VIRTUAL
COLLEGE

How to roll out e-learning within an organisation

A summary by Virtual College

Introduction

This guide has been designed to help with the roll out of e-learning across an organisation. It has been written using the ideas and suggestions of organisations that have successfully rolled out e-learning to their staff, Board, customers and contractors. The ideas in this pack can be altered to fit the culture, size and budget capacity of any organisation.

You will need the support of everyone in your organisation to ensure the roll out of e-learning is a success. However, some people will be more involved than others.

The key stakeholders within your organisation will be:

- **Chief executive**
- **Board members**
- **Training manager**

- **Department managers**
- **Internal experts**
- **Learners (staff or contractors)**

It is vital that you have all of these key stakeholders on board with e-learning to ensure successful roll out across your organisation. The best way to do this is to get everyone involved and interested in e-learning from the offset.

Your aim – to make sure everybody is talking about e-learning!

A shift in the way we learn

Learners are shifting their style of learning. The responsibility for deciding how, when and what to learn often sits with the individual rather than the employer and means that learners integrate learning into their daily lives and expect information to be available to them on demand. This is known as the 'Google effect'.

The universe is at your fingertips

The internet has changed the way we gather information. Gone are the days of sitting in a library for days on end or ringing multiple experts to gather their opinion (at a cost!) Instead all we need to do is open a browser and enter our search terms. Alternatively, if time is limited and even this fills you with dread, you could try one of these useful websites.

Virtual-college.co.uk
Easy access to information about the products and services available from Virtual College.

LinkedIn.com
Use the forums to ask and answer questions.

Twitter.com
Follow industry experts.

Wikipedia.org
Find out everything about everything.

YouTube.com
Short, sharp learning opportunities.

TED.com
Inspiring talks by amazing people.

wikiHow.com
How to do anything.

iTunesU.com
Free tutorials from experts around the world.

Businessballs.com
Hints, tips and free resources for all things business.

Stakeholder benefits

Struggling to engage your key stakeholders? Let them know what benefits e-learning will bring to them...

Chief executive
- The opportunity to promote the organisation by submitting news, press releases, job vacancies and events through the Virtual College website and magazine.
- The ability to bring the company up to date with technological training techniques whilst offering cost and time effective training to all staff.
- The opportunity to share best practice with a network of social housing providers whilst reducing carbon dioxide emissions by cutting travel to and from face to face training sessions.

Board members
- The ability to reduce pressure on budgets as e-learning can lower training costs whilst maintaining industry standards.
- Confidence that staff are receiving consistent and up to the minute training.

Department manager
- The ability to reduce the number of staff days lost to training as e-learning can be done anywhere, at any time and does not require travel or excessive time away from the office.
- The ability to quickly produce reports from the LMS which can be set against departmental targets.
- The ability to track the training needs of the department easily.

Training manager
- The ability to produce customisable reports on all areas of training.
- Access to a system which enables them to process training requests quickly.
- The ability to create Personal Development Records (PDRs) for learners.
- The ability to monitor learner progress.
- Confidence that the learning portfolio offered suites all learning styles.

Internal experts / trainers
- The ability to use e-learning as a pre-training tool to ensure all learners have the same basic level of understanding on a certain topic.
- The opportunity to split the cost of developing a course with other Virtual College customers.
- The ability to upload their own rapid e-learning courses (e.g. PowerPoint) on to the LMS and allocate to staff.
- The ability to upload additional documents to the LMS and assign to specific groups of people.

Learners
- The opportunity to study at a time, place and pace to suit them.
- The ability to print off their own CPD accredited certificates for their personal development record.
- The opportunity to access to engaging, informative and professional training.
- The ability to take notes throughout the course which are saved on to their learner record and are available to revisit whenever needed.

How to maximise your training budget

- **Encourage coaching** – utilise the expertise within your organisation by encouraging peer-to-peer coaching

- **Introduce blended learning** – develop programmes that combine a variety of training approaches including coaching, classroom training, e-learning, forums etc

- **Look for deals** – sign up to mailing lists so that you hear about deals immediately and can take advantage of them

- **Bank your money** – Virtual College give customers the opportunity to 'bank' their money allowing them to save budget until they need it

- **Buy training vouchers** – training providers often give the opportunity to purchase training vouchers, which can be redeemed against a variety of programmes whilst giving cost benefits

- **Buy in bulk** – plan ahead so that you can group training needs and buy in bulk, which often brings cost savings

- **Take advantage of quiet times** – monitor highs and lows in workload and encourage staff to use the quiet times to complete training via e-learning

Engaging your learners

The use of pilot groups

The use of a pilot group enables you to test out the system within your organisation on a manageable number of people. Ideally your pilot group should contain approximately 5% of staff chosen at random to represent every aspect of the organisation. Where possible your group should include a cross section of job roles, IT skill levels, gender and seniority. This will enable you to collect representative data and will also help with 'word of mouth' advertising.

