WIN YOUR COMPETITIVE RACE WITH EXTENDED ENTERPRISE LEARNING

By: John Leh, CEO, Lead Analyst at Talented Learning, LLC

Extended enterprise learning is facilitated by a Learning Management System (LMS) to keep track of all your users, content and the relationship between the two. For over twenty years corporate organizations have been using LMSs and eLearning to provide mandatory and self-service training to their employees. Historically, LMS systems were successful in reducing training delivery costs and ensuring regulatory compliance but they fell woefully short in engaging learners, being easy to use or facilitating ecommerce. They were all about saving money. The new cloud LMSs leverage the advances in technology to finally facilitate easy engagement with global extended audiences at a fractional price point to traditional LMSs.

With these hurdles removed organizations are focusing on delivering a measurable impact to their business metrics through training and they can prove it. Training your corporate extended enterprise audiences is all about making money, impacting business change and winning your competitive race.

This paper will introduce you to the topic of extended enterprise learning and outline the very tangible measurable business benefits. We’ll discuss tools and technology you will need to engage the voluntary users of the extended enterprise and give you steps and advice to get going at your organization.
Win your Competitive Race with Extended Enterprise Learning

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Are you impacting your business with extended enterprise training? If not, you are behind. Organizations in every industry globally - including yours - use extended enterprise training as a strategic tool to grow and improve their business and profitability.

Extended enterprise learning is any training, knowledge, certification or performance support provided to your non-employees such as channel distribution partners, resellers, dealers, franchises, members, customers and end-users of your products and services.

The evolution of cloud computing, mobile devices and social media changed the learning and development market in ways that no one could have predicted. While progressive L&D experts have been leveraging these new technologies for their employee learners, the greatest beneficiary has been opportunistic organizations who maximize their interaction and training contact with their corporate extended enterprise learners.

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What is Extended Enterprise Learning?

Extended Enterprise (EE) learning is any training effort targeted at your non-employees with the goal of impacting measurable behavior change. Every industry globally uses some form of EE learning and they all have the same fundamental challenge. Extended enterprise users are voluntary users and thus need to be treated differently – better than employees.

All extended enterprise audiences are voluntary but to differing degrees. For example, students who register for a college MOOC course and then pay for a certificate that has questionable value are much more voluntary than an employee of a restaurant franchise.

The more voluntary the audience, the tougher the challenge to capture their mindshare.

You can make your employees take training but you can't make the EE voluntary learners consume content. Organizations need to make voluntary learners want to take content, pay for content and come back and do it again and again. As a result, experts in extended enterprise learning need to be equally skilled in business, marketing and measuring success as well as the traditional learning technology skill set.
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Extended Enterprise Use Examples

Extended enterprise learning comes in many shapes and forms. Here are some examples of how you can use extended enterprise training to gain a competitive advantage.

Partner Channel Training and Certification

Manufacturers, software providers, insurance companies, investment brokerages and telecommunication companies usually have global, independent partners that resell and service their product lines as well as provide local value added services and support.

These global partners often represent competing product lines from competing organizations. The organization that best trains and certifies its partners on their products and services and provides just-in-time performance support will win the mindshare battle. In every industry, those organizations that train and certify their partner channel see dramatic increases in channel sales, complexity of sales and end-customer satisfaction.

Dealer/Franchise Onboarding and New Product Rollout

While channel partners can represent many organizations, dealers and franchises usually only represent one. Automobile manufacturers, gasoline service stations, restaurant and hotel chains, car rental agencies and beauty aid organizations all sell exclusive dealer or franchise rights to independent partners usually limited to a geographic area.

These partners pay a hefty initial fee and ongoing royalty for the proven business model, brand recognition, marketing, defined products and training to make them successful.

Most dealers and franchisers provide training and certification to their franchisees for every job role from owner to maintenance in a prepackaged LMS, content and performance support learning environment.

In a recent research report by Towards Maturity and Raytheon Professional Services, 22 European automotive manufacturers were surveyed about their learning technology and dealer training programs. 100% responded that increased learning access and flexibility was a top business goal, 94% of respondents used a Learning Management System and 45% agreed that eLearning has made a significant contribution to increasing revenue.

