

The Case for an IT Learning Group

Technology deployments have increased as organizations struggle to manage and gain competitive advantage. Learners must adopt new technology quickly, and companies are under greater pressure to deliver effective training faster. However, most project teams are not staffed to do the job.

An IT Learning Group can bring many benefits to a project, including efficiency, standardization, cost savings, better results, and shorter time to realize ROI.

Where there is no IT Learning group we see IT project managers with no tactical training support, facing familiar questions about who will design, deliver, coordinate, and deploy the learning program. Some will slap together documentation and call it training. Others will re-invent the wheel. Some grab the first high-priced professional who promises to get them out of a jam.

The results are often inadequate, with low learner adoption on one hand, or wasted time and money on the other.

The case for an IT Learning group centers on experience and repeatability. The group can be structured in a couple of ways.

Operates as a standards group

The group can develop, with minimal staffing, a strategic learning initiative that contains the elements a project needs to build a successful learning program, including:

- Tools
- Deployment strategies
- Infrastructure requirements
- Support requirements
- Templates
- Guidelines

It can offer advice about models for design and delivery, and train project team members to use suggested tools, guidelines, and templates. Cross project work is easier when methodologies and toolkits are shared. This approach ensures repeatability, standardization, and a higher chance of learner adoption. It also relieves project managers of the need to revisit the same questions on each project.

Operates as a full service group

As an alternative, the group can offer full-service support. IT project managers “contract” with the group for the learning development and deployment. It can be fully staffed, supplying project managers, instructional designers, trainers and technical writers, as needed to a project. And, when special skills are needed, the IT Learning Group can acquire reliable outside talent at a fair rate.

As a full-service provider, the IT Learning Group ensures:

- Adherence to standards
- Consistent look and feel for all company training
- Possibility of learning content reusability
- Higher learner adoption rates and faster ROI
- Economies of scale through shared services
- Better rates for outside talent

But most important, a full service learning group frees the IT project manager from involvement in day-to-day training activities.

We think the case is clear: Companies and projects are best served in their quest for economy and excellence by tapping into the resources of an IT Learning Group.