

# Rethinking LMS to Drive Sales and Win Deals

An LMS + Data-driven sales enablement = A modern solution that ties sales' performance to growth



MindTickle!★

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus proclaimed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE that “Change is the only constant.” And it’s still true 2,500 years later. Consider just a few of the changes and challenges sales enablement leaders may confront on a daily basis:

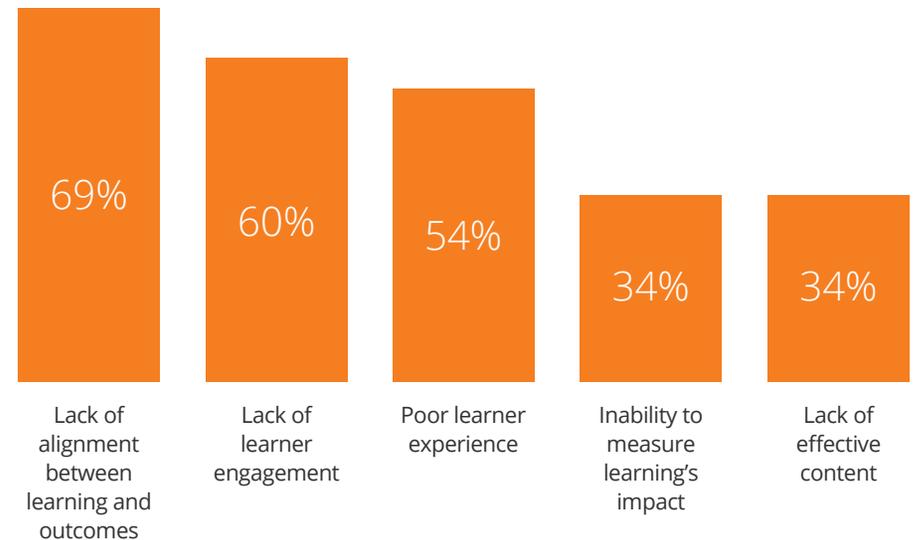
- Business rapidly expanding into new markets or new geographies
- Sellers needing to continually react and adjust due to multiple product lines with changing messaging
- Rapidly growing partner channels that have been created to help achieve revenue goals
- Sales managers no longer having time to coach on-site to model customer and partner interactions
- Sales teams needing to be able to handle objections and add continual value in order to drive new sales

To do *all* that and more, you need to quickly deliver the right enablement to the right teams, structured and personalized to make it engaging and exciting and ensuring it will stick in their minds. And, you need help from today’s technology stack to get you there.

In many businesses, the enablement team’s technology stack includes a learning management system (LMS). An established and well-known technology, LMSs were designed for the early days of business teaching but came to full fruition during the e-learning revolution. They started as a tool to track compliance training, certifications and course content, but have evolved for new applications over the years, and now include integration with talent management systems and the ability to serve as a communication channel.

While these developments have been useful, LMSs are unable to fully support the modern digital learning experience, especially as standalone systems. In a sense, “learning management system” is a misnomer; it’s really a *training* management system. An LMS can’t provide the agility and flexibility needed to engage, equip and coach sales people with the knowledge *and* skills needed to succeed in today’s competitive market.

### Biggest Challenges of Achieving Critical Outcomes



Source: Brandon Hall, 2018 Learning Strategy Study

# 5 Reasons Sales Enablement Leaders Need to Rethink the Role of Their LMS

## 1. LMSs are complex and inflexible

Learning management systems can organize and deliver large volumes of one-time training content, including material from third-party content providers and internal teams of course designers. But they also come with complexity and lack of agility. Leading HR-industry analyst and consultant John Bersin has noted that the LMS paradigm is based on the idea of a course catalog, which “makes sense for formal education, but no longer feels relevant for much of our learning today. As a result, learning management systems are often hard to use, though they offer thousands of courses, most employees simply find them of limited value (except for mandatory or compliance training).<sup>1</sup>

With sales teams requiring a constant flow of up-to-date content and training to stay current with rapidly changing markets, product lines, and business models, adapting and applying the right content in an LMS is challenging at best. By the time any changes reach the sellers, they're already outdated. As many Chief Learning Officers (CLOs) understand, even a simple task like running a report can be frustrating and time-consuming.

