

Deploying Your Learning Experience Platform

How You Can Unlock the Value in Your Learning Technology

Artificial intelligence is driving a shift in the way work gets done. Current technology can automate as many as 45% of existing work activities.ⁱ Jobs are changing as workers partner with both physical and virtual machines.

As the shift places new skill demands on workers, savvy business leaders have come to understand that they won't be able to recruit the workforce of the future—they must build it. According to the 2018 world economic Forum Future of Jobs report, 38% of businesses expect to upskill and re-skill their workforce to new productivity-enhancing roles through 2022. More than a quarter will create new roles.

Moreover, 84% of respondents In the Deloitte Global Human Capital Trend 2019 survey believed they need to rethink their workforce experience, and 86% percent responded that they must reinvent their ability to learn.ⁱⁱ

The Reinvention of Learning

Forward-thinking L&D leaders saw this trend coming. They put a lot of effort into finding a formula to engage employees in learning, and their LMS providers scrambled to build a better user experience. A few agile companies took an innovative approach, creating what we now know as the learning experience platform (LXP).

The LXP was a radical departure from traditional thinking. In the conventional model, learning leaders were trying to figure out what they wanted their people to learn and how to design learning that would engage and attract them. LMS companies were trying to help them manage it better.

LXP providers use a learner-centered design, built for the way people want to solve problems and learn new skills. The result is single-point-of-access systems with integrated technologies that let users choose what, how, and when they learn.

As the LXP has matured, its vendors have added LMS-like tools, but continue to deliver five core capabilities:

- Content curation, contextualization, and creation.
- Integration with multiple technologies.
- Social learning, including collaboration and networking.
- User experience design, including learning and career paths built around career development options.
- Robust data analytics to inform the organization about skill gaps and opportunities for improvement.ⁱⁱⁱ

The current trend is toward simulations as low-cost, scalable way to provide learning experiences.^{iv} Just as LXP have become a growing segment in the learning solution provider market,^v the simulation market is growing at over 15% per year.^{vi}

Do You Need a Learning Experience Platform?

The LMS has adapted many of the characteristics of LXP and vice versa over the past five years, but their core capabilities remain different. The LMS excels at required training for skills, certifications, and compliance. Learning is administrator driven, where employers prescribe the content for both required and voluntary learning. LXP remain learner-driven. Users decide what they will learn based upon recommendations driven by artificial intelligence.

If compliance is your most crucial learning need and upskilling or re-skilling are not a top concern, an LMS is probably enough for you.

However, if your job roles are becoming more fluid as your people adapt to technology in a competitive environment, we recommend you consider a learning experience platform.

Deploying your LXP

The methods used in implementing cloud learning platforms have become or less standardized over the past 20 years, but that doesn't mean it's become risk free. Nor does it mean you will optimize the value your technology can deliver. You will always need to take a hands-on leadership role, especially in preparing your organization for the change.

New vendors like to maintain control by managing the deployment themselves. As they grow, they soon find that the approach is not scalable, so they work with partners like Pixentia that specialize in software deployment. While partners follow the methods prescribed by the vendor, they differentiate themselves on the quality of their services and customer satisfaction.

Which partner you choose matters. Check references before you make a decision.

Implementation vs. Deployment

We use the term deployment rather than implementation. Implementation refers to installing the technology, but that is only one part of the work you must do to make your programs successful. You will be deploying software, people, programs, and assets in your company to achieve your goals. Your success is not dependent on the technology as much as on how your organization embraces the change.

We wrote this e-book to share with you the approach we have used to help our customers succeed. We hope it helps you meet your objectives and realize the full value of your technology investment.

Start with strategy

In our experience, a successful deployment begins with a strategy review. As Yogi Berra once said, “If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up someplace else.”

You can start by asking these questions:

- Does your company have a strategy for the next few years? Have you communicated the plan to your workforce? Do your people understand it and how they contribute to the objectives?
- Do you have a learning strategy aligned with the business strategy?
- Does each of your people know how it applies to them?

