

# ELEARNING FOR SAFETY BUYER'S GUIDE

Find out:

- Why we use eLearning
- How eLearning can improve your safety program
- What kind of ROI you can expect with eLearning & much more!



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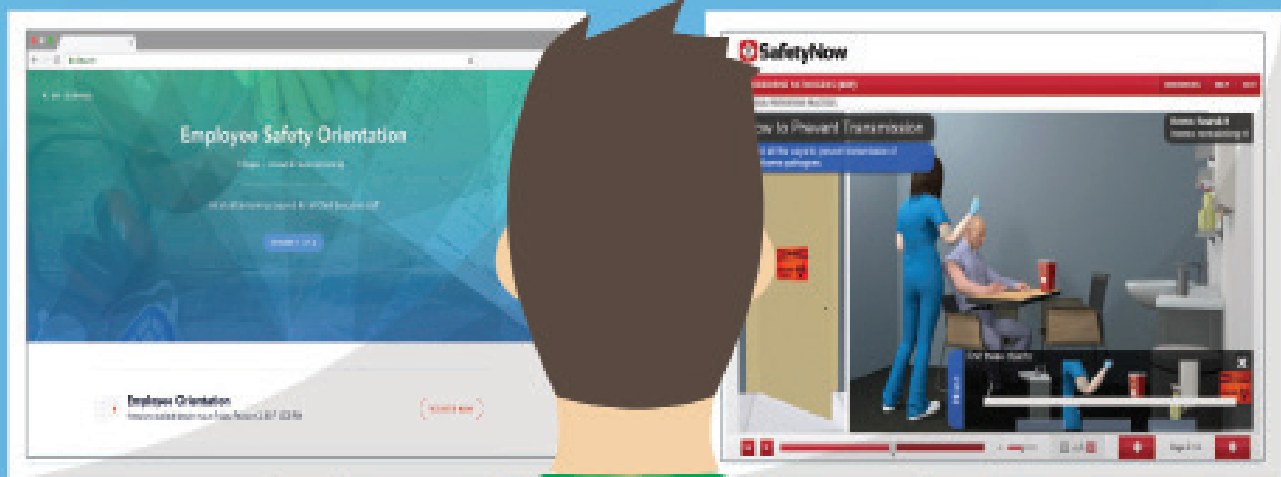
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**SAFETY LEADERS ARE DISCOVERING THAT ELEARNING AND BLENDED TRAINING PROGRAMS DELIVER BETTER, MORE COST-EFFECTIVE SAFETY TRAINING RESULTS. BUT MANY ORGANIZATIONS FAIL TO ACHIEVE EXPECTED RESULTS – TYPICALLY BECAUSE KEY CONTENT, PLATFORM, AND BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT CONSIDERED BEFORE BUYING DECISIONS ARE MADE. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED TO HELP YOU RECOGNIZE AND ADDRESS THESE REQUIREMENTS.**



# WHY eLEARNING?

## WHY USE ELEARNING? HOW WILL IT HELP YOU TRAIN TODAY'S WORKFORCE?

The workforce continues to become increasingly diverse as younger workers, with learning styles very different from previous generations, and remote workers continue to be hired.

Having this new type of workforce has a lot of benefits, but poses specific problems for safety training.

With younger workers, it can be hard to have them learn through old learning styles and the second trainers turn on an outdated training video - their attention is lost.

For companies with remote workers, it can be extremely expensive to send trainers to multiple sites.

This is where eLearning comes in. Good eLearning makes it possible to reach employees regardless of where they are. Great eLearning uses modern training techniques to grab worker attention (regardless of age and learning style) and prove understanding while implementing strategies to help retain the training long-term.

A great eLearning provider will give you peace of mind knowing that all employees receive all same consistent training message through interactive training, presented in a practical and useful way.

## SUCCESSFUL SAFETY ELEARNING PROGRAMS TYPICALLY START WITH 3 ELEMENTS:

### TRAINING CONTENT

eLearning can't happen without training content. Content comes in many flavors, from simple text-based slides to more engaging videos, simulations, and interactions. Training content can be developed from scratch,

purchased from outside vendors, or reflect a blend of both approaches. The "buy or build" decision depends on a few key factors, including the safety hazards in your workplace, the qualifications needed to develop content for compliance or other purposes, and the time and investment allocated for your training program.

### LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

eLearning requires a Learning Management System (LMS). These systems, also referred to as platforms, enable you to deliver content to your learners, whether they be employees, contractors, or visitors. Some platforms include only the system to deliver training content; others integrate both the content and platform, eliminating the challenge of getting content and systems to work together. Some LMS platforms require you to install and maintain software on your own. Others are delivered over the internet, removing the need to worry about software upgrades and maintenance. A web-based LMS typically enables you to deliver training to any learner, at anytime, anywhere in the world.

### PEOPLE

Successful eLearning programs require the right people – or at least access to these people. Its no different in safety. Having reliable access to the following people - whether in your organization or through vendors - dramatically increases your odds of success:

- A subject matter/content expert understands and develops content that is communicated to learners, and often has a deep knowledge of compliance standards and other business requirements. Vendors providing content typically have subject matter experts and advisors who develop training content.
- A learning designer understands instructional techniques that lead to great training results. He or she uses these techniques and the content from a subject matter expert to identify learning objectives and design effective training experiences. A common deliverable for eLearning is a storyboard.

- A course producer is responsible for implementing the storyboard or other course designs provided by a learning designer. This can be as simple as placing text and graphics in the right order, but often involves video, audio, and programming interactions that ensure learners understand material and progress properly through a course.
- A systems developer implements LMS and other platform needs like custom security, network, data, and systems requirements. Safety eLearning providers may or may not have this expertise in-house, but having it before you launch can prevent problems that can derail a program, especially if you have multiple sites or need to integrate safety training programs with other initiatives in the organization.
- A training program administrator is responsible for ensuring the right training is assigned to the right learners at the right time. He or she handles business needs like goal-setting, program reporting or analysis, and user training. Some safety eLearning providers offer this support; others require you to handle all administrative activity.
- Learners are the people you need to train – employees, supervisors, contractors, and even visitors. eLearning allows your learners to cover material at their own pace and according to their own schedule. Learners also do better when your LMS and training program are easy to understand and convenient. If either is not intuitive for your learners, the likelihood of success will decrease quickly.
- Depending on the size of your organization, one person might perform multiple roles; however, whomever you choose - whether in-house or via a vendor relationship - should have experience. You're otherwise greatly increasing the potential for "not knowing what you don't know", leading to implementation delays and cost over-runs that can overwhelm great people and programs.

# HOW CAN eLEARNING IMPROVE YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM?

## eLEARNING CAN DELIVER 6 SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS FOR ANY SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM

1. Training can happen anytime, anywhere
2. Training can be delivered consistently and in time-frames that work better for all parties – for supervisors, employees, unions, or others
3. Effective, quality training can be substantially less expensive and time consuming
4. The time between identifying safety issues and delivering corrective instruction can be reduced substantially, reducing the risk of injuries and property damage – even more so if you a) have multi-site operations and b) source great ready-to-use content vs. creating content from scratch
5. Learner competency – a key compliance requirement – can be tested immediately and addressed immediately, increasing the likelihood material is retained and reflected in work. Employees who are instructed on multiple occasions but continue to misunderstand or misapply key safety requirements can be identified easily and removed from conditions dangerous to them or others.
6. Recordkeeping is simpler, instant, and consistent, making it easier to meet compliance and reporting requirements. Plus, historical records don't walk out the door or get left in mystery file cabinets when key employees leave.

# WHAT KIND OF ROI CAN YOU EXPECT?

ROI is affected by many factors, but an effective eLearning program often returns at least 2-3x the program investment in the form of:

- Less time to develop necessary safety training content
- Less time and cost to deliver safety training to learners
- Fewer injuries and fatalities, and less property damage, due to better-trained employees and better timing of training delivery

- Less bad PR resulting from injuries, fatalities, or property damage
- Increased employee morale and productivity because of consistent training to avoid key hazards