44% of  
organizations  
currently  
considering  
replacing their  
LMS

Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study 2016

## 2. LMSs can't deliver an engaging user experience

LMS can offer a step-by-step approach for compliance or in-depth knowledge training, but the archaic user experience available in legacy LMSs wasn't designed for the functionality that's needed to attract and hold the attention of today's salespeople. Bersin, working with corporations around the world, found that "employees simply do not use the LMS unless they have to, and this has caused a lot of pain in L&D."<sup>1</sup> He's correct; fully two-thirds of Learning and Development (L&D) professionals have trouble getting today's employees to engage in traditional L&D offerings (Deloitte Consulting study, 2018).<sup>2</sup> Instead, sales representatives require a dynamic and personalized presentation of information and the opportunity to practice their skills. Without the ability to engage sales, LMS's merit as a candidate for further investment is questionable.

38% of LMS users want to improve the user experience

— Bersin Deloitte

28% of companies are buying a new core learning platform

— Bersin Deloitte

## 3. LMSs can't help you correlate learning outcomes with performance outcomes

The lack of alignment between learning and outcomes is the most common challenge that companies face when trying to achieve business results from their learning programs, according to research from Brandon Hall Group (see graph on page 2). Nearly 70 percent of companies said they faced this challenge. About one-third reported that "inability to measure learning's impact" was a challenge.

LMS technologies predate the rise of data analytics, big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning, and other systems that have transformed our consumption of data in recent years. As a result, they lack

the functionality to meaningfully engage with sales readiness, productivity, and field performance data—a necessity for any successful sales enablement organization.

LMSs enable you to track and certify users on specific content, but they don't provide a holistic view of sales readiness or an understanding of how enablement performance correlates with business outcomes.

#### 4. LMS can't drive behavioral changes

LMSs organize and present training, but they *don't help to develop skills or drive changes in behavior*—which are often major challenges for sales enablement. Simply *knowing* the information is very different from being able to articulate it or handle objections in front of a buyer. Unless your sales force has a way to practice, receive feedback, and build confidence in a simulated environment, you can't expect them to be ready to handle real-life sales situations.

#### 5. LMSs don't provide visibility

LMSs can't provide visibility into skill gaps, so managers don't know where their teams need help. Managers are left coaching their reps indiscriminately, without customizing feedback or remediation for weak skills. When reps can't practice their skills in real-life situations and managers can't provide targeted feedback, the chance of closing deals and hitting quota significantly decreases.

In short, LMSs are stuck in the “train and done” mindset and don't reinforce training in ways that drive retention and execution in the field. They don't provide a framework to help sales people cultivate the knowledge and skills they need to succeed and consistently drive new revenue.

“As I talk with companies all over the world, I hear a continuous story that ‘employees simply do not use the LMS unless they have to,’ and this has caused a lot of pain in L&D”<sup>1</sup>

—Josh Bersin

# The Capabilities of a Modern Enablement Solution for Sales Success

Given the accelerated rate of change in today's markets, it's more important than ever to effectively enable sales people with the skills and knowledge they need, as they need them. This requires a solution that picks up where an LMS leaves off. Sales success today calls for a modern enablement solution—not just another point solution—that provides a breadth of enablement capabilities that support the right skills and behaviors. An effective sales enablement solution should continuously deliver:

## 1. Ongoing, dependable enablement

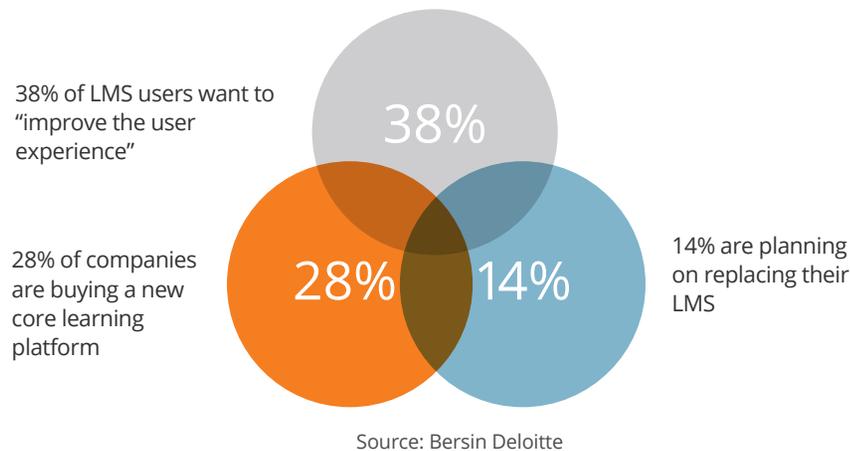
Sales enablement leaders increasingly recognize that learning and retention don't happen through one-off training events, but through a continuous effort that nurtures skills and adapts easily to the rapidly changing needs of the organization. An enablement solution needs to provide reps with the information they need, where and when it is most convenient for them to access it. It should make it easy to carry out rapid-fire tweaks or large-scale rewrites to keep content up-to-date and on-point. Reps should be able to count on always receiving quick updates about movements in the market or changes to the product line. With the organization driving effective enablement, reps can more easily focus on success in the field and engaging customers.

## 2. Analytics-driven insights

A key goal for any sales enablement organization is to understand both individual and team capabilities and any critical gaps that exist in order to offer coaching and remediation. A modern enablement solution should provide useful insights, based on hard data, so leaders can ascertain their team's time to productivity, effectiveness, specific competencies and overall capabilities.

When an enablement solution is based on data, managers can start to understand the impact of sales enablement programs by looking at leading indicators, such as sales pipeline or sales activity metrics. By identifying their top performers and tracking the sales capabilities that make them successful, they can compare competency levels and develop additional enablement training to help other reps master those capabilities. In short, analytics provides a mechanism by which enablement leaders can help "B" players replicate "A" players' skills and behaviors.

## Satisfaction with LMS Reporting (1-5)



### 3. Activities that build competency and confidence

Rather than simply presenting blocks of information in check-the-box style as a legacy LMS does, the right sales enablement solution should provide:

- A comprehensive array of programs and activities to engage reps and help them learn how to win.
- The full range of skills-development activities, enabling, via media-rich, highly interactive self-paced learning and instructor-led training when necessary; show, by modeling excellence from top performers; and practice, in a simulated environment with coaching and through experiential learning using virtual role plays.
- Positive reinforcement through an ongoing delivery of content and coaching to drive meaningful and sustainable change.

A sales enablement platform improves and facilitates all facets of enablement, including onboarding, ongoing development, and coaching effectiveness.

### 4. An engaging user experience

An effective sales enablement solution offers content in a way that stimulates users' interest and supports different learning styles. Many users today expect a consumer-level experience that includes mobile access, micro-learning, easy search, and gamification. Others may prefer a more traditional mode of delivery, with content and resources they can complete at their own pace and discuss with peers and management. But all reps expect enablement to be directly relevant to their job, right down to providing competitive insight or next-step actions based on their opportunity stage. With a modern sales enablement solution, reps should be able to:

- Access content and training wherever and whenever they need it
- Receive short, bite-sized updates that provide the latest market or company news
- Practice real-life scenarios
- See and understand how their peers – specifically top-performing reps—handle the same scenarios

