

Enhancing the Value of Learning Management to Your Organization

*"A **workflow** consists of an orchestrated and repeatable pattern of business activity enabled by the systematic organization of resources into processes that transform materials, provide services, or process information. It can be depicted as a sequence of operations, declared as work of a person or group, an organization of staff, or one or more simple or complex mechanisms." (Wikipedia)*

Over the past decade, software vendors around the globe have developed and released countless web and mobile applications aimed at automating common business workflows – from manufacturing and quality control through accounting and HR to sales and marketing. Generally speaking, the key benefits often associated with these systems include error reduction, improved employee productivity, increased customer satisfaction, and cost savings.

Over the same period, as learning and training technology has continued to evolve and mobile-responsive, Software-as-a-Service offerings have become the norm in the industry, learning management workflows have become prime candidates for improvement via learning automation features available in next-generation Learning Management Systems (LMS).

In this whitepaper, we will explore five key benefits offered by learning automation, to consider when planning on implementing an LMS for the first time (or replacing an existing one) for your organization:

The Quiet Power of Learning Automation
Enhancing the Value of Learning Management to Your Organization

 **MORE PERSONALIZED LEARNING**
Provide a highly relevant experience to your learners, at scale.

 **INCREASED LEARNER UTILIZATION**
Get your learners actually learning, sooner rather than later.

 **IMPROVED COMPLETION RATES**
Enable your learners to finish what they've started.

 **BETTER LEARNING VISIBILITY**
Generate excitement and support for learning from business managers.

 **PRODUCTIVITY COST SAVINGS**
Demonstrate the financial benefits of automation across the enterprise.

MORE PERSONALIZED LEARNING

These days, in both our personal and professional lives, there is no such thing as "one size fits all." We've grown accustomed to a high-degree of personalization available to us, from our mobile devices to our workout playlists to our social media accounts to the hot beverage we prefer to start our workday with (short flat white, coconut milk and one raw sugar, anyone?).

We expect nothing less in the learning and training activities we participate in as we progress through our careers – and this expectation is even greater with the digitally native generation now entering and rising up through the ranks in today's workforce. They know no different.

In the next-generation LMS context, automated enrollment and assignment workflows may now drive highly personalized learner experiences. Connecting data captured during the registration process with customizable enrollment or assignment rules ensures that each learner is automatically directed to the curriculum, courses, and lessons that best meet their learner profile and specific development needs.

Beyond individual learner benefits, group automation enables learning administrators to easily create custom cohorts of learners based on any profile attribute collected and managed by the LMS. Once created, these grouping rules may be used to trigger a variety of enrollment, assignment and renewal actions for learners, as well as streamlining the activity and progress reporting process for learning administrators and other stakeholders.

Want to automatically enroll all new sales reps in an online product education curriculum to get them productive as soon as possible? Need to ensure that your accounting organization is fully compliant with local, state, and federal regulations at all times, year after year? **Learning automation.**

Another benefit of grouping rules is the ability to drive peer-to-peer learning – or social learning – among learners who are members of a specific group. Such informal, community-based learning, when combined with more formal learning interventions such as classroom, e-learning, or virtual live instruction – can help transfer into practice the knowledge, skills, and abilities covered in the learning or training activity.

Given the unprecedented amount of information and activity today's connected workforce needs to sift through every hour of each day, a more personalized, targeted approach to learning and training will be well received by your learners.

Which leads us to the next benefit of learning automation: increased learner utilization.

INCREASED LEARNER UTILIZATION

Another common myth, particularly when it comes to learning and training initiatives, is “build it and they will come.”

Any L&D professional has likely spent many sleepless nights prior to the launch of a new learning or training initiative, wondering whether the program will be well-received, achieve its intended learning objectives, and benefit the business.

In addition to improvements in learner personalization and relevancy enabled by profile-based enrollment rules at the individual or group levels, another benefit offered by learning automation is increased learner utilization driven by automated reminders and other notifications.

Along with the “anytime, anywhere” access to information at Google speed in all aspects of our day comes a decrease in our ability to effectively process and sort out the flood of data that crosses our various screens each day. To combat such information overload (and the attention deficit it can create), the next-generation LMS incorporates a robust notification layer for significant activities in the learning and training workflows.

Automated system notifications and calendar integration help ensure that learners know “where they need to be and when” for their learning and training activities, with scheduled reminder messages designed to help them begin the coursework or attend a live training event in a timely fashion – without having to process yet another bit or byte of information to do so. Learning administrators benefit from escalating notifications that start with friendly reminders to the learner to emails to their supervisor, ensuring that the learning or training is completed when intended.

Meeting such “easy button” expectations of your learners from the get-go will help you get some (much needed I’m sure) sleep, resting easy with the knowledge that, while you and your team cannot stay on top of every single one of your learners and every single course or training event, your next-generation LMS with built-in learning automation features can (and will).

IMPROVED COMPLETION RATES

With most things, starting is easy. It’s the finishing that’s hard. Learning and training activities are no different.

As highlighted above, today’s working professionals are bombarded from all sides with constant hits to their bandwidth – both their availability and their attention. Keeping them on track with in-progress learning and training activities competes with other, often more immediate or important, priorities. This dynamic is especially true for asynchronous (self-paced), learning, whether e-learning courseware or OJT assignments.

Learning automation can help drive completion rates through a combination of heads-up progress analytics and automated progress notifications and reminders.

Learner dashboards and heads-up progress analytics enable a learners to rapidly visualize their progress and completion status for every active course enrollment, helping them prioritize their learning and training time and stay on schedule.

Similar to enrollment and course start reminder notifications, automated progress notifications provide the learner with a series of email and/or text messages that encourage them to stay on track with a given course they’ve begun, relative to its target completion date.