The ROI for every organization will differ, but below is a sample that assumes replacement of a typical onsite, instructor-led safety program with a blended training program for 300 employees across 10 sites using an LMS and content from an outside provider:

| FACTOR  | BEFORE   | AFTER  |
|---|--|--|
| Content development time – 12 topics – one each month | 24 hours per topic – compliance & best practice research + content development + editing                       | 2 hours per topic – content tailoring  |
| Training delivery time & cost                         | 2 hours per site + travel time and cost if trainers not at each site + additional sessions for absent learners | 20 minutes per site by phone for follow-up Q&A; no travel time or cost                     |
| Cost of injuries, fatalities, and property damage     | Increased - corrective training across org. on issue observed in one location is slower                        | Reduced - eLearning can be assigned with deadlines across org. to instantly address issues |
| Total investment                                      | \$40,000   | \$14,000   |
| Program Savings                                       |  | \$26,000   |
| Injuries Prevented                                    | 2  | 4  |
| Injury Savings  | \$80,000   | \$160,000  |
| <b>ROI</b>  | <b>2X</b>  | <b>11X</b>   |



## BUDGET TIP

The right safety elearning program can have an 11x ROI. That means fewer accidents and incidents, less injury time off for workers and more money to use on other safety and company needs.



Average content development time for onsite training: 24 hours (Source: SafetySmart)

Average cost of injury: \$40,000 (Source: <http://http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/injury-facts.aspx>)

# CONTENT & PLATFORM BUYING CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR **eLEARNING** SAFETY PROGRAM

Before you make a decision on what eLearning solution to purchase for your safety training needs, you need to weigh out choices in three key areas:

- Training Content
- Learning Management System (LMS)
- Support & Tailoring

## TRAINING CONTENT

Key Questions:

- What topics and safety hazards need to be covered in your program? How often?
- Which content providers offer coverage of these topics? Will they help you tailor content if needed? Do they offer unlimited access?
- How will content change when standards or other best practices change?
- What content formats and media will best help learners retain the material trained?
- What training frequency is needed? New worker training? Monthly or weekly training? Just in time? Corrective? Reinforcement?

US Federal and State OSHA standards, along with Canadian Federal & Provincial OHS acts, have many statutes regarding safe work practices. For example, there are certain requirements for confined spaces and using Personal Protective Equipment properly. Some training must be provided to every new employee and some must be provided every year. It's important to keep supervisors, employees, contractors, and visitors trained to the competency levels and frequency required to meet these standards.

Before buying, you'll need to consider how many courses you need, and on what subjects. This depends entirely on the nature of your work and size of your organization.

Best practice is to train consistently over time and provide routine reinforcement training where required for compliance or for high-risk subjects. Having the flexibility to assign corrective refresher training also matters when risks are identified, whether through safety observations, inspections, close calls, recordable incidents, or competency issues identified during meetings. Many vendors will offer libraries of content; some offer unlimited courses and usage, while others charge on a per-use basis. The best providers will offer both and design an approach that works best for you.

An ideal eLearning content solution will cover most topics to meet compliance standards, and will do it in a way that is interactive and engages employees vs. simply presenting material.

Great solutions also include instant updates over time as standards or other best practices changes, along with customization services so you can tailor material to your specific requirements. The best solutions also include automatic updates, minimizing the need for you to monitor and implement changes on your own.

## LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

Key Questions:

- Do you have or need an LMS?
- Do you know how to setup an LMS, or have people who are committed to do it for you cost effectively? Alternatively, does the provider have an easy-to-use LMS that requires minimal setup?
- Do you know how to configure and manage an LMS over time?
- Can learners be easily added or removed from your LMS? Can they be arranged into groups for quick assignments and tracking across many learners?
- What level of security and integration will your platform need?

- If you already have an LMS, can it support the content you need to deliver? Does it support SCORM-compliant content? Can you upload your own content?
- Do you need the LMS to reflect your corporate branding?
- How will your needs scale or change over time?
- Does your LMS need to work with other corporate systems?
- If you choose to build or manage your own LMS, do you have the IT skills and resources to develop and manage it over time?
- Can learners and administrators easily login and use the LMS platform?

Even if your organization already has an LMS, you'll need to understand what kind of content can be loaded into the LMS and how you can use the LMS. For example,

SCORM is the name of a common standard to facilitate content working across multiple LMS platforms. SCORM-compliant content is typically compatible with more LMS platforms; however, not all LMS platforms are SCORM compliant and won't accept all training content.

Another common LMS challenge is configuration and setup to reflect your training needs. Issues like uploading and managing employees, sending course reminders, including corporate branding elements, and ensuring security are often beyond the day-to-day scope of safety management roles. Without the internal IT support to handle these issues, great training programs can be frozen in place, even though these are common components of a successful eLearning program. Ideal vendors will have the skills, processes, and people to help you with these issues.