Pilot group → **Complete courses** → **Feedback and report**

Once word of the pilot group gets out you may find that individuals request to become members or begin to ask when they too will have access to e-learning. Through your pilot group members you can begin to create a 'buzz'. You will find that word of mouth plays a huge part in the successful roll out of e-learning in any organisation.

Your pilot group should complete a number of courses within a given time period. For example, they could be asked to complete three courses within a 6 week period.

Feedback from your pilot group can be used to produce reports showing how people are using e-learning including a comparison of roles, levels of seniority, skill levels etc., which is useful when planning how to use e-learning across the organisation. These reports will also allow you to identify potential risks to your roll out i.e. lack of take up, lack of time, problems with access etc., therefore giving you time to address those risks before full roll out.

Competitions

People love prizes! Think about where you can introduce an element of competition to your roll out and give prizes that are likely to attract interest. For example all the members of your pilot group could receive a prize and certificate on the completion of everything that was asked of them. This will make it more likely that pilot members will get involved.

On full roll out you could give prizes for the first 20 learners to complete and pass 2 courses. This will entice people to have a go. Prizes don't have to be big they could be £20 retail vouchers or similar. You could also consider how the prizes could be used for internal marketing i.e. by giving a mug showing your e-learning logo it is likely to be kept on the learners desk and can prompt questions and conversations about e-learning.

E-Champions

E-Champions are nominated individuals who can provide support and encouragement to learners. You could recruit champions from your pilot group or advertise via managers. Champions should be enthusiastic and approachable.

It is useful to have a cross section of champions that are representative of the organisation as a whole so that learners have someone who they can identify with. Champions allow you to give learners in remote locations face to face support without the need to travel. A photo of the champions could be published in staff newsletters or on organisational websites for all to see.

Marketing and getting the word out

Think about how you are going to market e-learning within your organisation.

- Could you ask your e-champions to produce an advertising campaign? This will give them ownership and will promote word of mouth advertising

- Can you produce posters and leaflets to give out showing the benefits of e-learning and including quotes from your pilot group?

- Do you already run a face to face induction programme? You could begin to talk about e-learning during the induction so that new staff know to ask their managers and colleagues about e-learning

- Can you run a series of face to face sessions where staff can come along and try e-learning in a safe environment?

- Do you have an intranet or staff newsletter where you can put information about e-learning in anticipation of roll-out?

- Can you present to team meetings, managers meetings, staff groups or residents groups about e-learning?


