![Virtual College logo]

Virtual College

How to engage colleagues in digital training projects

Inspiring learning for all

When you're embarking on a project to develop digital training programmes or find a learning technology partner who will fully support your business' ambitions, you'll soon find there are plenty of challenges to overcome. Not least of these challenges is the difficulty of communicating across departments in your business and winning over your internal stakeholders.

Every team has its own targets and priorities – even when sharing in the overall aim of making your organisation a success – and it can be hard to work out how to work with colleagues whose criteria for 'a good training solution' might be different to your own. Understanding what they need to help them feel confident in these new projects can be the difference between a smooth, enjoyable process and one in which every stakeholder struggles to feel engaged.

We spoke to two of our team members to understand how to go about persuading internal stakeholders that the solution you have identified is the right one.

Wining hearts and minds

For Sarah Baker, our Content Development Manager, it's all about winning hearts and minds. '**Your colleagues need to hear how this new project or partner is going to help them overcome their current challenges,**' says Sarah, '**your internal stakeholders are juggling lots of requirements – learners' needs, business objectives, national standards, changing educational systems – and so demonstrating that you understand, and can help solve their problems, will really help them feel confident in what you're proposing.**'

The best way to do this, Sarah explains, is to tell them the story. '**This story starts with how things are right now – what challenges are they facing? What isn't working in your current offering? Next, it's showing them what your organisation could be like if these challenges were overcome – and how satisfied and skilled your learners could be. Finally, you can show them how to solve those challenges with your project, training proposal or suggested learning technology partner.**'

Your colleagues will also want to know why they should trust, and ultimately work with, the technology provider you're suggesting. '**Your colleagues will have their own challenges and will want to understand the risks to them and the business,**' Sarah adds. '**Case studies and customer testimonials from your technology partner can help do this quickly and simply.**'

She also highlighted that internal stakeholders will want to understand whether a project or partner can successfully deliver the specific requirements of your organisation's learners. '**That might be a need for international languages, on-the-go access, understanding how your learners' education fits into their day job or effective pedagogies for your type of learners,**' Sarah explains, '**but whatever it is, your stakeholders want to know your learners will be catered for and supported as much as possible. If you can highlight how your chosen provider or new project will be able to do that, they'll feel confident it'll be a great success.**'

Making the business case

'First and foremost,' explains Jaison Cresswell, our Learning Technology Manager, 'your organisation will want to understand the positive impact of any digital project you undertake. Sharing this information will immediately help get your internal stakeholders on board.'

Jaison says one of the best ways to do this is to show them results from earlier projects or test modules your chosen partner has produced. 'That way, they can see exactly how likely it is that you will achieve these results. Your learning technology partner should be able to give you clear qualitative and quantitative results from similar projects they've successfully completed, so make sure to ask for them.'

Your business will also want to know what other organisations are doing, both in your industry and across L&D in general; 'this helps them understand how undertaking this new project could make your organisation more attractive, supporting recruitment and retention of employees,' adds Jaison. He also mentions that explaining how your business can improve what they do for your learners can win over colleagues, who will want to know their organisation is doing everything they can to be successful. Successful teams translates to successful businesses.

Finally, Jaison says it's important to explain which parts of your current training programmes can be digitised, and how. 'Your organisation will want value for money, which means spending money in the most appropriate and effective way. Showing them exactly which elements of your current offering could be digitised, the impact this will have on the business and learners, and offering creative ideas on what could be done, will all help them feel confident in your proposed solution.'

Whichever team you or your colleagues are in, your overall objective is the same: to get the best possible learning for your learners, and the best possible results for your organisation. Each team needs different information to know they're making the right choice, but with a little understanding – and support from your chosen provider – getting everyone on board doesn't have to be difficult.

"Your colleagues will have their own challenges and will want to understand the risks to them and the business."

Sarah Baker, Content Development Manager, Virtual College

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

+44 (0)1943 605 976
virtual-college.co.uk