Finally, ease of use is critical. Even if you select an advanced LMS platform, if employees and administrators



## LMS TIP

If the LMS isn't easy for you to use, you aren't going to use it effectively. Make sure you're clear on how the LMS you're looking at functions, and that you understand the value in it.





don't understand how to manage course assignments, progress will be impossible. The best LMS platforms are simple to use for both employees and administrators.

## PEOPLE & SUPPORT

Key Questions:

- Who will handle learner questions?
- Who will correct content issues?
- Who has the time and technical skills to setup and manage the LMS?

It's inevitable: the more learners you have, or the more turnover in your staffing model, the more questions you'll get from learners. You'll also likely experience more technical problems or limitations with your LMS. Common problems include network connection errors, course format and upload issues, user setup errors, reporting issues, and system performance issues. Without the skills

to address these issues, your training program can quickly grind to a halt.

The best eLearning solutions often include live support or other interactions that make it simpler for new employees or administrators to be successful. Without this support, you'll be stuck handling every issue that comes up – or worse, you'll be unable to handle issues that are disrupting your program.

# COMMON USAGE SCENARIOS

| SCENARIO                               |            |                     |                  |                     |
|--|------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Usage Choice                           | Licensed   | Licensed & Tailored | In-House Content | In-House Everything |
| Content Source                         | Licensed   | Licensed            | In-House         | In-House            |
| LMS                                    | Licensed   | Licensed            | Licensed         | Purchased           |
| User & Learning Support                | Included   | Included            | Not Included     | In-House            |
| Content Customization                  | No/Limited | Yes                 | Yes              | Yes                 |
| LMS Customization                      | No         | Yes                 | No               | Yes                 |
| SKILL/TIME REQUIREMENTS                |            |                     |                  |                     |
| Subject Matter Expertise               | Lower      | Higher              | Higher           | Higher              |
| Content Development                    | Lower      | Lower               | Higher           | Higher              |
| LMS System Configuration & Maintenance | Lower      | Lower               | Higher           | Higher              |
| LMS User & Learner Support             | Lower      | Lower               | Higher           | Higher              |

# COMPLIANCE & BUSINESS BUYING CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR **eLEARNING** SAFETY PROGRAM?

## COMPLIANCE & REPORTING

Key Questions:

- Who in your organization needs to be trained?
- How many different groups, total users, and security levels?
- What are your training deadlines? Do they recur monthly or yearly?
- Can you get activity reports and follow-up with users who have not completed training?
- Do you and your learners need certificates to demonstrate training completion?
- Can you provide records required for compliance and business purposes?

Tracking & reporting functionality should enable you to regularly track employee progress, spot and take action quickly on roadblocks, and meet compliance & business reporting needs.

Strong eLearning solutions make tracking and reporting easy, often including alerting features that send emails or other reminders to employees and supervisors to ensure timely course completion. Here are a couple sample reports you should expect from a great eLearning solution:

- **Completions by Course:** Who has been assigned a specific course or group of courses? Who has not finished by the due date and needs a reminder?
- **User Activity:** What courses have individual users completed or been assigned? How much time did they spend in each course?

Assigning refresher training is another key compliance requirement. Ideal eLearning solutions allow you to schedule refresher training or other training sessions far in advance. The best solutions also enable reporting on eLearning and onsite training together, supporting compliance requirements that involve in-person training

and enabling a complete employee training record.

## BUDGET & PURCHASING

Key Questions:

- How much will you need to invest to meet your needs?
- Will you need a provider to customize the content or any LMS configuration?
- Who needs to review or approve a training purchase?
- Are the financial and other benefits of eLearning clearly understood by decision makers?

The investment required to launch an eLearning program is dependent on a few factors: The number of courses you need to purchase or develop, the number of employees you need to train, and any custom LMS or custom content you may require.

