

Implementing a mobile learning solution? Think ahead!

If you are looking to implement a mobile learning solution on a larger scale, here are some of the factors you should consider before you begin implementing a mobile learning solution.

Defining the learning issue

Look closely at the issues you are facing with your current training and education methods. Consider what the gaps are and why a mobile learning method would fill these gaps effectively. There may be many ways of overcoming current learning obstacles and before investing into any new technologies, you need to be certain that mobile learning is the right answer for you.

Based on your issues, you will then be able to detail your objectives in greater detail. There may be more than one objective for some learning issues, and the better you can describe what you wish to achieve, the clearer your requirements and success measures become.

Identifying content sources and subjects

Once you know your learning objective this step is easier. But from there you need to consider what kind of material will best suit the “Review-Refresh-Reinforce” capabilities of mobile learning. If biology is the subject you are focusing on, would mobile learning help students get a hold of plant nomenclature? Do animations work best for teaching subjects like atomic physics?

It is also a good idea when implementing your mobile learning plan to use this technology for access to material that is frequently required, such as FAQs, review questions, help guides and tutorials. This creates a steady usage patterns, enabling learners, and educators alike to get accustomed to using the technology and relearning new habits for looking up content.

Identifying technologies needed

If you are part of an organization that already provides mobile devices to its students, or a company where staff are all on company-owned phones, rolling out a new, training method may only require software applications to be identified and disseminated. In other cases, your technology requirement may only be software training, or it may extend from software and software training, to hardware like the mobile devices, networks etc. Talk to someone who has already invested in mobile learning or a

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company that offers mobile learning solutions and you'll be able to get an idea of the kind of technology you might need to invest in.

Skill & training for teachers/facilitators

Think about who will be providing the content and what skills or level of technological understanding they'll require. It helps to generate enthusiasm early on from your support staff regarding the learning potential of the solution, especially if you will need to provide additional training to teachers. Otherwise you may face resistance while trying to implement mobile learning from your own teachers, which can seriously limit its potential.

Cost of implementation

Consider all aspects including software and hardware costs, training, implementation, and connectivity. Also talk to a few mobile learning companies and explain your requirements to get an idea of costs. This will also help you understand the details of the implementation process from an expert, as well as give you insight into how other organizations are using mobile learning.

Facilitating Acceptance

Organize open discussion with your staff to first measure how receptive they will be to using mobile technology to facilitate their lessons. You may have even have had one them raise the case for mobile learning and if so, make this person your champion. New methods are better received when it appears to come from within the system rather than from the top down. Additionally organize talks and training with experts and particularly expose your staff to positive case studies so they can see the benefits as well as the goal as clearly as you do. Similarly, meet with students and gauge their reactions to the new technology. Organize discussions and contest from time to time to give that little push and keep the momentum going.

Measuring Success

The clearer you've defined the learning problem, the easier it will be for you to gauge success later on. Look at measurable data such as grades or performance, especially comparing the before and after implementation period. Get anonymous feedback from both staff and students alike. And most importantly, interact with some of your learners one on one to gain insight into general opinion of how the new solution is doing. Remember, it takes time to accept new methods and not all people adapt at the same rate. Give focus to areas of concern, and periodically hold refresher training courses, to keep usage of the mobile learning method active, and visible.

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