According to a satisfaction survey, 95% of partners who had successfully passed our sales certification confirmed that our education helped them better understand and sell the product.

Source: Peter Ruchatz, Chief Marketing Officer at Veeam

Use of Learning Technologies in Auto Dealer Training

Source: Driving Innovation in Dealership Training for the Automotive Sector; www.towardsmaturity.org/automotive2014
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Customer Training Academy

Over the last few years customer learning has evolved into a strategic marketing, sales and support tool. If you have a product or service that requires any level of customer expertise, then you better be training your customers in a measurable way. A learning management system branded as a “customer academy” is used as the backbone of the customer learning system delivering eLearning, tutorials, videos and social learning that can be created once and reused countless times.

Knowing if your customers have been trained or not gives you the power to measure the return on your investment by comparing their buying and use behavior. Organizations with formal customer learning programs enjoy higher customer satisfaction rate, decrease in support calls, increase in customer renewal rates, upsells and cross sells.

Contract Workforce Compliance

In the oil and gas, transportation, large scale construction industries and even retail, many workers are independent contractors. The regulatory compliance nature of these industries and positions require employers to be incredibly diligent in training contractors and ensuring their training or regulatory certifications are current.

An extended enterprise LMS allows contracting organizations to deliver compliance mobile enabled content and verify compliance adherence. Using APIs these organizations integrate contractor ID card readers, building entry access, starting of vehicles or even a helicopter ride to an off shore drilling platform to real-time LMS compliance completion status records. Compliance violations can cost lives at the worst and millions in fines at the best and can be solved with a good extended enterprise LMS.

Continuing Education and For-Profit Training

Many professional jobs such as accountants, architects, dentists, doctors, nurses and teachers to zoologists are required to take a certain amount of professional development training every year. The amount of training is usually expressed in credit hours and varies by professional and geographic location but 20-50 hours/year is common. Many types of organizations compete to provide continuing education content and certification to these professionals including associations, training providers and universities. The ability to attract professionals, sell them content, provide them value and have them come back next year is vital to success, stability and longevity of any organization providing training.

The professional continuing education industry is huge. For example, the healthcare continuing education industry is centrally accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education. In 2013, CME providers conducted over one million hours of instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME) PRESENTED BY ACCME ACCREDITED PROVIDERS</th>
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<tr>
<td># of ACCME Accredited CME Training Providers</td>
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<tr>
<td># of Unique CME Learning Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Hours of Instruction</td>
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<td>Total Participants</td>
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Source: Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education 2013 Annual Report
Why Train your Extended Enterprise Audiences?

Winning your competitive race is a matter of percentages and few organizations outdistance everybody for a long period of time. Continual investment and growth in training your extended audiences and providing them targeted performance support has a proven positive impact on core business metrics. Smart organizations use this fact to their advantage.

Unlike internal employee training it is easy to measure the business impact of extended enterprise learning. An extended enterprise learning management system will allow you to report on the training completions of your extended audience groups. Compare trained vs. untrained groups or individuals in any metric you are tracking such as renewals, support calls or channel sales performance to determine the measurable impact.

The measurable benefits can be easily grouped into three main categories:

• **Increase Income** - Extended enterprise learning is about making money for an organization. If you train your channel partners about your products and how to sell them, channel partners will sell more. Similarly, if you train your customers on how to use the software they just purchased, they have a better chance to get a good start, use the product as intended, be successful and renew their subscriptions. Organizations also sell their content and certifications and create a new stream of revenue from the sale of content and channel partner certifications.

• **Decrease Costs** – Educating your partners, prospects and customers increases customer satisfaction and decreases the cost of customer support. Extended enterprise learning technology also decreases overall training delivery costs through the reuse of learning materials and elimination of travel and instructor costs and also reduces the regulatory compliance risk. Finally, the cost to build and support a growing and global network of partners and customers is greatly reduced through extended enterprise training and performance support.

