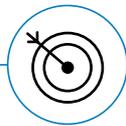


talent  lms

How to Choose your LMS.

Choosing the right LMS for your business is understandably not an easy thing to do, especially if you start from scratch as there are numerous things to consider. For that reason, we've added this checklist to our Cheat Sheet Series with the aim to provide a simple to go through guide that will give adequate insight to better inform and support your decision.

1. NEEDS & OBJECTIVES



Why do you need an LMS and what do you hope to achieve with it?

There are plenty of reasons for choosing an LMS on an organizational level. Some of the most common ones can be summed up as follows:

- Managing your company's administrative learning activities and processes effectively.
- Taking your corporate training online by building custom courses and ensuring a consistent output.
- Giving a 24/7 access to eLearning materials company-wide instead of limiting it to a specific time and location e.g. the training department.
- Creating an eLearning business by selling courses, educating clients and partners.

2. AUDIENCE



Who do you intend to train?

Your audience may vary between employees,

clients and partners. If for instance you need to train employees then mass actions, automations, detailed tracking and reporting are some must-have features that will eventually save you a large amount of time over your daily administrative tasks.

On the other hand, if selling courses to clients is your ultimate goal then you may need to integrate your LMS with a compliant e-commerce platform, as well as ensure coupons and discounts are available.

Another parameter here will be the size of your audience. Different LMS packages will serve different business sizes, varying from small businesses to large enterprises.

3. LMS TYPES



What type of LMS system is a better fit for your needs?

There are two types here you can choose from:

CLOUD, SAAS OR HOSTED LMS

These are web based LMSs. All your data is securely stored in the cloud and the platform gets frequently upgraded with no extra cost for the user. In general, it is the best option if you don't want to worry about maintenance and technical issues, as it is all taken care by the provider. It is also easier to set up in terms of instructional designing.

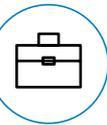
DEPLOYED OR INSTALLED LMS

These LMSs are hosted internally on your company's servers. They can be highly custo-

mizable but at the same time the responsibility of setup, security and maintenance falls at the IT team's hands.

The deployed LMS can be (depending on the provider) open source, meaning that the user has the ability to edit the program and make improvements or use add-ons, based on their needs.

While that might seem like a great option at first, it needs to be considered that the user might not get any official support after editing an open source.



4. FEATURES

What key features are you looking for in your LMS?

Some of the most common ones you need to be aware of are: Customization and Branding, Integrations, Security, Native Mobile Apps, Reporting, Assessments and Surveys, Certifications, Gamification, Communication tools, SCORM and Tin Can Compliance, E-commerce and many more.

If all these sound completely unfamiliar then utilizing your people's expertise can be a lifesaver. If this is not an option though, using directories can help you get to know more and compare solutions based on their features and characteristics. Some of the most distinguished directories that specialize on LMSs are [Capterra](#), [GetApp](#) and [eLearning Industry](#).



5. SUPPORT

How important are the vendor's Support Services to your business and at what frequency will they be needed?

In some circumstances, support services are more often required by businesses. For instance, if your organization is completely new to the concept of an LMS, then it is likely

that support services will be required more frequently. Types of support include:

PHONE SUPPORT

A representative will discuss with you any issues you might have with your LMS on the phone. Support hours can vary from 24/7 to business hours depending on the provider.

ONLINE SUPPORT

Either by providing email address or through a dedicated support form, you can communicate any inquiry you may have concerning your LMS. This is the most time-saving solution since your request will be directly designated to the person who can handle it best, avoiding a fair amount of back and forth communication that is often needed mostly on technical support issues.

KNOWLEDGE BASE

A knowledge base from your provider is a very useful tool to have at your disposal. It is basically an archive of in-depth and well-documented information, descriptions and how-to methods of several functions regarding the platform.

VIDEO TUTORIALS

Video tutorials can provide abundant assistance, especially for demonstrating the basic features of an LMS platform to a new user as well as guiding the initial setup. They are usually found on-site or on the vendor's video channel.



6. BUDGET

What is the budget allocation for your organizational training?

It is important that your budget includes the overall cost of the LMS for the whole time you intend to use the service, alongside any implementation fees e.g. the cost of an instructional designer or LMS consultant in case you need extra assistance to set it up.

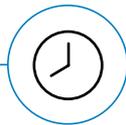
FREE

A free tool usually refers to trial versions, but there are also a few platforms that are forever free. Still, the capabilities they have to offer are limited and usually serve the purpose of getting familiar with the platform. However, in some cases, where the audience is too small, for example, they can fulfill the user's needs in the long term.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial tools are advanced solutions where their features, support and capabilities can expand depending on the vendor and the plan that you have with them.

Another factor to keep in mind is that usually a deployed system is more expensive than a cloud one. However, in some unusual cases, it can cost less in the long run. The most affordable rates for commercial Cloud LMSs start at 29\$/month, whereas for a deployed option a custom quote is usually required. For starting plans and further pricing options you can consult [TalentLMS Pricing](#).

7. TIMEFRAME

Are there any specific constraints in terms of time?

More specifically, how much time is there available until you have to reach a decision? Is it enough for you to compare several vendors/demos/trials or is time a pressuring factor?

In this case, choosing a Cloud LMS over a Deployed one is more likely to help you start your training program sooner. This is due to having less setup and implementation requirements.

**8. TEST DRIVE**

How would you prefer to test-drive your LMS? An LMS can be a significant investment. Therefore, it is important to understand how it works beforehand. There are three common methods for you to choose from depending on your preferences.

DEMO: Arranging a demo presentation with an LMS provider will give you a basic overview of the platform. Demos can take place either in person (depending on location) or, and most often, online, through a web conference tool. It is a great first encounter with the service, especially for those who won't be particularly involved in the implementation process.

FREE TRIAL: The free trial will work best for those who are more practical or a step further towards deciding, and want to get their hands on the actual service. Free trials usually last from 7 to 15 days, so you better be quick to get the most out of it.

FOREVER FREE / FREEMIUM ACCOUNT:

A forever free account would be ideal for instructional designers, instructors, trainers, and people who will be actively involved in the implementation process. This still depends on the timeframe as the user benefits from having the ability to test the platform as thoroughly as needed before reaching a decision.

If still in doubt, we would be happy to jump in a [quick chat](#) with you and take you through this list, unless you want to try the TalentLMS platform on your own, in which case all you need to do is start by [creating your free account](#).