

## THE CHEAT SHEET SERIES

# The Ultimate Guide for Choosing an LMS

Deciding on the right LMS is tougher than ever. More platforms are on the market, and tech advances fuel an ongoing stream of new features. Gain clarity, save time, avoid costly mistakes, and stay in control with our LMS Selection Cheat Sheet.



## 5-step checklist

When it comes to choosing an LMS, research is key. Know what to focus on and why.

### 1. Define your training operation

Your users, business model, and growth trajectory influence the must-have features your LMS will need.

<b>Training employees?</b>	<b>Look for:</b> Mass actions, automations and reminders, detailed tracking, and key use cases such as onboarding, compliance, and skills development.
<b>Training partners?</b>	<b>Look for:</b> Multi-language support, the ability to create branches or sub-domains, and easy accessibility, such as Single Sign-On and a native mobile app.
<b>Training clients?</b>	<b>Look for:</b> Easy integration with your tech stack, white labeling, and advanced options like coupons, discounts, subscriptions, and special bundle pricing.
<b>Scaling up?</b>	<b>Look for:</b> Adaptable pricing (per-user, bulk licenses, and tiered features), dynamic resource allocation, and no storage limits. Check for any hidden costs associated with changing plans.
<b>Offering seasonal or sporadic training?</b>	<b>Look for:</b> Just-in-time content, micro-learning functionality, blended learning, and flexible scheduling tools.

## 2. Evaluate your content needs

Great training can't happen without great content. But great content means different things to different businesses. Pinpoint what you need from an LMS by exploring the following options:

- AI-assisted course generation
- Ready-made courses and templates
- User-generated content
- Access to third-party video content and external course providers

### Did you know:

Access to ready-made courses is [the #1 feature employees would like to see](#) on a learning platform.

## 3. Scope out support and setup

The level of third-party support included with your LMS varies according to the deployment method.

### A cloud-based LMS has your back

With a cloud-based or SAAS LMS, the vendor handles all maintenance and technical issues. Data is securely stored. The platform is frequently upgraded at no extra cost and there's in-built scalability. **An out-of-the-box solution**, setup is also quicker and more seamless.

**Pro Tip:** Check out ongoing support. How responsive is the customer service team? What self-service resources (webinars, guides, and tutorials) are available?

### A locally-hosted LMS offers more control

A deployed or locally-hosted LMS provides flexibility for businesses with a robust IT infrastructure. Hosted on your servers, it's easy to customize. But responsibility for setup, security, and maintenance rests with you.

**Pro Tip:** A hosted LMS can be customized, too. A good platform will offer everything from simple ways to change a logo or white label a portal to fully-fledged CSS and JavaScript implementations.

## 4. Test usability

To maximize adoption and investment, your LMS must be intuitive and easy to navigate. Schedule a (free) trial or demo to explore usability and features. Compare this with the level of tech literacy across your organization. And against your capacity to provide support internally. Remember to consider usability across different access types.

**Pro Tip:** A smooth transition between your different platforms will make your new LMS more appealing and accessible. So, scope out the integration with your existing toolkit (for example, your HRIS and CRM).

## 5. Pindown price

Cost is key when choosing an LMS. Sync your **budget with the benefits** your chosen LMS will bring to you, and you'll have the balance right. To get to that point:

- Compare pricing models (per-user, bulk licenses, tiered features)
- Check for hidden costs and confirm scalability options if user numbers fluctuate
- Evaluate the investment for the whole time you intend to use the service
- Scope out extra implementation fees

### 8 core LMS features to consider

1. AI	From course creation and building skill sets to automated admin and personalized learning paths, an AI-powered LMS saves L&D teams time and boosts individual training outcomes.
2. Integrations	Look for seamless integration with your existing tech stack for smooth data flow and user management.
3. Skills-mapping	Upskill, cross-skill, and reskill teams by creating a catalog of the expertise your organization has at its disposal. And then use AI to fill in the gaps.
4. Customization	Design your training environment to match your business model and branding. Use white labeling tools and subdomains to offer your different user groups a unique and consistent experience.
5. Engagement tools	Mixing interactivity and gamification with reward and recognition motivates learners and raises completion rates.
6. Mobile learning	Whether onsite or on the road, give all learners equal access to training.
7. Reporting	Assess training effectiveness by tracking learner progress, performance, and other metrics with custom reports.
8. Blended learning	Support for live, asynchronous, online, and instructor-led training (ILT) caters to today's diverse and dispersed workforce.

Ready to go? It's easy!

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