ACHIEVE BETTER LMS USER ADOPTION

When it comes to implementing and effectively making use of a learning platform, we have one key problem: users aren't tied to the software. And when they don't use the solution provided, it's a waste of budget, time, and effort. This issue is not new. We know that learner engagement is the weakest link in the eLearning chain.

So, why do users so frequently abandon or improperly use the LMS their company has adopted? And, why does poor user experience continue to be the reason companies switch LMSs?

It's probably because user adoption is such an enormous challenge – one that is pervasive beyond realm of LMS software. It's everywhere, present across every enterprise software product on the market.

And that's not because there aren't great enterprise software solutions out there. It's partly because these solutions tend to be so singularly focused on how to provide all of the essentials of great software delivery that they forget about the experience of the users who will bring the solution to life and make the software product truly viable.

So what to do about it?

Below, we'll discuss strategies for increasing user adoption in order to make sure the learning platform you choose is best leveraged by its users.

1. GET USERS INVOLVED EARLY IN THE SELECTION PROCESS

Remember that your users will be the ones using the system. Too often, users are an afterthought when it comes to adopting new enterprise software architecture.

Users need to be part of the initial software selection process – they should be considered key stakeholders in anything that is eventually adopted.

As we have seen in a recent Brandon Hall Group report, many organizations lament failing to include a large, cross-functional team in the software selection process from the onset. As well, poor coordination is the key reason many find they did not find the products that were best suited to their organization.

2. TREAT UI/UX AS THE #1 FEATURE OF A GREAT LMS

We already know that UX is the greatest challenge facing user adoption. If a user can't learn a system with low training or no training, either the software hasn't done its job, its evaluators were too foolhardy in their assessments, or both.

Individual learners need to pick up a learning platform and run with it as if it was a normal, casual, web-based application they are already so used to adopting and using, day-to-day.
Any cumbersome impediments to usage will become problematic both in terms of initial adoption and over time. You need something you learners don't need to think about in order to use. Make their choice as easy as possible.

3. ONBOARD THE SOFTWARE LIKE YOU'D ONBOARD AN INDIVIDUAL

The standard approach to software evaluation and implementation is to think of it as simply another tool as opposed to something that becomes a part of

enterprise software architecture and day-to-day usage for all staff in all areas of the organization – a salient point for LMS implementations in particular, since their tendrils permeate the entire organization.

It's easy to assume that a software product can be implemented, and that users will immediately be onboard. By the same token, many may think that the responsibility of adoption falls squarely up to the users adopting the software, as opposed to the software adapting to the users. Much of this falls to L&D leadership and IT resources, but it is essential to make sure that the software is as prepared for its users as its users are prepared for the software. Embed these considerations into the implementation plans and your users and your software will be more likely to get along.

4. BE SURE THAT CONTENT (THE KING) INTEGRATES EFFECTIVELY

A proper learning platform is all about providing fertile ground upon which learners can succeed. This starts with finding great partners in the process of integrating an LMS. Some technology partners don't know that an LMS and a content provider are two different things. If an LMS provider pretends to be a content provider as well, it may be stretching itself too thin. To achieve a successful union, an LMS and a content provider must act like the left and right side of the brain and work together to establish a successful and fruitful working dynamic.

Find an LMS that mentions content integrations with third parties from day one. Otherwise, they may be over promising and risk under delivering when it really counts. Developing a great, robust LMS is one thing. But, we need the platform to be seamless, easy to use, and smooth in its integration with other enterprise software, including human resource information systems (HRIS),

enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, etc.

THE BOTTOM LINE

No matter how great the software, no matter how exceptional the planning and implementation process, your LMS is only as successful as the users that use it in earnest – if they use it at all. Keep that metric (and a few others) in mind as you select and implement a system and you can't go wrong.

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