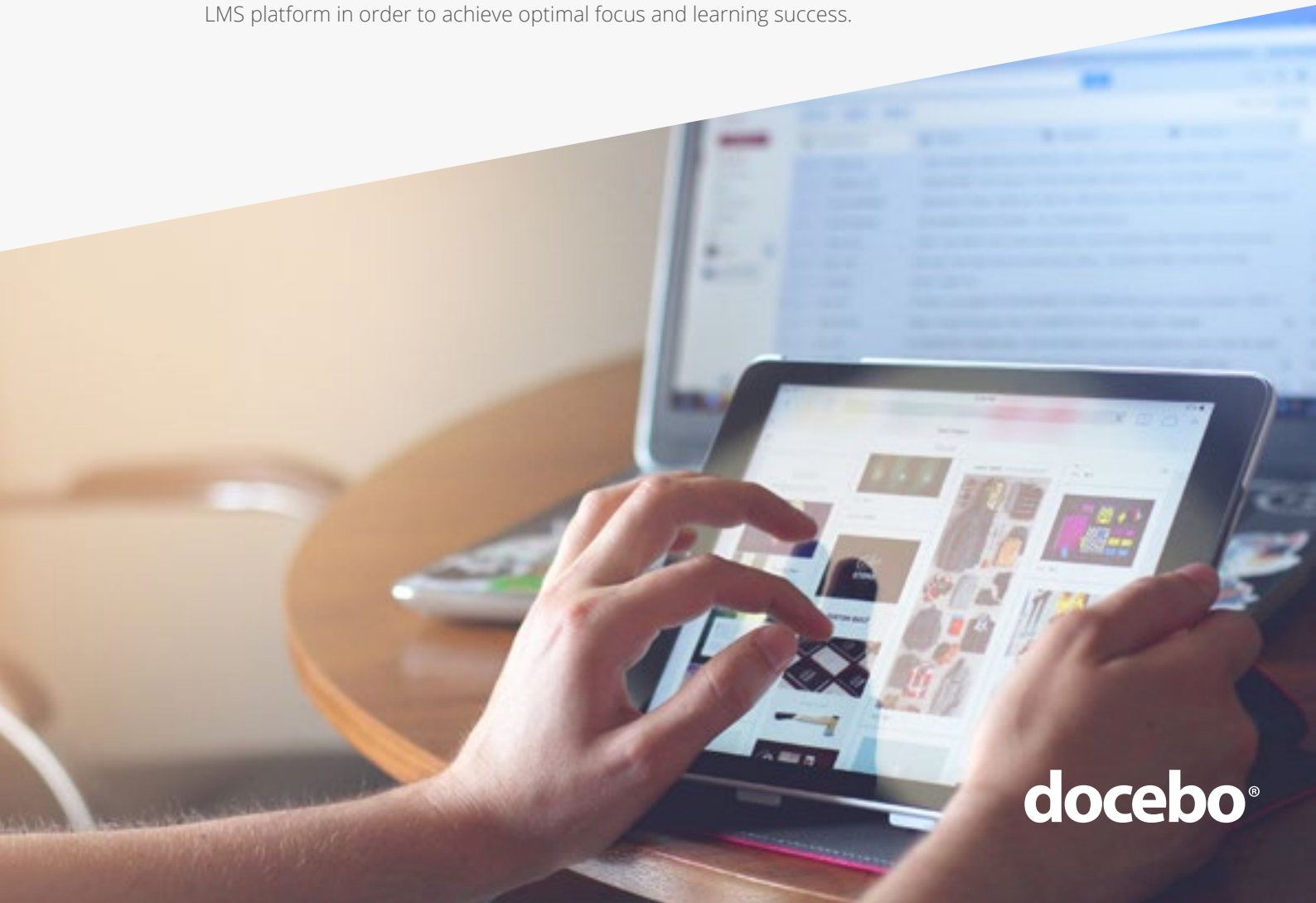


## How to Launch a Mobile Program

While it never hurts to start exploring mobile opportunities in eLearning that are essentially quick wins, there's enormous value in developing a comprehensive mobile strategy that aligns with L&D goals and broad business goals as well. So, certainly, play around with mobile options to test the waters, but for the long game, plan to launch a comprehensive mobile program that incorporates some of the following elements:

