10 Favorite LMS Features

As a competency management company, we talk to business and learning leaders all the time about their workforce development programs. Our conversations often center on how they can maximize their learning management systems (LMS) to advance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their employees.

People want to understand the big picture – and specific LMS features, too. Inspired by those conversations, we pulled together this list of handy LMS features.

10 Favorite Features

1 Certifications

Employees love having tangible proof that they've completed their courses. Some courses have built-in certificates of completion; others do not. We favor an LMS that eliminates that variability with certificates for every course.

Certificates should allow an organization to personalize certificate designs and layouts. The best certificate features support customizing the colors, fonts, and logos that support the brand as well as the flexibility to include fields of data - such as name, course title, and date of completion - that are most important to the organization. Some LMSs support multiple templates, so certificates earned through one part of the organization look different from those earned in another. Avilar's WebMentor LMS™ supports unlimited, customizable certificate templates.

2 Course Credits

For some organizations, awarding course credit is an important credential to acknowledge course completion. Some credits, or continuing education units (CEUs), are tied to professional certifications or regulation compliance. It's helpful when the LMS automatically awards the credits for those courses – and when the technology supports self-reported credits for courses taken outside the system.

3 Rich Course Selection

Often, an LMS provider will facilitate access to a broad training catalog from multiple vendors, so learning and business leaders can select exactly those courses that will produce the desired outcomes.
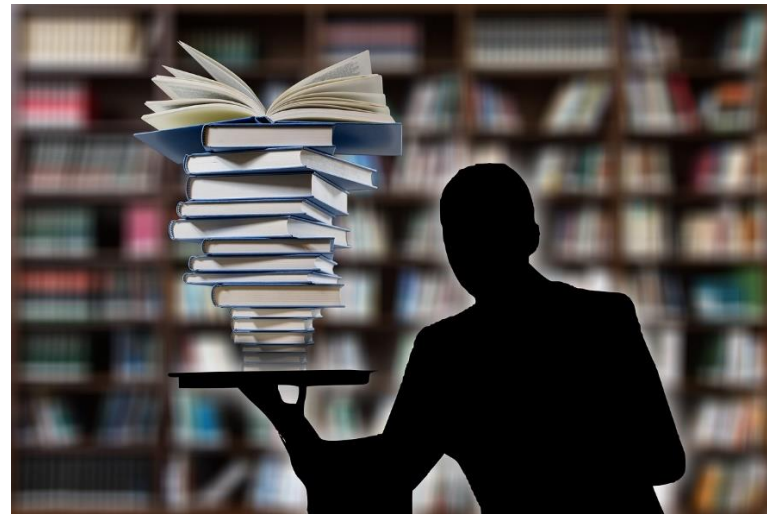
The ability to choose courses from multiple vendors is important for organizations who need to customize their catalogs to fit their workforce development needs. Most often, large employers will select a wide range of courses from a variety of providers to meet the needs of their diverse and geographically distributed workforce.

4 Custom Courses and Course Authoring

To maximize the learning experiences for students, the LMS should support multiple file types and formats, from standards like SCORM and AICC to repurposed PowerPoint, PDF, and video files.

Some LMSs offer proprietary course authoring tools. For instance, Avilar provides WebMentor Author to create courses that run in Avilar's WebMentor LMS™. Having the ability to customize content with a free authoring tool makes it possible for organizations to deliver tailored content that is made to meet your company's needs – and it's budget friendly.

With custom courses and other learning content, students can meet learning objectives faster and easier than if they are working through generic courses with information that doesn't apply to their specific needs.

5 Tracking

Another important feature that leading LMS platforms offer is the ability to track and report learning outcomes.

Tracking student progress is important for learning success. It gives managers feedback about how effective courses are, reveals areas where students need the most help, and shows whether further training is needed for students to fully know the material. It also helps managers understand where skills gaps exist and helps them make informed decisions about their workforce.

In addition to having the ability to track student progress through online courses, students also like the ability to record credits that they earn by completing offline training outside of the LMS.

Having the ability to track and manage student progress gives managers control of the ongoing learning process and gives staff the best opportunity for success.

6 Automation

For anyone tasked with enrolling employees or customers and registering them in courses, entering data for an individual is an essential LMS capability. When faced with multiple enrollments and registrations at the same time, though, automations such as bulk enrollments and bulk registrations are welcome time savers!

We see automation at its best when it's applied to course and curriculum assignments, such as automatically enrolling new employees into a new hire curriculum.

7 Integration

By integrating with other web technologies and web services, an LMS can deliver additional functionality through applications or services that companies already use.

Integration with any one of many online shopping cart apps, for example, supports e-commerce for organizations that sell their courses to the public or chargeback learning costs to internal departments. Or integration with an HR system can automatically manage learner accounts and course registrations in tandem with HR triggers like hiring, promotion, or termination.

For data extraction and custom reporting, integration with any number of other systems supports a richer data set for review.

8 Customizations

Effective LMS solutions are able to tailor the visual interface to reflect your company's branding and identity.

For some companies, it's also essential to go much further than just displaying your company logo and adjusting the color settings. Many also want the ability to tailor the dashboards and screens, create custom course templates, wrap their branding around course content, create custom completion certificates, and more.

In addition to visual adjustments, there is also a need for functionality customizations. Features that users in various roles encounter when they log in should be easily tailorable to minimize distraction and expose only those features that are relevant to the organization's learning objectives.

Without the ability to customize the look, feel, and functionalities, there can be a poor user experience. Having the ability to customize both visuals and functionalities with your company's needs in mind, you can ensure that students and administrators alike are able to work toward learning goals as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

9 Curricula

This guided course of study prompts learners to progress through a series of courses, building on knowledge gained from a previous course. We particularly appreciate LMSs that support choice within the curricula to allow, for example, three required courses and six electives across the available classes.

10 Live Events

Online learning is not the only way to train people effectively. Sometimes, it's not even the right way. Live instructor-led training (ILT) may be the best way to achieve the desired learning outcomes for some topics.

Favorite LMS platforms have the ability to manage and track live events with all of the same powerful features as online courses, plus added features designed specifically for this type of training.

It's important that an LMS has the ability to register learners into ILT courses, track their attendance, deliver downloadable handouts and assignments, record grades given by instructors, and award completion certificates. With ILT features, instructors and students can engage each other through email and threaded discussions that are constrained to a specific course.

Additionally, instructors should be able to design and deliver online tests to gauge students' understanding of course concepts, using questions that include not only the typical true-false and multiple-choice formats, but more elaborate formats like matching and sorting, select-all-that-apply, fill-in-the-blank, and essay.

WebMentor LMS – Affordable yet Flexible and Powerful

There are many great features of LMSs. We selected 10 of our favorites, with a bias toward delivering efficiencies and flexibility for all users, employees, and customers as well as learning professionals and business leaders.

Avilar's WebMentor LMS™ offers the essential features companies need to implement a successful learning management program. With custom roles, tailored visuals and functionalities, integrations, live events and more, we're always working to enhance our LMS features.

We strive to provide a product that is cost-effective, but also customizable and distinctly powerful – enterprise features on a small business budget. Our LMS is flexible and user friendly, yet includes features that are powerful enough to meet all of our clients' needs.

If you're looking for an LMS to support your organization – or want to know more about what to look for, please contact us. We're always happy to help!