

Learning and Development Software:

Selection, Requirements, and Workflow



- Platform decisions compound for years: content velocity, compliance, data quality, admin load



- Three decisions: what you need, what you buy, how work runs after



- Avoid: tool-led strategy, requirements after demos, unowned workflows, AI as compliance shortcut



- 2026 context: 70% use an LMS, 16% an LXP; AI now foundational



- You leave with: weighted requirements matrix, vendor scorecard, mapped workflow

Setting the 2026 Market Baseline



- LMS market: **\$26.8B** in 2025, reaching **\$100.6B** by 2034 at **15.8% CAGR**



- Corporate learning is the fastest-growing segment at **19.1% CAGR**



- Consolidation is operating context: Coursera-Udemy (\$2.5B), Docebo, Learning Pool, Instructure



- AI is table stakes: only **2%** of vendors report no AI use



- Vendor convergence: **43%** offer 21+ functions; **69%** cluster into one archetype



- Budget norm: **\$1,000–\$3,000** per employee on training

LMS MARKET GROWTH OUTLOOK



AI ADOPTION STATUS

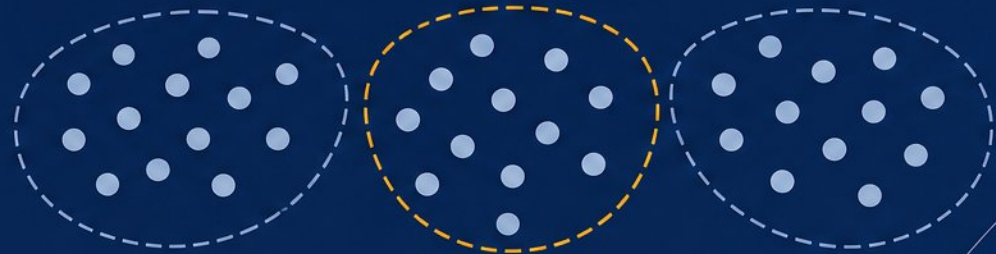


of vendors report no AI use

CONSOLIDATION CONTEXT



VENDOR LANDSCAPE MAP



Category Map: LMS, LXP, Skills Platforms, and the Rest



LMS

ADMIN-FIRST
SYSTEM OF RECORD

Admin-first system of record; assigns, tracks, and audits formal training



LXP

LEARNER-FIRST
DISCOVERY

Learner-first discovery; aggregates content, personalizes, but won't enforce compliance



SKILLS PLATFORM

ORGANIZATION-FIRST
CAPABILITY MAPPING

Organization-first; maps verified capabilities and feeds workforce planning

ADJACENT TOOLS (DON'T CONFLATE)



