How to Upskill Employees:

Supercharge Your LMS for Maximum Impact

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There's no doubt that upskilling employees is a win-win for your company and your workforce. As your people master essential skills, they become more valuable and engaged in the work while your organization becomes better-placed to thrive in an evolving business environment.

But what does it take to upskill and reskill employees? Certainly, a learning management system (LMS) is one essential tool. However, an LMS alone is not enough. To truly address the skills gaps of your employees with the learning and development they need, you'll want a robust LMS paired with a competency management system that informs and guides the upskilling process, every step of the way.

Challenges of a Siloed LMS When Upskilling Employees

For many employee learners, an LMS is the place to take courses and get results. Results can be as simple as a record of completed courses, test scores, and course credits. Certifications can be associated with courses, too.

When it comes to upskilling, an LMS is an essential tool to deliver, track, and monitor courses that help to build essential skills and knowledge. **If the LMS is a stand-alone system, though, you're missing the bigger picture and benefits of upskilling.**

Too many organizations only use their siloed LMS to:

- Simply record whether and when a learner completes an assigned class.
- Deliver training without regard to career path.
- Track training without regard to skill development.

Let's take a closer look at each:

Simply record whether and when a learner completes an assigned class.

For some coursework, taking one class on a topic is enough. However, many topics should be revisited repeatedly – either as an annual refresh or as a succession of building blocks to advance skills and knowledge.

To support upskilling or reskilling the workforce, your LMS must reinforce a continuous learning culture, where employees periodically repeat essential courses or complete a curriculum on an essential topic. Your LMS can and should be accessible during the everyday rhythms of work, too, providing quick answers to employee questions about how to do something or what to do next. The goal is for your LMS to support ongoing learning that fits the timing and level of knowledge each employee needs to succeed.

Deliver training without regard to career path.

In the "olden days," managers defined employee career paths as employees were hired. Employees were presented with the training they were told would get them up to speed on their jobs and set their career paths. Today, we have [flexible career paths](). There's more give-and-take with employees and managers to map evolving company needs with employee skills and interests.

The very need for upskilling and reskilling was born from the reality that today's workforce will need to master skills that weren't even imagined ten years ago. To manage this well, you need a modern LMS that makes career paths visible to learners and flexible enough to suggest courses and curricula related to new job roles, as career goals shift over time.

Track training without regard to skill development.

It's easy for an LMS to record the behavior of an employee related to a training course. When did they take it? Did they complete the course? What did they score on the tests? To truly map that training exercise to learning and knowledge, it's important to associate it with skills and performance.

Upskilling and reskilling the workforce is all about skills – not just course completion. Select an LMS that will track all learning activities – coursework, mentoring, workshops, and on-the-job training. Map your organization's competencies to the learning activities in the LMS, to document and spark conversations based on skills and performance, not training classes.

Combine Your LMS and Competency Management System to Accelerate Upskilling

Whether you're advancing existing skills (upskilling) or introducing brand new skillsets (reskilling), a flexible learning management system PLUS a robust competency management system is a winning combination for closing skills gaps. Many of our customers combine WebMentor LMS™ with WebMentor Skills™ competency management system to effectively execute and manage their upskilling and reskilling programs.

Why? Here are three of the many important reasons:

ONE: Keep the Focus on Skills

When upskilling or reskilling the workforce, start by identifying those essential skills your workforce needs for today and the foreseeable future. Map those skills and competencies to job descriptions and conduct a [skills assessment]() for all employees. You'll know right away where there are skill gaps. You'll also take another step in the direction of inclusiveness, by focusing on employee abilities and contributions more than their backgrounds or current job roles.

Use your competency management system to track individual, team, and company-level proficiencies. Your LMS supports individual learning plans based on assessment results. The combination ensures that your organization is focused on building and tracking the skill development you're aiming for.

TWO: Align and Monitor Learning

The LMS is the thing that brings individual development plans and career paths to life. By mapping the essential skills to courses, curricula, and jobs, your LMS becomes a valuable tool to help individuals and managers identify which learning and development resources are available and suitable to build essential knowledge and skills.

Use the LMS to record non-traditional training and development activities, such as mentoring sessions and on-the-job experiences. Periodically assess employee performance and skill levels. By integrating your LMS with your competency management system, it's easy to monitor whether or not the learning and development experiences are producing tangible business results.

THREE: Build a Competency-based Culture of Learning

Once your employees start to see the LMS as a tool to monitor how well they are building the skills they – and you – care about most, the whole conversation changes. Employees can focus on their careers and contributions, not courses.

Managers can focus on individual and team performance, supported by near real-time competency data to inform next steps.

Companies with a culture of learning, supported by an integrated LMS and competency management system, have a workforce and management team that embraces continuous learning. They are ready, willing, and able to constantly learn the new skills they need for their – and the company's – future.

If you're wondering how to harness technology for reskilling and upskilling employees, contact us to find out how Avilar's WebMentor LMS™ and Avilar's WebMentor Skills™ can support your team.

About Avilar

Avilar – The Competency Company™ is a leader in workforce development and planning with web-based competency management and learning solutions for corporations, government, and non-profit organizations. In 1997, Avilar pioneered its award-winning WebMentor™ product line and has built itself on the basis of superior customer service and highly adaptable product design.

Let Avilar help you transform your organization from ordinary to extraordinary.

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