



Managed Learning Environment (MLE)

A perennial problem for the Exec Board and HR is the training requirements for its staff. Many organisations find themselves penalised in financial terms if they can not demonstrate that their staff have been trained in statutory or mandatory courses. These may include, for example, Fire Safety or Effective Risk Assessment. Insurance policies generally cost more unless the organisation can prove their staff is trained to a sufficiently high standard.

Businesses typically try to address this by maintaining staff training records on spreadsheets or databases. Whilst this may work for smaller organisations, larger structures find these ad-hoc registers costly both in terms of man hours and admin staff. Indeed these systems quickly break down as departments organise their own training but fail to register the information in a structured fashion. Usually it is an adverse auditor's risk assessment that triggers an organisation to address these concerns.

It is important to understand what a managed learning environment will not do: it is not a course content provider. When an organisation purchases an MLE system, it will *not* be buying training packages at the same time.

A good MLE should deliver the following at least:

- Web based course booking service.
- Identify staff who require mandatory or statutory training
- Build and maintain a full training record for every member of staff
- Hold course information on all types of training.
- Allow staff training record to move with employee.
- Integrate with e-learning courses and report statistics
- Extensive user defined reporting on training activity and competency record.

The MLE should enable individual members of staff to book themselves on to a course on line. Their manager can then approve the booking as appropriate and a record is kept. Managers can identify individuals who require training; those who fail to attend a course and view reasons why. The system sends out automatic reminders to those staff who need to attend mandatory/statutory refresher courses. Trainers can administer the registers, put in course details and setup appropriate certificates for each one.

MLEs will either host e-learning course material on their own server or provide a link to it. Most MLEs are **Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM)** compliant. This means that any external SCORM compliant E-Learning package can feed back attendance and other vital statistics to the MLE package.

Organisations will have their own unique training management requirements. The good news is that many MLEs will tailor their system to match these. Most MLEs have powerful reporting functions and can meet the most demanding of HR requirements. Costs vary, but an organisation with approx 2000 staff can expect to pay from £1 per user with a typical setup cost of £12,000.

Once a good MLE is in place the Exec Board and HR can be confident that employees are demonstrably skilled. As importantly, the board will note financial gains from an improved auditor's assessment, reduced insurance costs and staff time. Managing staff training may not be such a perennial problem after all.