• **Accelerate Timelines** – Through the use of extended enterprise training organizations can shorten timeframes for many activities. Rolling out new products, expanding into new global areas, ramping up external sales are all measurable impact areas. Onboarding new customers to successful customers is dramatically decreased with focused training and just-in-time learning interventions.

Few activities in the corporate world have the ability to impact so many of the above business metrics. Deploying an ever evolving extended enterprise outreach and training initiative can provide you a sustainable competitive advantage to outpace your competition.
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Extended Enterprise Case Studies

To be really successful in extended enterprise learning it is important to develop a measurable success plan from day one. Define who you are going to target, what behavior you want to change and how you will measure it. By knowing the impact to the business you have all tools to ask for more budget and then prove the impact.

One software organization I know has over 400 team members developing content because they can prove the impact each piece of content has on the business, so they keep growing. Here are four case studies of organizations that have proven the worth of training their extended enterprises. Click on the company name to access full case story and many more.

- VeeamSoftware, a global leader in data protection disaster recovery and virtual environment management, provides training content to over 50,000 channel partners and 90,000 customer users, resulting in 3000 learning engagements per month and 10,000 revenue generating certifications. 95% of trained partners agree that training helped them to improve knowledge and ability to sell, improving results and productivity.

- Autodesk certifies instructors who can train users and organizations to help them obtain the greatest return on their Autodesk software investment. Autodesk lowered their training delivery costs, increased global reach, generated income and improved content consistency while certifying over 5000 instructors in 13 countries.

- Sealed Air is a global packaging and cleaning products manufacturer that developed and deployed a for-profit client academy to certify their clients on their products and how to properly use them. Sealed Air analyzes training completion data combined with business data to benchmark goals and measurable performance.

- International Parking Institute utilizes Docebo to train, certify, measure and report on learning for parking professionals from member organizations in every industry globally.

What Do You Need to Get Started in Extended Enterprise Learning?

Getting started in extended enterprise learning is easy and the initial investment is modest. Because all efforts are targeted at demonstrating measurable business results, it is easy to start small, prove the worth of the program and then expand and improve your efforts. There are only three items needed to get started:

1. Measurable Business Case - To fund the content and a LMS, you need a measurable business case. The measurable business case is the only way to secure the budget needed to launch an extended enterprise program and is the language of the executives who hold and allocate the budget. If you can frame the argument of why your organization needs to invest, proof of any past results and the predicated future results, you have a good chance to get your initial budget and build your extended enterprise program from there.

2. Content can be delivered in any format from the formal to informal including self-paced learning, virtual classrooms, live training, documentation, tutorials, videos, social learning and mobile learning. The best content is internal sales and product content because it can easily be repurposed for external audiences and has a huge influence on external sales channels.

3. An extended enterprise LMS is the backbone of the program and is most typically cloud-based software providing a storefront or portal that houses your catalog of content for any media and keeps track of users and the association between the two. With a LMS you can track who has or has not completed training activities making it possible to measure your success.
Top 15 Features of an Extended Enterprise LMS

So how do you know what an extended enterprise LMS is? Many people define an extended enterprise LMS as one that has ecommerce capabilities, but it is so much more than that. Since extended enterprise learning is about attracting learners, getting learners to want to purchase, participate in communities, providing value and enticing them to return because they see value, there is a different set of features required to support that mission. A good extended enterprise LMS will have the following features:

#1 - Cloud LMS – The cloud LMS is mandatory in extended enterprise learning. It's quicker, easier, cheaper and more reliable than trying to do it yourself and allows you to get to your measurable results quicker. If your usage explodes, a cloud LMS can scale immediately with no issue. The LMS needs to be technically flawless and maintenance free. Let your vendor host the channel LMS and spend your time and money on developing great content. Good cloud LMSs leverage technologies like Content Distribution Networks (CDN) to replicate content to local geographic areas facilitating fast content in bandwidth challenged areas.

#2 - Consumer Based Interface – Think of an extended enterprise LMS learning interface like an Amazon, eBay and BestBuy site for learning. Searching, refining, researching learning products and information should be easy and require zero time to learn how to do it. If the main page of the LMS looks like an Excel spreadsheet or needs to reload with new search criteria, you are not looking at an EE LMS.