- 1 Build a mobile strategy:** Build out a "single-source-of-truth" mobile strategy document that covers all aspects of the mobile plan, including a needs assessment, implementation plan, vendor analysis, resource allocation, goals and performance KPIs, and so on. This document will help you measure the success of your program as it is implemented and adopted.
- 2 Align mobile strategy with L&D strategy as well as overall business objectives:** The mobile strategy cannot live in isolation. As a recent Brandon Hall Group paper revealed, too often L&D program objectives are not mapped to overall business performance objectives. All three elements -- mobile, L&D, and overall business -- need to be aligned in order to achieve holistic performance objectives and continual improvement.
- 3 Assess prospective vendors' mobile offering:** There's a wide disparity in terms of the maturity of LMS vendors' mobile solutions presently. Some have robust offerings, some have grand ambitions and sound plans, and some have no mobile offering or vision as yet. Get a good sense of your (existing or prospective) vendors' own mobile strategy before developing (or continuing) a relationship with them.
- 4 Establish whether offline functionality is part of the offering:** As they say, offline is the new online. In many mobile learning circumstances, learners simply can't access their LMS and need to take information offline then have their progress synchronized with the centralized learning repository once they achieve connectivity again. Solutions today need to feature clear offline/online capabilities to ensure learner progress is properly tracked and recorded.
- 5 Determine whether company mobile eLearning policy will use a BYOD approach or provide users with devices:** The whole Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) issue has been a bit of a quandary for companies when it comes to mobility, because on the one hand it makes sense to invite users to use eLearning applications on their own devices, and on the other hand there can be privacy and ownership concerns that may drive companies to provide users with work-sanctioned devices. It's a church-and-state dynamic, and there is no clear answer to it. But as your organization pursues a mobile eLearning strategy, it is important to answer this question out of the gates.

- 6 **Use data to improve the mobile learning effectiveness over time:** Between SCORM and xAPI data capabilities and the Big Data opportunities that flow from them, we have so much potential to learn more about our learners behaviours, habits, and accomplishments than, say, course completions. Mobility presents great opportunities for us to open the floodgates of Big Data analytics and break that information down accordingly to improve our mobile learning approaches and effectiveness.
- 7 **Assign a champion (or a champion and a mobile team) to own the mobile strategy:** Going back to the mobile strategy component of this whole approach, it is important to have someone or even a leader and a team, depending on the size of your organization, drive the mobile strategy, keep it alive, monitor its performance, and ensure its continual improvement. This can be the CLO or even a dedicated role, but what's important is that, after putting all of the pieces in place, someone or some team is there ensuring its continued survival and success.
- 8 **Design to counter distractions:** Finally, mobile devices, by their very nature, are designed to deliver distractions. Between notifications, texts, emails, phone calls, and other distractions, learners using mobile devices for learning can be tempted to turn away from the lesson or task at hand to shift their attention -- a precious commodity in this information age -- away and towards whatever else arises. Determine a plan to combat distractions as your learners engage with their mobile LMS platform in order to achieve optimal focus and learning success.



## Conclusion

We used to play around with the idea of the potential of mobility in all areas of enterprise performance, including learning and development. A few years into that journey, what is becoming clear is that mobile is not only relevant and useful, it's here to stay and only projected to grow in importance. Mobility in L&D began as a nice-to-have but has since evolved to become a virtual necessity for a best-in-class eLearning program. However, before jumping right into the mobility game, it is of fundamental importance to build a comprehensive eLearning mobility strategy that aligns with overall business and L&D objectives and goals.



# Begin your journey in enterprise mobility today by seeing what a best-in-class LMS looks like yourself

We invite you to try the Docebo LMS today free for 14 days. There's no cost, no credit card, and no commitment required.

[START YOUR FREE TRIAL](#)

## ABOUT DOCEBO

Docebo is a global SaaS enterprise learning management system (LMS) used in more than 80 countries and offered in over 30 languages. Established in 2005, Docebo offers a learning ecosystem for companies and their employees, partners and customers that is designed to increase performance and learning engagement. Docebo is a learner-centric technology, embraced for its ease of use, elegance and ability to blend coaching with social and formal learning. It's no wonder that Docebo has been heralded by PCMag.com a "the best online learning platform for business on the market." Visit [docebo.com](http://docebo.com) to learn more.



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