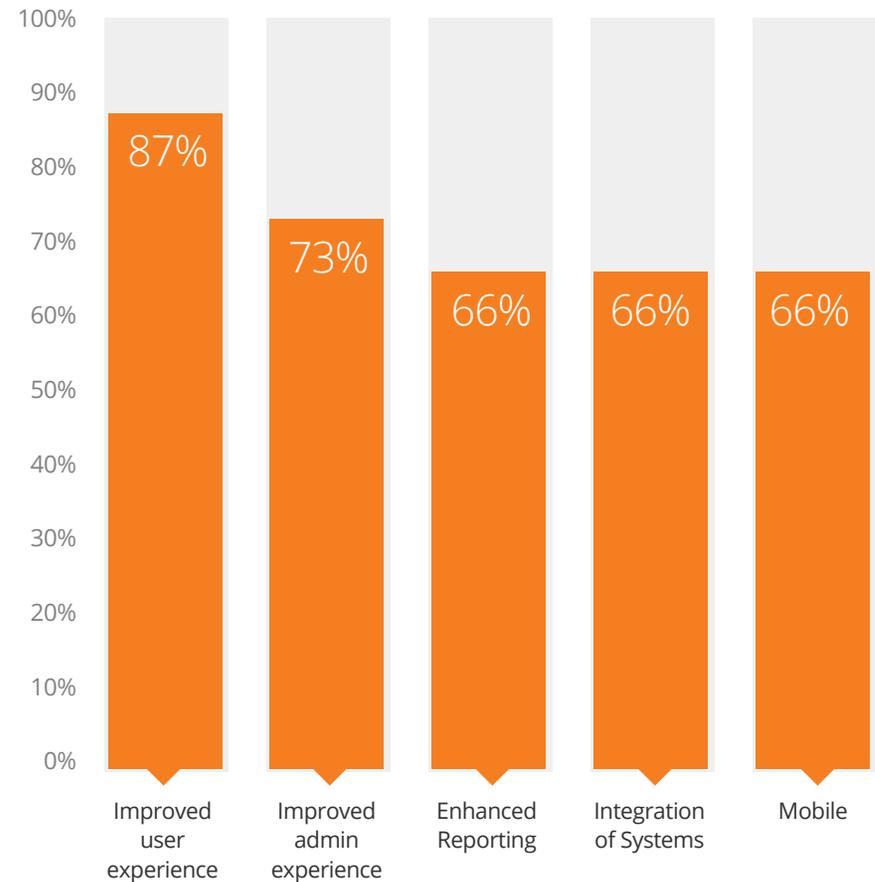
## 5. Full, flexible interaction with LMS

An enablement solution should be able to co-exist with an LMS, or even extend its capabilities. Many managers will want to continue to use the LMS for compliance training and other established processes. The enablement platform should provide full control over integration, so enablement leaders can introduce new capabilities in their way, on their terms. For example, if user profiles are stored in the LMS, the sales enablement platform should import them automatically.

## 6. Comprehensive automation

This is an important advantage of any enterprise-ready enablement platform. Enablement content and learning paths should adjust automatically based on user profiles, accommodating new roles and responsibilities. For example, when an employee is promoted (e.g. business development rep to account executive, account executive to territory manager) his or her new enablement programs should be automatically assigned without requiring manual effort.

## Top Reasons Companies Switch from an LMS



Source: Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study 2016

# 3 Ways to Use LMS with a Modern Sales Enablement Solution

## 1. Complement

Use the sales enablement solution with integrated LMS content and leverage the strengths of both. For example, use the LMS for corporate onboarding and compliance training, and the sales enablement platform for sales readiness, skills development, mobile access, gamification, and micro-learning.