#3 - Customer Relationship Management (CRM) – Extended enterprise audiences are voluntary users so you have to spend time marketing to them. A CRM allows you to send more and more targeted communication campaigns to segments of your audience based on their profile demographics, content completion, stage in the sales cycle or past purchase history. A CRM tracks and provides analytics on who opened the email, links they clicked on and then actions they performed on the LMS like buying content. Good LMSs either provide their own CRM type capabilities or leverage existing cloud CRM software like Salesforce.com.

#4 – Domain Management – Extended enterprise initiatives need to support many diverse audience groups with branded, private portals. Many times large customers or partners require their own private area of the LMS with their own log-on page, content, users, language and workflow. An extended enterprise LMS easily manages the interrelation of all these groups and the sharing/not sharing of content.

#5 - Dynamic Audience Grouping – In internal LMSs, the ability to group users by job, role or organization is used to assign content and run reports has been around a long time. An EE LMS builds upon that by allowing any user profile demographic field –even custom fields populated with data from external systems- to be used as group creation criteria. Via an API feed to a CRM or social platform, users are added in or removed from a group real-time as their profile demographics change. Through dynamic audience grouping, EE owners can send targeted email marketing campaigns and promotions to sell content, assign and recommend content and have detailed effectiveness reports available for continual analysis and improvement.

86% of buyers will pay more for better customer experience.
Source: Customers 2020 – The Future of B-to-B Customer Experience

70% of companies surveyed report reinvesting money saved back into their business as a result of moving to the cloud.
Source: PC World: Infographic: SMB Cloud Adoption Trends in 2019

“Gartner predicts CRM will be a $36B market by 2017.”
Source: Forbes.com

70%
86%
$36B
#6 - Continuing Education Management – Being able to manage continuing education is key. Earning credits, completing programs of study, obtaining certification, recertification, accreditation and managing the whole process is a complex and deep set of functionality. Additionally, certification business rules, credit values and recertification criteria can vary from state or country level and all need to be managed concurrently and easily.

#7 - eCommerce – Selling training to individuals or to groups with individuals is a core requirement in many extended enterprise LMS initiatives. Storefronts, shopping carts, checkout and payment gateway integration all facilitate business to learner commerce. Purchase orders, e-checks, tokens, credit accounts, debit accounts and organization charge backs are all methods of tracking organizational commerce. Bundles, subscriptions, timed access, content recommendations and related content provide tools to help you offer promotions. Advanced features include taxation and multi-currency support.

#8 – Social Learning – Creating an active community of your partners, customers, members or learners is the ultimate goal of extended enterprise learning because each new interaction with learners costs nothing but has an incremental impact. The LMS social feature set includes but goes far beyond the old features of threaded discussions, chat, wiki and moderated groups. Social learning now includes being able to create an account and sign in with your public social media profile, newsfeeds and the ability to engage experts for just in time performance support. At certain configurable thresholds, learners can also earn tangible rewards such as gift cards or discount coupons.

#10 - Mobile Enabled – External users are not sitting at their desktop at work. They are not your employees. They have their own jobs and are voluntarily taking your training at night, weekends, on the train, plane or anywhere they can squeeze in. Most extended enterprise content will be consumed via mobile devices. Everything you do for the extended enterprise needs to be mobile first. The LMS and any content need “responsive” design that automatically tailors the screen for no-scrolling on any device. Advanced mobile features include native iOS and Android apps that allow for the downloading of content, offline consumption and eventual reporting back to master LMS.

#11 - API Connectors - The extended enterprise LMS is no longer a “destination” but integrated into a complete ecosystem that can display and share content with many other core systems. Through the use of open APIs software systems can talk to each other but setting integrations up requires experienced IT help. Smart extended enterprise LMSs have API connectors that are prebuilt and all you have to do is activate them. This allows you, with no IT help, to integrate into any cloud based software such as CRM, single sign on, ecommerce, social media, learning content and virtual classroom applications.

