

# STOP BUYING THE WRONG **LEARNING TECH**

How to Prevent Buyer's Remorse  
and Save the Learner Experience

WE LEARN



# YOUR PEOPLE DESERVE BETTER.

We've all seen it happen a thousand times. Your decision-making executive is wowed by a sales presentation that's all sizzle and no steak or becomes enchanted by bells and whistles that have nothing to do with your organization's real learning needs. Then, an overpriced contract is signed before anyone asks any hard questions and boom! Your employees are stuck with a kludgy, non-integratin', no account, overpowered learning system that couldn't learn its way out of a wet paper bag.

Maybe you've been on the receiving end of this process; maybe you've even been one of those executives who made that wrong call. (No judgment — who doesn't love bells and whistles?) But, as longstanding opponents of sh\*\*y learning, we're here to say: Stop. It. Step away from the shiny object and think before you buy!

Learning strategy matters, learning content matters, and learning culture matters too. But in this day and age, if your learning tech is broken, the wrong fit, or just plain-old bad, all other things become impossible to deliver.

# HOW DO WE STOP MAKING THE SAME MISTAKE OVER AND OVER?

It's in our nature to be distracted by the new, the exciting, the sugary. (Remember the cronut? It had all three!) But, knowing this about the human condition, **how do we exert a little more control over ourselves?**

## RETHINK THE BUYING PROCESS:

- Don't lose sight of your organizational strategy. Ask yourself: How does this purchase align with it? How can this solution help you get there?
- What problems are you trying to solve with this tech?
- What are your nonnegotiables? What must you absolutely have? What can you absolutely not have?
- How do you make sure you don't buy more than you need?
- How do your needs connect to the needs of the business/organization?

These kinds of fundamental questions are important to ensuring you get the best learning tech for your organization. However, to find answers to these questions requires that leaders leave their bubbles and get input from *all* stakeholders.

# CULTIVATE YOUR EMPATHY FOR *ALL* LEARNERS.

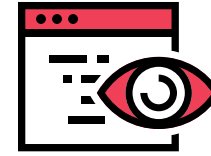
Learning and development is increasingly about designing learning experiences. Design thinking methodology begins by developing empathy with the end user. If you set out to make a better tape dispenser or washing machine, you must first understand the people who will be using them. What do they like about their current tape dispenser? What do they not like?

Too many decisions about learning are made as if our employees work only at their desks (or even have desks), have high-quality internet connections, and have a lot of schedule flexibility. Learning technology in particular is still designed with the university-educated in mind.

We recommend that, before you buy anything, you run a few focus groups with representative samples of your learners to find out:

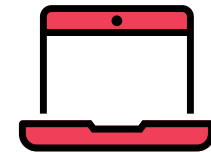
1. What sucks about your existing learning experience
2. What might make learning easier and more engaging for them

**Cultivating your empathy with the end user in this way means you are less likely to buy the wrong solution or pay for unnecessary features.**



## **Become obsessed with accessibility**

Keep a running list of what's necessary to make learning accessible for all your people. To be clear, we're not just talking about the perfunctory, legally defensible version of accessible, but accessible in a way that reflects the needs and limitations of your workforce.



## **Think about the long-term experience**

Don't forget that you'll have to maintain this tech. It doesn't keep working on its own. Keep the learner in mind when evaluating technical support offered by vendors. In many cases, the support they can or are willing to provide isn't the right fit.



# PRESSURE-TEST POTENTIAL PARTNERS.

Now that you have a more accurate understanding of what your people want and need, **it's time to put potential vendors to the test.**

Come armed with your list of nonnegotiables and see how good of a fit their tech really is. How mobile-friendly is the user experience? Does this meet accessibility standards for your people in other countries?

Ask lots of questions!! There are no stupid questions. You need to get to know your future tech and what's under that hood.

Get end users in the room and playing with the technology themselves to give feedback. Tell your people to try and break it!





# PUSH FOR BEAUTIFUL, CONSUMER-GRADE EXPERIENCES.

Beauty matters in learning; don't ignore this aspect of the end-user experience. In a world where we're cruising Amazon and Netflix all day, **your people have a much lower tolerance for click-heavy, complicated user interfaces.**

**You NEED tech partners that get this:**

- Find ways to shrink the number of clicks needed to get from A to B
- Make it ergonomic and appealing
- Refrain from over-engineered solutions; if you can't explain it in plain language, it's not simple enough

# BETTER TECH MEANS **BETTER** **LEARNING.**

When it comes to learning tech, the stakes are too high for you to whiff on it. As the platform most of your learning will flow through, **it matters a great deal.**

**To improve your decision-making around new learning tech purchases, you and your leadership must:**

- Start with a clear idea of your needs as an organization
- Cultivate empathy with the end user
- Look for ways to elevate the learning experience through your tech
- Forget about feeling bad when it comes to putting your vendors through the wringer



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