No worries if you haven’t reached that stage of development. You can get there with a little hard work.

The Value Chain

Many people talk about a skill shortage as a broad concept, but it’s about having the right talent where it matters.

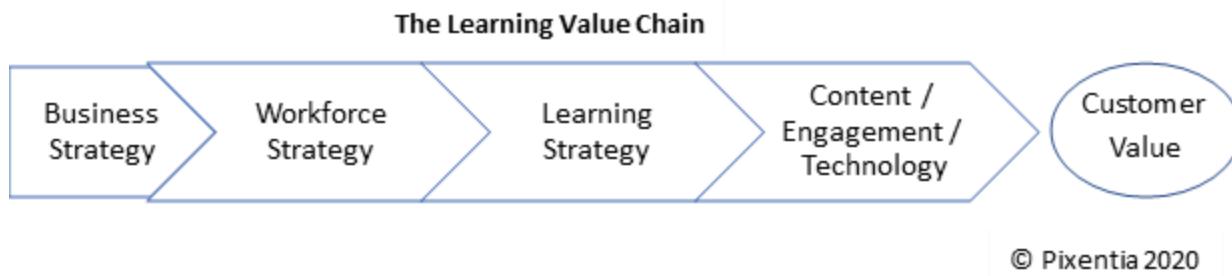
“Not having enough of the right talent where it matters is like trying to run a Ferrari with cheap gas in the tank. It’s a formula for frustration and poor performance.”

—Sandy Ogg, [Understand the Value Agenda](#)

When you need specific talent right now to seize an opportunity, you are at the mercy of the market. When you understand how talent drives value, you can anticipate your needs and grow your available talent pool. You need to pursue both solutions if you want to lead and succeed.

Connect your talent to value and connect that value to your learning strategy by asking three questions:

- Which roles create value in your company by generating revenues, lowering costs, and increasing efficiency?
- Which roles enable value by helping you manage value at risk?
- What do the people in those roles need to know and learn to create or enable current and future value?



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Sandy Ogg, Founder of CEO.works, calls this the Value Agenda. Its purpose is to align talent to your strategy to get the right people in the right roles to drive your business agenda—but it's more than that. To succeed, you must manage talent as diligently as you manage capital resources.

To dig deeper into the value agenda strategy, we recommend reading Ogg's five-part series on "[Connecting Talent to Value](#)."^{vii}

Governance

Your organization may have a data governance framework, and you may even use it to keep your reports organized, but without a governing structure for learning, you are risking a lot.

Not only will the lack of governance create inefficiencies and duplications, but it also exposes your company to compliance risks. Even worse, it can mean that learning in your organization may not support your business objectives.

We recommend you seize a learning platform deployment as an opportunity to build a governance framework to improve the way your organization approaches learning. Your framework should:

- Align learning in your organization with your business needs.
- Facilitate decision-making to capture more business value from your learning initiatives.
- Remove inefficiencies and duplications in your learning delivery.
- Make your learning platform more natural to use by making resources and reports easy to find.
- Set and enforce content quality standards.
- Prevent junk accumulation with standards for retaining learning content, reports, and data. The company's data governance program should have those standards in place.

If you are unfamiliar with governance and governance standards, we recommend that you visit the [Data Governance Institute \(DGI\)](#) and the [Governance Institute®](#). You can also read our article, "[How Governance Can Align L&D with Business Strategy](#)."

Change Management

Too often, communication about a planned technology change gets short shrift, although change management has improved in recent years as we understand technology change as a way of life.

- Start your conversation as soon as you know you will make a technology change and continue it for the entire life cycle of the platform.
- Tailor your conversation to the segments of your audience: the Board of Directors, top management, people managers, learners, and HR professionals.
- Start your conversation by informing people about the change you are about to make and why. Ask for their input on how they want your new learning programs to serve them.
- Set up a conversation group in your collaboration platform so people can offer their comments and suggestions. Seed the conversation with frequent updates from your project team.