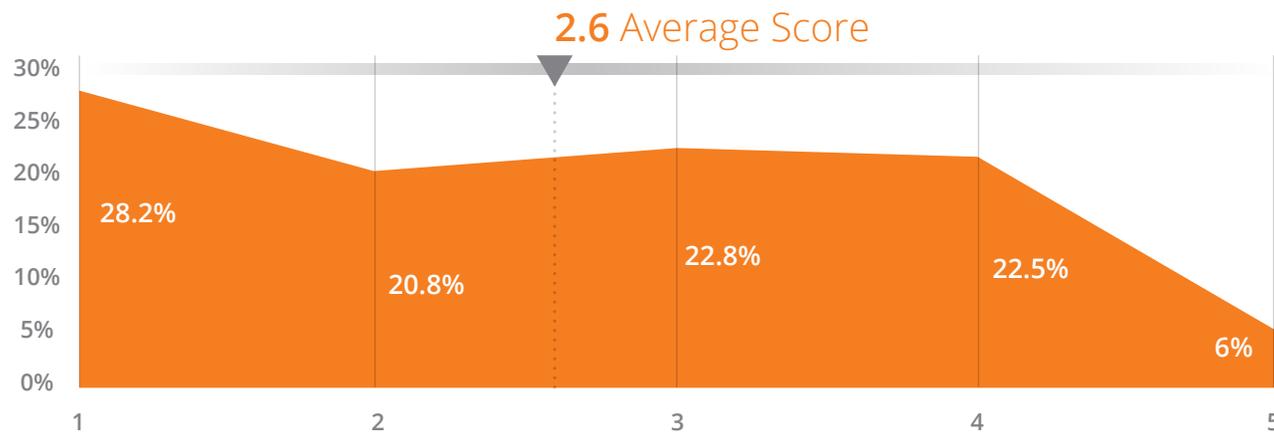
## 2. Integrate

Keep the LMS as the default learning portal for employees and integrate the sales enablement platform so that reps can launch sales enablement programs and activities from the LMS. Or vice versa—whatever fits best for the company and culture.

## 3. Phase in or replace

For some organizations, a phased-in or one-time upgrade to a modern, data-driven sales enablement solution may be the best option.

Satisfaction with LMS Meeting Future Needs (5-point scale, 5 highest)



Source: Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Study 2016

# With Effective, Adaptable Sales Enablement...

## Imagine if...

### **Your messaging changes and you need to turn on a dime.**

Leadership has announced new positioning, and everybody feels great about it. But how quickly can you communicate the change and calibrate reps' command of the new messaging?

With a sales enablement solution, you can consistently deliver new messaging through quick, engaging, trackable updates. And, you can also learn where the new messaging is working and where it's not, and use those insights to assess the risks and impact of any future messaging changes.

## Imagine if...

### **You are doing lots of training, but don't understand the impact of your programs.**

You're in a highly regulated industry with multiple complex offerings, so your reps are used to receiving a lot of training and jumping through hoops for compliance certifications. But how well prepared are they for specific sales initiatives, and where are their capability gaps?

With a data-driven sales enablement solution, you will have analytics on your sales teams' performance, a unified metric that measures their knowledge, skills and behavior, and a strong basis for accurately predicting revenue. Plus, useful insights that will enable you to assess the proficiency levels, strengths, and gaps of your team.

## Imagine if...

### **Your company is in hypergrowth mode, and in-person sales training is not an option. You're innovating at light speed, and your products and services are constantly evolving. But how do you get your rapidly growing team onboarded and ready to sell when you are moving so fast?**