A smaller organization purchasing content and an LMS from a vendor and requiring little customization could get the same results paying as little as a few thousand dollars per year or investing into the tens of thousands of dollars, while a Fortune 1000 company requiring superior content, substantial content customization, and LMS integration may invest into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Time is another major investment to consider - specifically the time you're able to invest. If you aren't buying, you're building, and it's challenging to predict the time you'll need to invest or the time you'll need from others in your organization. Can you secure that time and support up-front and over time? If not, you're setting up for failure and should instead consider purchasing a solution. Although your up-front investment may be higher, you'll get far more back in time saved - plus you'll reduce the risk of being pulled away from critical safety duties to handle LMS configuration or troubleshooting issues.

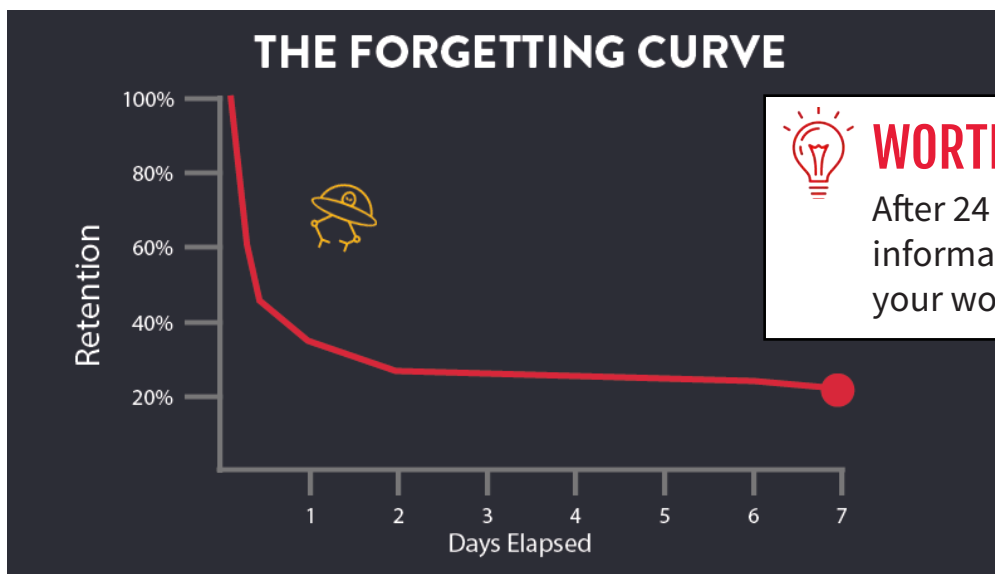
Finally, advance buy-in from the right people in your organization is a critical step for launching an eLearning program. Typically the larger your organization, the more

people who will be involved in a buying decision. Below are examples of stakeholders who may be involved in a decision, along with the role they play in the decision to invest in an eLearning safety program:

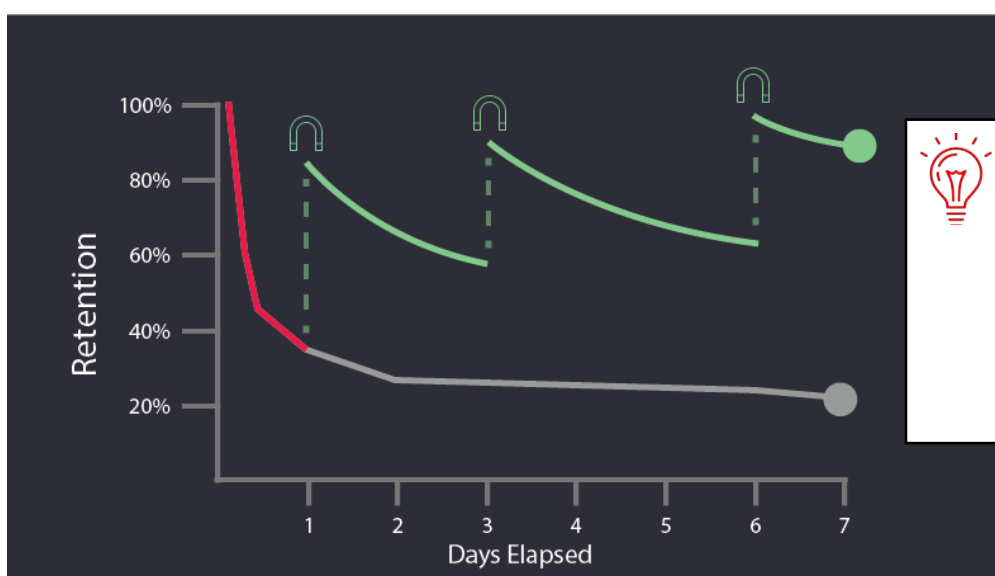
- Safety committee: Reviews, supports, and sometimes approves decisions that will affect the safety program
- Purchasing/finance: Reviews, negotiates, and approves all purchases, with a focus on investment vs. budgets and plans
- IT: Reviews purchases involving IT systems that will affect employees, like an LMS, to ensure appropriate technical, network, security, and other IT requirements are met
- HR: Ensures any purchase will comply with the company's employment policies and goals