#12 - Globalization – It’s tough to find examples of extended enterprise solutions that don’t have the potential for global rollout and a good EE LMS makes the process simple, straightforward and cost effective. Globalization includes the first tier of localization of the interface into multiple languages based either on a user profile or dynamically sniffing the language of the browser. Enhanced globalization includes the ability to manage a piece of content and create local variation to be dynamically served up to users, yet have one reporting record for administrators.

With a compound annual growth rate of 18.2% for the next five years, it is estimated that the worldwide mobile learning market in 2015 will reach $8.7 billion and it will even reach $12.2 billion by 2017.”

Source: The 2012-2017 Worldwide Mobile Learning Market

51% of executive respondents indicated that they use Web 2.0 technologies to increase the speed of access to knowledge for their channel partners.

Source: How companies are benefiting from Web 2.0: McKinsey Global Survey results

Gamification learning is often thought of and described at the content level. LMS gamification includes contests and games that overarch all the content in the LMS. Learners are awarded points for using the LMS, taking content and participating in social learning. As points accumulate, users earn new levels, badges and distinctions that are displayed on their profile, “leaderboards” and social news streams.
#13 - Virtual Classrooms -- One of the hurdles in getting started with channel learning is the time and cost of creating good content. The easiest way is to use a virtual classroom tool to provide live virtual training at a regular time every week. The live presentations can be recorded and made available for self-paced playback building your library over time inexpensively. Finding a LMS with an integrated virtual classroom simplifies the integration, contracting, maintenance and end-user experience.

#14 - Reporting and Analytics – Without this, you never get the funding in the first place. Extended enterprise LMS solutions exist because they have an easy to measure impact in the business. It is simple to compare groups of users who have vs. who have not taken sales training and see if they sell more for example. Reporting proves the ROI value for purchasing organizational leadership. Reporting needs to be modern, easy, secure, automatic, dynamic, real-time, inclusive of custom fields and modifiable. All data fields in the LMS should be available. Data should be exportable for comparison with data in other systems or be capable of being the warehouse.

#15 - Corporate Experience – Although not a feature, vendor experience is the most important aspect of choosing an extended enterprise LMS. If you can’t find mention of partners, sales channel, customer, members or the general public eLearning on the main page of the LMS vendor website, you are looking at an internal LMS. If you have to explain to a vendor more than once that the LMS is not for internal employees, you are looking at an internal LMS. To be successful in extended enterprise learning you want a LMS that focuses its product and its services around the support of external training including the marketing and growth aspects of the solution.

Conclusion

Training, certifying and providing ongoing performance to your extended enterprise audiences is a sustainable competitive advantage. You can start the program small and targeted, predict impact, measure and improve. With each additional piece of content you can grow you cumulative impact on the business. Being a training professional is so much more fun when you are making a measurable impact.

Having the proof that extended enterprise learners consumed content is the baseline you need to prove that the content improved the business in some metric. Once you learn how to measure and improve the impact, you will be able to grow your initiatives and make a larger and larger measurable impact on your organization’s business. If you don’t take the time to develop your extended enterprise audiences, your competition will.

You don’t need to start big. You just need to start and you will be outpacing your competition in no time.

About the Author

John Leh, CEO and Lead Analyst at Talented Learning, LLC, is an LMS selection consultant and training industry blogger focused on helping organizations plan, buy and implement technology strategies that support extended enterprise learning. He has 19 years of experience in the eLearning and LMS industry having served as a trusted advisor to more than 100 learning organizations.
Ten Tips to deploy your Extended Enterprise LMS

Appendix 1
Ten Tips to deploy your Extended Enterprise LMS

1. Reaching your global audience
   In a Global Economy, your Extended Enterprise Users can be located worldwide. To satisfy their needs, you need to bear in mind two things: speed and latency. The speed at which your users can download the content they need from the internet, or your company academy, should be high. The latency - the time needed to establish the connection between the final user and the remote service - should be low. One of the most effective ways to ensure both of these things is to use a content distribution network (CDN).
   This is a technology that replicates the learning materials on different datacenters, located worldwide, and delivers that content from the closest server to the user. This enables the learning materials to get to all users, wherever they are, with optimal speed and latency.

