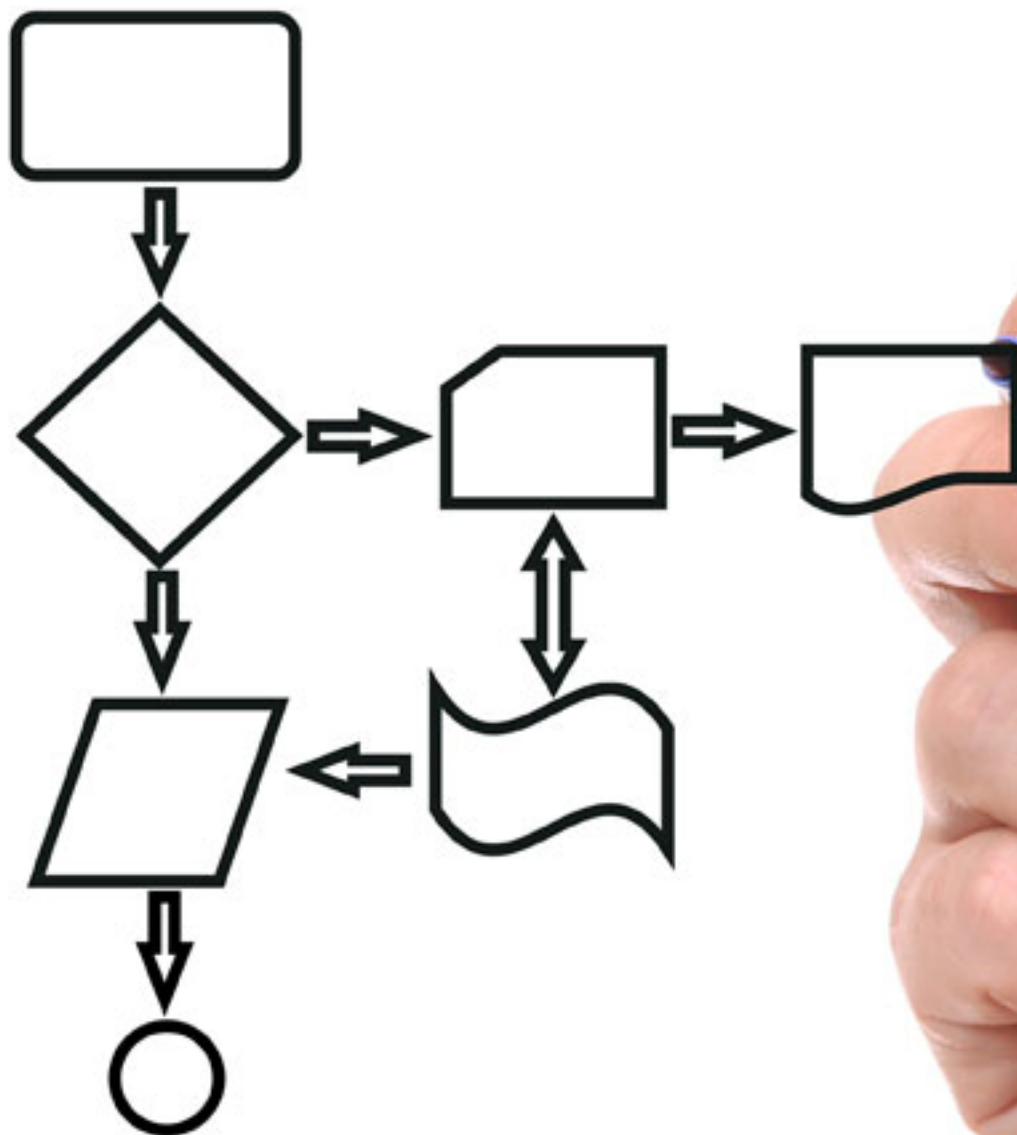


Planning and Evaluating Business Needs for an Enterprise Learning Management System





Brandon Hall Research

Independent, Innovative Intelligence

Planning and Evaluating Business Needs for an Enterprise Learning Management System

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About the Authors



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Part 1 - Introduction

Imagine you've been given the job of researching and finding a suitable learning management system (LMS) for your company. Where do you start?

You start with lots of planning and evaluation of various systems and suppliers, as well as a thorough assessment of the needs of your business. While it is true that an LMS is a piece of software, we speak of an *implementation* process, rather than a simple software *installation*, because of the many steps involved. A typical learning management system can take months, if not a year or more, to implement, and it can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Getting it right is critical; getting it wrong can be problematic for both you and your business.

Essentially, the process usually involves four stages and many steps:

Stage 1: Planning and Evaluation Business Needs for an Enterprise LMS

- > Development of a business case for investing in a learning management system
- > Consideration of alternatives to an LMS
- > Articulation of a vision and scope for the entire project, resulting in the development of a “project charter”
- > Development of an implementation strategy and project management plan that includes a presentation of the business case, an assessment of the impact on the organization of implementing an LMS, and a change management strategy
- > Development of the communications and marketing plan for the project
- > Identification of all stakeholders for an enterprise LMS
- > Requirements gathering exercise, including the development of “use cases” for each business unit and group of stakeholders

Stage 2: Purchasing an Enterprise Learning Management System

- > Preparing a budget for purchasing and maintaining a learning management system
- > Buy or build? Customization vs. Configuration
- > Install internally or a hosted solution?
- > Specifying your technical and security requirements
- > Standards for LMSs
- > Understanding Pricing for LMSs
- > Gathering information on LMS suppliers



- > Using a knowledgebase to gather information
- > Issuing a Request for a Proposal (RFP)
- > Developing a short list of suppliers
- > Interviewing suppliers
- > Choosing a supplier
- > Signing the contract

Stage 3: Implementation of the Selected Learning Management System

- > Formation of an executive steering group to manage the entire initiative – a partnership of the buyer's and supplier's staff
- > Assignment of roles for the project team, including the project sponsor, project manager, and project staff; this is your project management team for day-to-day management of the implementation
- > Development of a detailed specifications document
- > Development of a comprehensive project plan
- > Development and management of implementation budget
- > Management of technology, including the software to be implemented and the hardware on which it will be installed
- > Management of the expectations of end users
- > Planning for the uploading of content into the LMS
- > Development of both print and online help and documentation for the system
- > Change management procedures while the implementation is underway
- > Management of all personnel involved in the project
- > Testing and quality assurance procedures
- > Managing the rollout process

Stage 4: Maintenance, Support, Operations and Governance of an LMS

- > Developing content/educational experiences that work with the selected LMS
- > Transition to operations team – documentation and Web site
- > Governance of an LMS



- > Setting up management for sustainability of project: impact on the organization; change management; ownership; innovation; configuration database; maintenance, support, and periodic reviews
- > Ongoing evaluation – ROI, analytics, and measurement of success
- > Developing documentation and Web resources for the project
- > Setting up support procedures

This report is all about Stage 1, planning and evaluating business needs for an enterprise learning management system. Getting this first stage right provides a firm foundation for success in all the later stages. Subsequent reports will cover the steps for the other three stages.