

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH FINDING A SUITABLE ELEARNING PARTNER



As you are running training for your business, your business sends an ambitious requirement your way that drives you to look for a training partner. Perhaps it is a compliance requirement that needs the global workforce of several thousand to complete a certification in 6 months. Or maybe the product team needs content for the next version release, and the deadlines are immediate. How often have you been faced with such a dilemma?

The inevitable next steps “How do we get started”?

The needs that brought you to the quest for sourcing a suitable training partner could be one (or a combination) of the below:

- **Scalability**
- **Faster turnaround**
- **Diverse skill sets and industry tools and standard expertise**
- **Line-of-sight to what is happening with other customers and how organizations like yours are solving their business problems**

However, the process of initiating the process is not always easy. The ideas below will help you get started in the journey to finding the right partner that can help you achieve your learning and development goals.

The Beginning

The provider landscape in the training and development field has several players; each with strengths that play to their expertise in tools, infrastructure, training topics across verticals and so on. These strengths should be considered with the following important considerations:

- **Local/Offshore partners**

One of the biggest advantages of off-shoring can be cost effectiveness and access to larger talent pools with diverse skills sets. However, sometimes this is not a possibility for compliance and other requirements. Furthermore, scenarios where on-premise support is needed will necessitate local support.

- **Multiple/Single partners**

Often, a training department will need to work with specialists in their areas. For example, you may need a partner for your training infrastructure and support for Learning Management Systems, one for your instructor-led-training delivery and another for your content support.

- **Evaluating skillset**

This can be done by identifying providers with your industry expertise, your industry network, references and the process of the proof-of-concept.

- **Global development and cultural fit**

It is important to understand that setting up any successful collaboration will need a recognition of the fact that teams will not be co-located; hence plan for collaborating across time zones and geographies early on.

Steps in Evaluating Your Partners

- **Find the right fit with the relevant expertise. The first step is to ask for references.**

Based upon the areas that have been identified for support; one can reach out to industry resources like ATD, trainingindustry.com, eLearning guild etc. for a supplier list with expertise in your area of support. ATD chapter groups, LinkedIn forums, conferences, etc. are also good resources to connect with professionals in your industry who would have addressed similar problems and maybe have partners that they can recommend.

- **Focus on the process maturity and strength in development**

One of the best indicators of supplier expertise is their process maturity – how the partner moves from the process of requirement gathering to execution. It is also important to ask questions about quality processes, risk management and how the provider team ensures that they work collaboratively with your team. Also ask questions about how data security and intellectual property rights are addressed.

- **Culture of innovation**

Learning is an ongoing journey that involves several components of both formal and informal learning. What is more, the technologies that are available to make learning engaging and effective are changing rapidly, and to build a world class training organization; you need to partner with a team that has the culture and capacity to innovate.

- **The team size and the ability to ramp up/down quickly**

This is one of the important elements to establish rules around for a successful collaboration with the provider team. It is important to recognize that your training provider is also a business that exists to support you as well as run a successful team. Transparency and conversations around this ability and need to ramp up or ramp down on teams helps build a stronger partnership from the outset, where the providing team is motivated to always do their best for your organization.

- **Be the customer that is loved and respected**

Understand what are the key success factors that the provider lists as their reason for success in other engagements.

In my experience the ability to solve complex problems with simple solutions that are architecturally designed to be re-used or re-purposed across departments is important to build a long term partnership. Furthermore, the flexibility and a collaborative engagement model will ensure success through the relationship

About Sify eLearning

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She is based out of the Bay Area and helps Sify's technology customers design and develop their customer education and training solutions. Her passion is to listen, connect and help people whenever and however she can!

We are here to help. Contact us for a demo or consultation.

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