An early start and continuous two-way communication can create a wave of desire for change that will carry you through your project.

Training

HR and learning software companies provide training for administrators and users. Implementation partners also offer workshops and training as a part of your deployment. We encourage you to take advantage of all the training they offer, starting early in your project.

- Make it a requirement for critical roles in your project team.
- Publish it in your project plan and communications for each of your roles.
- Follow up with reinforcement over the life cycle of your platform and make it a learning requirement in your onboarding program.

Provide training for these roles:

- **Administrators** are the keepers of platform security, configuration, and workflow. This critical role should have a ready backup and successors to prevent disruption. You can also engage a [managed services](#) provider to be your backup or your primary administrator.
- **Learning professionals**, your primary learning curators, are the masters of content. Engage them in training to ensure that you seed your LXP with the right content.
- **Learners** need training, too. LXPs are user-friendly enough that little learner training is necessary, but learners need to understand the terms and procedures and how to share and collaborate on content. Use learner training as part of your “Look What’s Coming!” campaign.
- **People managers** at any moment may be learners, learning managers, or coaches. Their engagement is critical to your success, and their training is a must-have for a successful rollout. Not only that—experiential learning is crucial for leadership development.^{viii}

Managing Your Project

Your vendor and partner will lead you through the implementation phase of your project, but as we stated in our introduction, you need to take on a hands-on leadership role. To help you along, we want to offer a few suggestions from our experience to help you manage your project to a successful outcome.

Metrics. It's worth the effort to determine how you will measure your project's success and report on your project. Establish sound metrics and keep your business leaders informed on your progress. Focus on the ultimate outcomes and capture their value.

Phasing. We recommend piloting your project with a small, high-impact group to learn from the experience before you roll it out to the whole organization. Pay close attention to the reactions of your audience so you can fine-tune the experience.

Content. Much of your success depends on the relevance of the content. Pay close attention to what content your people want and how they want to access it. Get everyone in your organization involved. Use your governance framework to drive learning content.

Testing. It's easy to fall prey to the idea that hundreds of customers use your platform, so you need not test it. Keep in mind that your vendor doesn't test your processes, your configuration, or your security. Test every business process from end to end and engage your end users in hands-on testing. Ask them for their reactions to the experience. They will notice things your project team won't.

With the right strategy, a robust change management effort, learning governance, a detailed project plan, you will succeed in realizing the value of your technology investment.

ⁱ Chui, Michael, James Manyika, and Mehdi Miremadi. "Four Fundamentals of Workplace Automation." McKinsey & Company, November 2015. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/four-fundamentals-of-workplace-automation>.

ⁱⁱ <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/human-capital/articles/human-capital-trends.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Clarey, Janet. "Learning Experience Platforms." Bersin, Deloitte Consulting LLP, 2018. <http://learn.skillsoft.com/Website-AR-Bersin-Learning-Experience-Platforms-View-Full-Report.html>.

^{iv} PIXENTIA BLOG: Simulation: The Gateway to Experiential Learning

^v Clarey.

^{vi} "Simulation Learning Market Is Booming at a CAGR 15.2% by 2025: CAE Healthcare, Pearson Education, Mentice, Gaumard Scientific." MarketWatch, December 24, 2019. <https://www.marketwatch.com/press-release/simulation-learning-market-is-booming-at-a-cagr-152-by-2025-cae-healthcare-pearson-education-mentice-gaumard-scientific-2019-12-24>.

^{vii} Ogg, Sandy. "Understand the Value Agenda - Part 1." CEO.works. September 19, 2018. <https://www.ceoworks.com/blog/connecting-talent-to-value>.

^{viii} Kelly, Ross. "Companies Are Turning to Experiential Leadership Programs as Digital Talent Fears Abound." ChiefExecutive.net. Chief Executive Group, LLC, May 7, 2017. <https://chiefexecutive.net/companies-turning-experiential-leadership-programs-digital-talent-fears-abound/>.