Choosing a learning management system that is sufficient/compatible/feasible—insert adjective here, can be a daunting task. There are hundreds of learning management system (LMS) platforms offering a wide variety of specifications, all of which may or may not satisfy your business’s needs.

Ultimately, there are two sides to the LMS equation: the learner and the administrator. As an administrator, your responsibility is to provide learners with content and to report and react on the progress of those learners.

The difference between an average LMS and an exceptional LMS is the ease in which learners and administrators can accomplish their unique goals.

Feature-rich software opens the door, but it’s ease of use that empowers learners and admins to walk through that door.

Is Your LMS Current?

If you have been using the same LMS software for a couple years or more, particularly if it’s an installed product, then your current system could be outdated. Not outdated in the sense that it’s become a nostalgic mixtape from your high school crush, but outdated in that alternatives exist. New technologies are available, and some may better satisfy your particular set of needs. Whether you’re re-evaluating your current LMS or a first time LMS buyer, seek a platform that is straightforward, informative and intuitive.
Straightforward Interface Design

Straightforward interface design is the bread and butter of an exceptional LMS. For an administrator to be successful in their position, they’ll require an LMS that expresses ease-of-use. Easy to use systems can give full-time administrators nearly 25% of their week back just by simplifying workflows. That’s time that can be used to create new learning content, optimize existing courses and explore other LMS features.

Remember, a straightforward design doesn’t necessarily go hand-in-hand with limited features. The composition of the LMS should give administrators the freedom to create and manage, without complicating the process.

Alternatively, a simplistic LMS may be easy to use, but its limited features will remove the flexibility to address your customized business needs. For example, administrators may want to override many system-generated data fields to support due date extensions, subjective scoring, and prerequisite overrides. Many LMS’s don’t offer this much flexibility.

Flexible vs. Custom

Finding a straightforward yet flexible LMS begins with software built on a single codebase. Some LMS providers may offer to spin off a customized version of their software with additional features for your business.

While customized software may seem like the right choice, you’ll soon be disappointed with the inability to keep up with both versioning and an ever-changing business environment.

In a single codebase, system bugs are easier to squash and new features that benefit the majority of clients can be added quickly.
Informative Reporting Options

Easy to navigate content and data management is important, but it’s useless without tools to assess and improve how your learners make use of that content and data. Look to remedy this with interactive and intelligent LMS reports. Administrators will need to generate reports that can be customized, saved, shared, emailed, exported, etc. The reporting process should allow admins the flexibility to look at both individual learners or a targeted group of users.

But reports don’t end at data retrieval. Many admins want to take action with groups of learners as well. For example, can your LMS report on user groups enrolled in a specific curriculum, based on the grade they received? Then, take those with failing grades and automatically enroll them in supplementary courses? If not, then you may benefit from an LMS with more advanced reporting features.

If custom reports aren’t your thing, consider an LMS that maintains an inventory of report templates. This may include: Learner Activity, Learner Progress, Department Progress, Learner Competencies, Course Activity, Course Summary, Assessments, Tasks, Curricula Activity, Course Evaluations, and Course Approvals, just to name a few. Generally, report templates should meet the needs of the majority of LMS administrators.
Intuitive Actions

It’s hard to envision an intuitive user experience without seeing it in action, but think of it like this: it knows what you want to accomplish and makes it easy for you to do it.

Select 3 users? A menu adjusts to options that are useful for multiple learners. Sick of sitting at your desk? Seamlessly switch to your tablet with a system that scales to the platform in use. Marking an exam question right or wrong isn’t good enough? Offer immediate feedback in the form of correction, new course resources or even new course enrollment.

When you bring straightforward interface design, informative reporting options and intuitive actions together, administrators are guided to actionable intelligence. For instance, an often overlooked advantage of an exceptional LMS is the ability to track and advance custom groups of learners. Take a sampling of learners place them in a group and turn your LMS features into smart features that can target that specific group and react.

Intuitive software is all about taking massive amounts of data and presenting it in a way that you are able to use, to optimize your learners’ potential. Content which targets different user types, self-assessment that creates action, and a responsive HTML5 interface are all examples of a unified intuitive learner-admin experience.

If a straightforward, informative and intuitive LMS sounds like something you’d be interested in learning more about, we’d love to hear from you. We’re here to help implement an LMS which reflects your business goals with the support of our experts until you become one yourself (and then we’re still here just in case!).

Talk to an Absorb LMS expert today