- Learning & development: Reviews purchases involving training content or systems to ensure alignment with any corporate learning objectives
- Legal/compliance: Ensures contracts, agreements, and other elements of a purchase meet the organization's requirements

A strong eLearning provider should understand your need to incorporate these stakeholders into the decision-making process, and should have experience and materials that enable you to work cooperatively with them to earn approval.



**WORTH YOUR \$?**  
 After 24 hours, 70% of training information is forgotten. Why invest if your workers won't remember?



**THE SOLUTION**  
 Using retention training keeps retention rates up and makes your investment worthwhile. Make sure the provider you consider has retention training.

# BUYING CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY AND EVALUATION WORKSHEET

This worksheet provides you with an evaluation framework that summarizes key buying considerations and essential questions, as well as features that an effective eLearning program and LMS must provide to support your organization's safety training program. Check off the check box as you ask these questions of your eLearning provider, and make notes of their responses.

| BUYING CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY |  |                          |       |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------|
| CATEGORY                      | KEY QUESTIONS  | ✓                        | NOTES |
| Training                      | What topics and safety hazards need to be covered in your program? How often?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
|                               | Which content providers offer coverage of these topics? Will they help you tailor content if needed? Do they offer unlimited access?             | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
|                               | How will content change when standards or other best practices change?   | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
|                               | What content formats and media will best help learners retain the material trained?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
|                               | What training frequency is needed? New worker training? Monthly or weekly training? Just in time? Corrective? Reinforcement?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| LMS                           | Do you have or need an LMS?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
|                               | Do you know how to setup on LMS, or have people who are committed to do it for you cost effectively?   | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
|                               | Do you know how to configure and manage an LMS over time?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
|                               | Can learners be easily added or removed from your LMS? Can they be arranged into groups for quick assignments and tracking across many learners? | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |

## BUYING CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY

| CATEGORY               | KEY QUESTIONS   | ✓ | NOTES |
|------------------------|---|---|-------|
|                        | What level of security and integration will your platform need?   |   |       |
|                        | If you already have an LMS, can it support the content you need to deliver? Does it support SCORM-compliant content? Can you upload your own content? |   |       |
|                        | Do you need the LMS to reflect your corporate branding?   |   |       |
|                        | How will your needs scale or change over time?  |   |       |
|                        | Does your LMS need to work with other corporate systems?  |   |       |
|                        | If you choose to build or manage your own LMS, do you have the IT skills and resources to develop and manage it over time?                            |   |       |
|                        | Can learners and administrators easily login and use the LMS platform?  |   |       |
| People & Support       | Who will handle learner questions?  |   |       |
|                        | Who will correct content issues?  |   |       |
|                        | Who has the time and technical skills to setup and manage the LMS?  |   |       |
| Compliance & Reporting | Who in your organization needs to be trained?   |   |       |
|                        | How many different groups, total users, and security levels?  |   |       |
|                        | What are your training deadlines? Do they recur monthly or yearly?  |   |       |
|                        | Can you get activity reports and follow-up with users who have not completed training?  |   |       |
|                        | Do you and your learners need certificates to demonstrate training completion?  |   |       |
|                        | Can you provide records required for compliance and business purposes?  |   |       |

## BUYING CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY

| CATEGORY | KEY QUESTIONS  | ✓ | NOTES |
|----------|--|---|-------|
| Budget   | How much will you need to invest to meet your needs?                                     |   |       |
|          | Will you need a provider to customize the content or any LMS configuration?              |   |       |
|          | Who needs to review or approve a training purchase?                                      |   |       |
|          | Are the financial and other benefits of eLearning clearly understood by decision makers? |   |       |



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