Posters and leaflets

At induction

On staff intranet

How you can use the LMS to market e-learning / communicate about e-learning

The key factor in the successful roll out of e-learning is to ensure that individuals access the learning management system and are therefore naturally prompted to complete their training. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Use the resource functionality to store a variety of documents / resources and signpost all staff to the functionality to get them used to accessing the LMS for organisational information.
- Set up the LMS log in page as internet home page.
- Link the LMS to the organisations webpage.
- Make organisational announcements via the LMS i.e. Christmas party.
- Use the alert functionality to raise awareness through competitions i.e. prize for first team to get 100% completion of XX or to encourage competition i.e. the marketing team were the first to complete their data protection training and had an average pass rate of 95%.
- Upload staff newsletters to the resource section.
- Attach quiz questions to organisational announcements i.e. upload presentation about new IT system to all staff records and attach a quiz focussing on key learning points.
- Use the LMS to gather feedback through free software such as Survey Monkey.
- Send emails from the system to employees with log in details, access instructions, course details, completion dates etc.
- Use the requested learning tab to showcase your course catalogue and engage learners in their own training and development.
- Use the alert functionality to automatically direct learners to the Virtual College website where there is a diverse course catalogue.
- Think about communication within your organisation and use what is available to you. Try and introduce a new element of marketing on a regular basis in the build up to roll out so that anticipation within your learner grows.
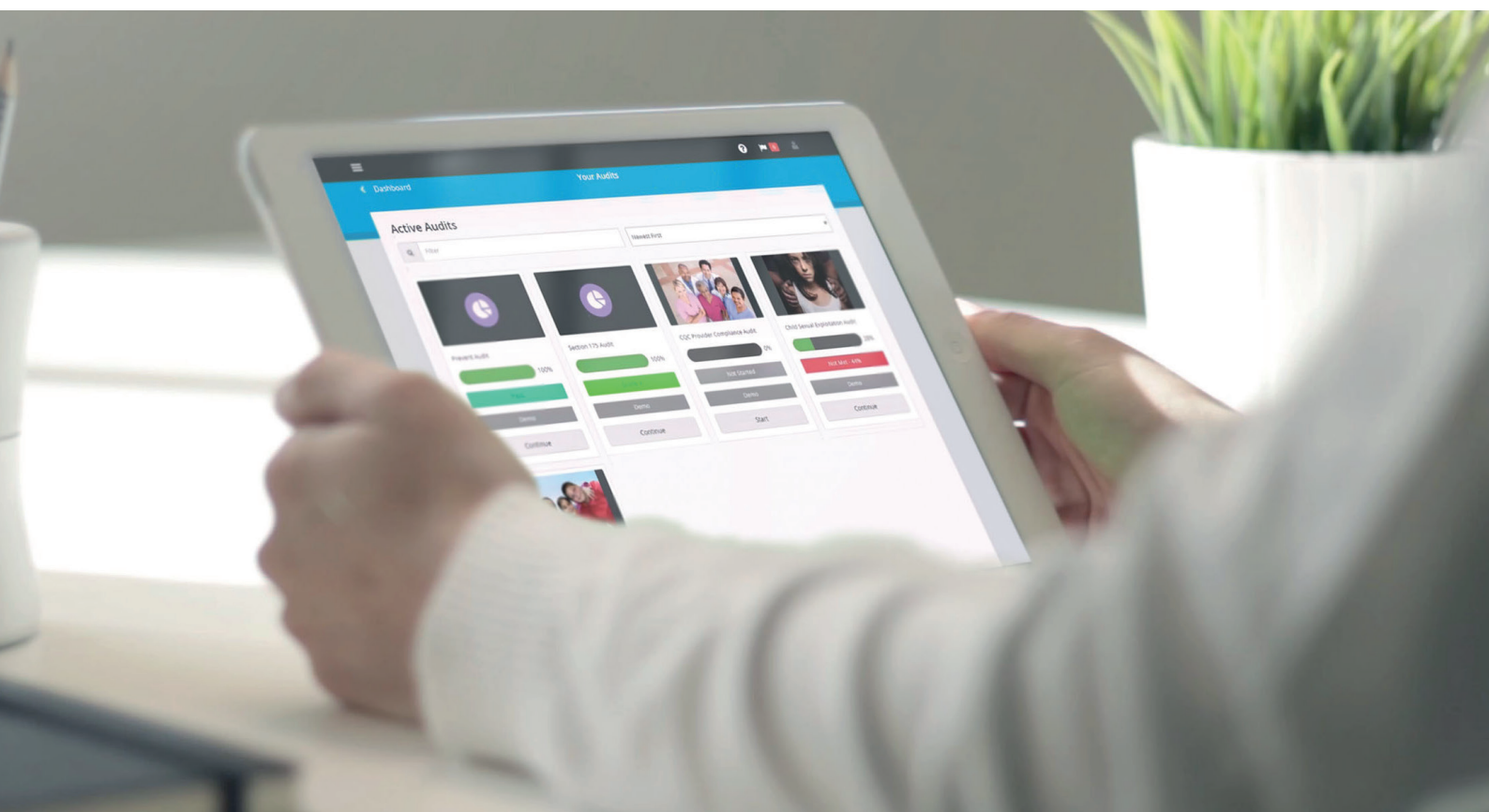
Organisational roll out

When you are ready to roll out e-learning across the organisation you need to consider how many learners you have and what information you will send to them.

The phases of roll out – It is easier to manage your roll out if you choose to do it in phases of around 100 learners (or 10% of staff).

We suggest one phase per week. Send out your learner packs on a Monday so that you have the rest of the week to answer questions and solve any issues such as learners not receiving packs or being unable to access the system etc.