Offloading the need for learning administrators or line managers to manually track, communicate, and drive learner progress to the LMS enables all parties in the learning and training workflow to stay focused on “their day jobs” while still driving improved completion rates.

BETTER LEARNING VISIBILITY

To loosely paraphrase the old, rhetorical saw about falling trees, “if a learner completes an online course, did it make a

difference?”

Now that you have a good sense of the benefits that a next-generation LMS with built-in learning automation can bring to your learning and training initiatives, it's time for us to focus on how it can improve the visibility of your initiatives across your enterprise.

The key to answering our rhetorical question above is actually three-fold.

First, your LMS must have a robust, highly-flexible reporting engine, enabling you and your learning administrators to create customized reporting that lets you provide business stakeholders with the data they need to understand and evaluated the impact of your learning and training programs.

Second, and equally important, is the ability to save customized report templates and set automated report distribution rules, scheduling specific reports to be emailed to specific individuals – supervisors, managers or other key stakeholders – on a “set-and-forget” schedule, including frequency of recurrence.

Third, the ability for your LMS to share data with other business systems is key for correlation and determining the true business impact of your learning and training programs. Do sales reps that completed and/or product education programs generate more sales? Do support reps that master communication skills courses deliver higher customer satisfaction or retention rates? Did the new business process you recently rolled out (and trained users on) actually achieve the error or cost reduction goals you set out to achieve? The difference is in the data.

Such reporting automation capabilities help you keep learning program performance and organizational performance, in general, consistently pinging on the radar across all levels of the organization.

PRODUCTIVITY COST SAVINGS

This is where the quiet power of learning automation we've been examining grows louder. **Much louder.**

Salaries around the world vary greatly based on region, industry, company, and job description. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that real median U.S. household income in 2015 was \$54,462, a slight increase over the year prior.

For illustrative purposes, let's assume that the average annual salary for employees at your organization is in line with that data, at \$50,000 per year. Assuming the standard 2,000 hours worked annually by a full-time, exempt employee (FTE), the unburdened hourly cost of that employee to your organization is \$25.

Now, let's examine the benefits of learning automation across your enterprise. If learning automation could reduce the amount of time spent by your learners, managers and administrators each month on learning and training activities by even just 10%, associated productivity cost savings can add up quickly.

At an SMB organization with 250 employees, where each employee spends four hours per month on learning and

training activities, the total time spent equals 1,000 hours. Using our assumptions above, these activities would then cost the organization \$25,000 per month. **That's \$300,000, annualized!**

If the learning automation highlighted above drove a 10% reduction in time spent on learning and training activities by all employees, our example organization would save \$30,000 in productivity costs per year – which should cover (or at least significantly offset) the annual cost of an LMS.

Moreover, these assumptions do not even factor in the financial benefit associated with how the hours saved by learning automation get re-deployed, creating additional value for the organization.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LEARNING AUTOMATION

The learning automation features available in next-generation Learning Management Systems (LMS) enable learning leaders, managers, and administrators to more effectively scale their programs, ultimately driving learner adoption, utilization, and completion rates and improving visibility on their impact across the enterprise.

Combined with a cloud-based hosting model and mobile-first LMS application design, there are few places that you and your learning programs cannot reach and positively impact.

Thanks for reading and happy learning!

Elevate Your Learning & Training Programs with Inquisiq

Considering a learning management system for your organization for the first time? Looking to replace a first-generation LMS that no longer meets your (and your learners') expectations? Need a learning solutions partner who has the proven experience and expertise to make your learning and training programs a sustainable success?

ICS Learning Group looks forward to discussing your learning management needs with you and giving you a tour of our next-generation learning management system – Inquisiq.

To request an in-person or virtual demonstration, please go to www.inquisiq.com/request-a-live-demo or call toll-free (877) 427-4770. International callers may dial (410) 555-1212 (international long distance call fees may apply).

Goodbye Servers, Hello Cloud-based Convenience

Inquisiq is offered exclusively on a fully hosted, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) basis. Your IT managers won't miss the servers (and the headaches that come with them). And your learners, managers and administrators will love having anytime, anywhere access to their personalized, plug-in free learning dashboard through a standard web browser – whether they're on their computer, tablet or smartphone.

Supported browsers include:

- Internet Explorer 6.x – 10.x
- Google Chrome
- Firefox 2.x – 18.x
- Safari 1x – 6.x

ICS Learning Group – Your Proven Learning Partner

With over 20 years' experience in providing effective learning solutions, ICS Learning Group is committed to enabling our customers to engage and empower their audiences with customized, compelling and highly-interactive e-learning programs, deployed when and where they're needed most.

In addition to the Inquisiq platform, ICS Learning Group also offers our valued customers a range of Learning Solutions, including:

- Library of over 4,000 off-the-shelf e-learning courses
- Custom courseware development – let us create learning content to address your specific business needs
- Authoring tools – create your own content with one of our authoring tool provider partners
- Learning strategy and instructional design consulting services
- Software development and system integration services

Learning Management Made (Seriously) Easy

Inquisiq has been designed to seamlessly support the full range of learning content and delivery modalities favored by today's connected organizations.

Whether you're offering your learners classroom-based or virtual instructor-led training, interactive e-learning, mobile learning or even on-the-job reinforcement and reference, don't let learning management get in the way of great learning.

Inquisiq supports the following learning content standards:

- SCORM 1.2
- SCORM 1.3 (2004) 4th Edition
- xAPI (TinCan)

Authoring tools compatible with Inquisiq include:

- Adobe Captivate
- Articulate Presenter
- Articulate Quizmaker
- Articulate Storyline
- Compositica
- Elucidat
- Knowledge Presenter
- Trainersoft
- Trivantis Lectora