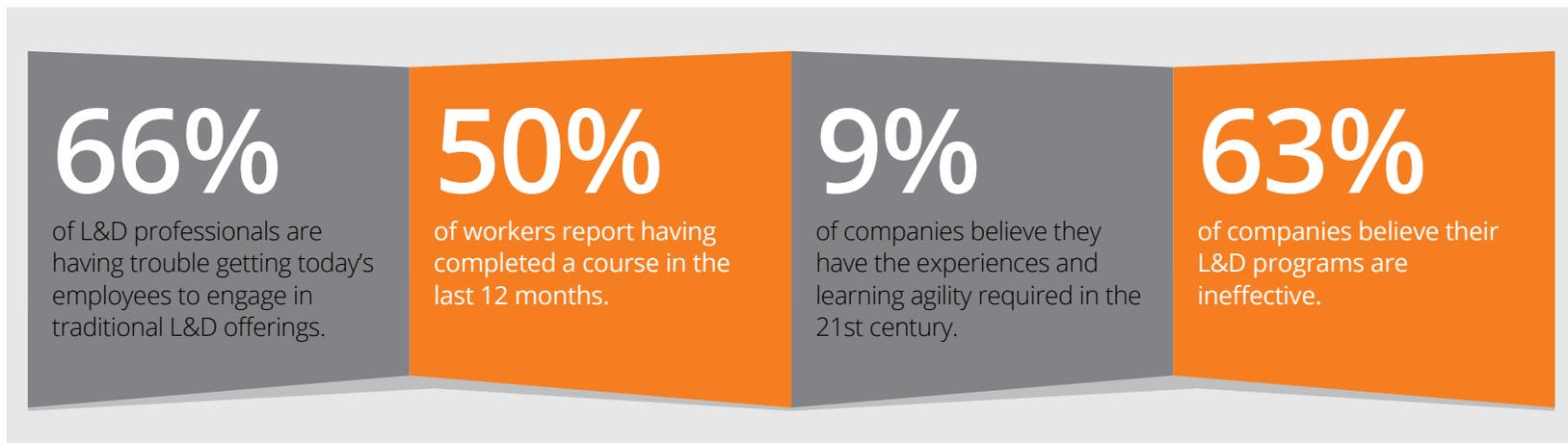
With a data-driven sales enablement solution you can onboard quickly by creating engaging, applicable content and update reps as needed. And, you can continually boost your rep's knowledge retention by sending out quizzes or by using gamification to create engaging and fun experiences .

# The New Reality for Sales Enablement Leaders

These are exhilarating, but challenging times for sales enablement leaders. In today's world of accelerated markets and new competitors, there's an increased enterprise-wide focus on revenue. In the traditional, compliance-oriented world of learning management systems, revenue generation was never meant to be an outcome from the enablement team. Yet for a function as close to the lifeblood of the business as sales enablement is, there should be no disconnect from revenue outcomes.

At the same time, sales reps' learning styles are changing due to the plethora of new, easily accessible information and how-to knowledge. They're used to learning that's attractively packaged into shorter, digestible, media-rich formats on-demand and available on any mobile device. They expect a consumer-level experience from enablement that's just as engaging, directly relevant, and easy to consume. But today's legacy LMS can't keep up. You need a new way to enable sales reps to keep one step ahead of today's demanding, research-savvy, highly-informed buyers.

## The Status Quo Doesn't Apply Anymore



Source: Global Human Capital Trends 2018 The Rise of the Social Enterprise. Deloitte Consulting LLP. Deloitte University Press, March 2018

**The answer?** A different kind of engagement experience that matches the way sales people want to learn, leverages internal expertise, builds collaboration, and inspires adoption.

As you weigh the technology options for enhancing your legacy LMS, consider that forward-looking, innovative companies are already implementing, data-driven enablement solutions that build, develop and reinforce behaviors and skills in ways that an LMS simply can't.

# About MindTickle

MindTickle is the only data-driven enablement solution that combines an end-to end analytics-based platform and best-practice methodologies that are designed and built to improve sales reps' skills, behaviors and performance over time in order to improve a company's win rates and increase average deal sizes.

To learn more about MindTickle visit [www.mindtickle.com](http://www.mindtickle.com)

- [1. The disruption of digital learning: 10 things we have learned](#)
- [2. Global Human Capital Trends 2018: The Rise of the Social Enterprise, Deloitte Consulting LLP, Deloitte University Press, March 2018](#)