Information

You may want to send out an 'access pack' containing

- a set of headphones
- a covering letter username and password
- a guide to accessing Enable
- the contact details of the e-champions
- a document containing frequently asked questions

You could also include a comparison of e-learning with traditional training techniques so that learners can see why the organisation has chosen to include e-learning in its training portfolio. You could include a list of all the courses available to your organisation via e-learning to enable discussion between individuals and managers around fulfilling training needs. A full breakdown is available from **www.virtual-college.co.uk.**

The role of the helpdesk

Consider whether you can set up an internal e-learning helpdesk for learners to contact via e-mail or the telephone. Virtual College provide a technical helpdesk via E>nable but cannot answer questions about organisational mechanisms such as access, why courses have/have not been added to a training record, report producing etc.

By providing a dedicated contact the organisation can field queries efficiently and keep records so that patterns of questions or issues can be spotted early. If you do decide to set up a helpdesk ensure that the contact details are advertised to your learners on a regular basis.

Comparing e-learning with other methods

	Advantages of e-learning	Disadvantages of e-learning
Compared with the classroom	E-learning, when it is interactive and self-paced, is much more efficient (typically learning takes half the time). E-learning saves on travel and other student expenses. E-learning is more accessible and available when needed. Some learners find it easier to open up online than in a face-to-face environment.	With e-learning, collaboration between learners can be more impersonal. With e-learning it can be harder to demonstrate of practice certain skills. With e-learning, learners find it harder to block book time and can be easily distracted from the task in hand.
Compared with on-the-job coaching and instruction	Self-study through e-learning can be much less expensive (although with heavily tutored e-learning this advantage is much reduced). E-learning is more accessible and available when needed.	E-learning can be more impersonal.
Compared with other forms of open and distance learning	Assuming they are online, e-learning materials are much easier to maintain. Assuming they are online, e-learning materials are much more widely accessible. Assuming it has an online component, e-learning facilitates collaboration with other learners.	Computers are less portable than books. The fact that you need access to a computer excludes those who do not.

How to sound like an e-learning expert

You can use this quiz to test your own knowledge or as part of your e-learning roll out:

1) What is an App?
- **A** An application for use on mobiles and tablets.
- **B** The learners ability to apply the knowledge learnt.
- **C** A DVD resource that can be accessed via a computer.

2) What is blended learning?
- **A** Training designed using no more than 2 delivery methods.
- **B** The combination of different types of training delivery.
- **C** A programme of learning that blends into day to day activities.

3) What is cloud storage?
- **A** The storage of gasses.
- **B** A specific storage system used by weather programmes.
- **C** Storage space based online.

4) What is distance learning?
- **A** A method of classroom based learning where people have to sit a certain distance from each other.
- **B** A method of learning which does not require learners to sit in a classroom setting and instead drip feeds information for completion at the individuals own pace.
- **C** A method of learning involving cross organisational training programmes.

5) What is m-learning?
- **A** Learning accessed via a mobile phone or tablet device.
- **B** Management learning.
- **C** Micro learning.

6) What is a MOOC?
- **A** Massive Open Online Classes.
- **B** Massive Open Online Course.
- **C** Modular Open Online Course.

7) What is open source?
- **A** Software where the source code has been made available therefore encouraging collaborative development.
- **B** Open source describes a course that is free of charge to all.
- **C** Open source describes a course where learners can drop in at any time.

8) What is a VOOC?
- **A** Vocational training offered by universities for a fee.
- **B** Vocational training aimed at 16 year olds.
- **C** Free bite sized information and advice for lifelong learning.

9) What is synchronous learning?

    A   Recorded instructor led online learning.

    B   Real time instructor led online learning.

    C   Instructor led training available on demand.

10) What is a VLE?

    A   Virtual Learning Environment.

    B   Virtual Learning Engine.

    C   Vascular Learning Environment.

Correct answers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	B	C	B	A	B	A	C	B	A

www.virtual-college.co.uk

info@virtual-college.co.uk   • 01943 605976

Virtual College
Marsel House, Stephensons Way, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, LS29 8DD, England

Virtual College is one of the UK's leading providers of online learning solutions with over
2 million online learners. Together, we steer our online community by creating effective
products, resources and services that meet the needs of organisations and individual learners.