2. It’s all about brand
   Delivering learning materials to different countries is likely to involve meeting several conditions. If, for example, your product is branded differently in different countries, you’ll need to create different customer academies with different product logos and even different content, based on each of your target audiences.

3. Fitting your clients’ brand identity
   When using Extended Enterprise, you can build separate academies for each of your clients - tailoring the environment to the client's logo and corporate identity to enhance the user experience and “fidelization”.

4. Different brands, different policies
   Using the Extended Enterprise concept to manage different audiences might mean that you need different policies for each one. For example, in an LMS that delivers Internal, Customer and Dealer training with different brands, you may need to set up three separate login policies - mixing a Single Sign On system with the internal systems for those accessing the Internal learning materials. Dealer users can reach the LMS from the Dealer portal, while Customers can be handled via self-registration.

5. Different countries, different laws
   Privacy and Data Protection regulations differ between the US and Europe – and variations in these regulations occur from country to country. Furthermore, laws in the world's emerging markets are evolving swiftly. With the Extended Enterprise approach, you have to ensure that your Extended Enterprise Vendor is cross-compliant with the relevant Privacy and Data Protection laws. Usually European Union (EU) laws in this area are stricter than are US laws (you may wish to view the Safe Harbor policy).
6. Don’t forget your CRM

Selling complex products involves the Four Keys of Social Media - Engage, Educate, Excite, Evangelize. This is a concept that can be applied to Extended Enterprise. Allowing prospects to self-register in a Customer Academy means that, thereby, you acquire a potential lead to record in your customer relationship management (CRM) tool. This starts a new sales funnel. An Extended Enterprise LMS must provide the API which allows it to send the lead to the CRM and then update the lead with useful information (such as how much time the user spends online, how many times the user logs-in and so on) in order to better qualify the lead.

7. Don’t forget Mobile users

The rapidly growing popularity, as learning methods, of mobile learning and video pills mean the Extended Enterprise LMS – including the Branding/ Sub Portal - must offer learners the opportunity to have their learning materials delivered to smartphone and/or tablet.

8. Focus on a single product and vendor

In the Extended Enterprise, it’s to your benefit to have a single system that can meet your needs across different situations. Consider the benefits of dealing with a single vendor, having a single system to learn and a single set of procedures to distribute and maintain between the people who work on the LMS.

9. Help your Help Desk team

Training your customers has a direct impact on your Help Desk workload. The more your customers know about your product, the more they are engaged and motivated – and the less time they’ll spend calling your Help Desk team.

10. How fast will you grow?

Since business growth is a company’s key goal, company systems should be able to scale and adapt to cope with new projects and the acquisition of new customers. An LMS, especially one tuned to the Extended Enterprise, must be able to meet your needs and, especially, be capable of scaling up and down dynamically to support your business.

Fabio Pirovano,
Chief Technology Officer (CTO), at Docebo
Appendix 2

How to setup your Extended Enterprise

Your Extended Enterprise can be set up in six easy steps. Follow the below steps to create an organization chart, and then easily manage clients and partners using the Extended Enterprise dashboard.
Organise

Organise your organization chart: each node can be a company branch, or one of your partners or clients.

Manage

Access the Extended Enterprise dashboard to organise your clients or partners, by associating them to a node of the organization chart.
How to setup your Extended Enterprise
Appendix 2

Web address
Create a subdomain, a subfolder or a new custom domain for each organization chart node to make them unique

Multibrand
Personalize colours scheme, logo, login page, and totally white label each organization chart node
How to setup your Extended Enterprise

Appendix 2

Security
It’s all about security! Add a custom SSL certificate and enable https protocol for each personalised organization chart node.

Power Users
Associate Power Users with specific privileges and super-admin rights to each organization chart node to ensure better management.
Extended Enterprise Examples

**VEEAM SOFTWARE**
Innovative provider of solutions that deliver *Availability for the Modern Data Center™*

Engage Global Solutions
Global Program Management and Certification Distributor for Autodesk