TMS



LCMS/
AUTHORING



ASSESSMENT



LRS



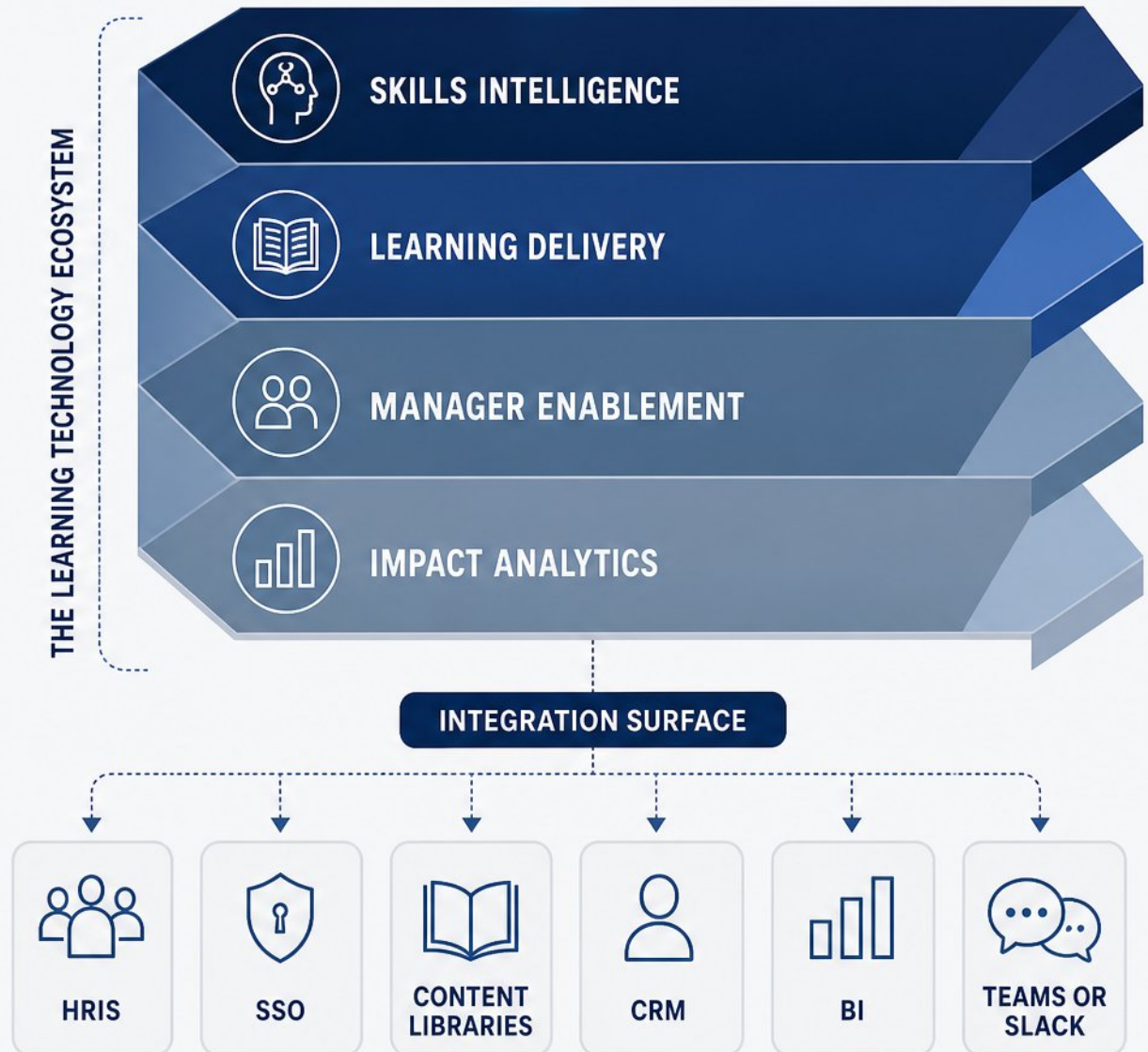
CONTENT
LIBRARIES

- LMS: admin-first system of record; assigns, tracks, and audits formal training
- LXP: learner-first discovery; aggregates content, personalizes, but won't enforce compliance
- Skills platform: organization-first; maps verified capabilities and feeds workforce planning
- Don't conflate adjacent tools: TMS, LCMS/authoring, assessment, LRS, content libraries
- Most enterprises need LMS and LXP capabilities, but not always two separate contracts
- Heuristic: no audit trail → LMS first; flat voluntary engagement → LXP; future skills gaps → skills platform



Suite vs. Best-of-Breed and the Ecosystem You Must Plug Into

- ▶ Suites consolidate contracts and data; best-of-breed wins on depth
- ▶ Four ecosystem layers: skills intelligence, delivery, manager enablement, analytics
- ▶ Integration surface: HRIS, SSO, content libraries, CRM, BI, Teams or Slack
- ▶ HCM-native learning wins when shared skills data matters most
- ▶ Know your standards: SCORM, xAPI, cmi5, LTI 1.3, SAML/OIDC, SCIM
- ▶ Ask vendors: proprietary skills framework, or open O*NET/ESCO?



Requirements Gathering That Survives Contact With Vendors



- Write requirements before any demo; otherwise you evaluate what vendors do best.



- Sources: learner pain points, compliance, IT/security, procurement rules, support tickets.



- Tier every line: Must disqualifies, Should is scored, May is bonus.



- Must means legal, data protection, essential workflow, or technical dependency.



- Each requirement needs measurable acceptance criteria plus named evidence.



- Accessibility is a gate: WCAG version, VPAT within 12 months, written remediation dates.



TESTABLE REQUIREMENT CARD



MUST

Disqualifies if not met.

SHOULD

Is scored.

MAY

Is bonus.



MEASURABLE ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

Define how we will verify the requirement has been met.



NAMED EVIDENCE

Specify the exact artifacts or documentation that will serve as proof.



ACCESSIBILITY GATE

WCAG version, VPAT within 12 months, written remediation dates.



MANDATORY GATE

END-TO-END WORKFLOW PIPELINE



Understand Needs



Write Requirements



Tier & Define Criteria



Validate Evidence



Vendor Engagement



Decision & Handoff

Longlist, Weighted Scoring, and Demo Design



6. Maximize Signal

Rewrite yes/no questions as demonstration requests — the highest-leverage change



Weighted Decision Matrix (Motif)

Use consistent criteria and locked weights to compare vendors fairly and transparently.

	WEIGHT	—	—	—	—	—
—	●					
—	●					
—	●					
—	●					



References, Commercials, and Exit Terms



- Reference calls are due diligence: insist on shape-matched, 18-month-live customers



- Four questions: timeline accuracy, first post-go-live break, support response, buy again?



- Compare pricing like for like, then model 3-year and 5-year total cost of ownership



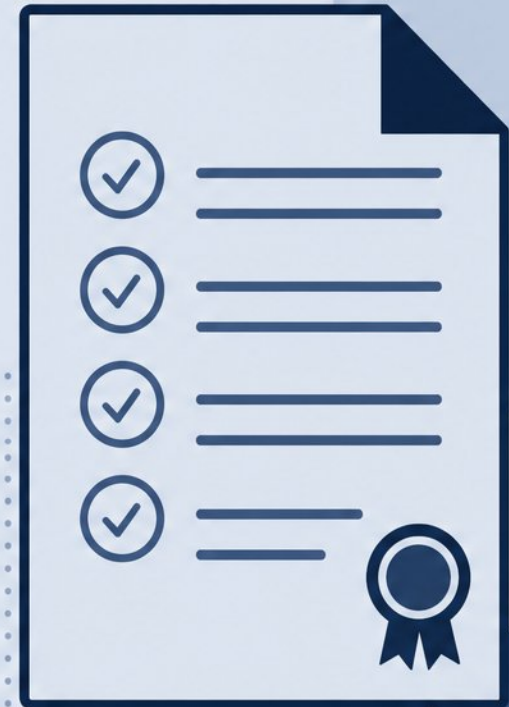
- Contract levers: renewal caps, seat true-up, SLA remedies, data ownership, exit terms



- Ask how you would leave: export format, cost, timeline, historical completion records



- If it isn't in the contract, it was never an answer



Workflow and Operating Model Before Implementation

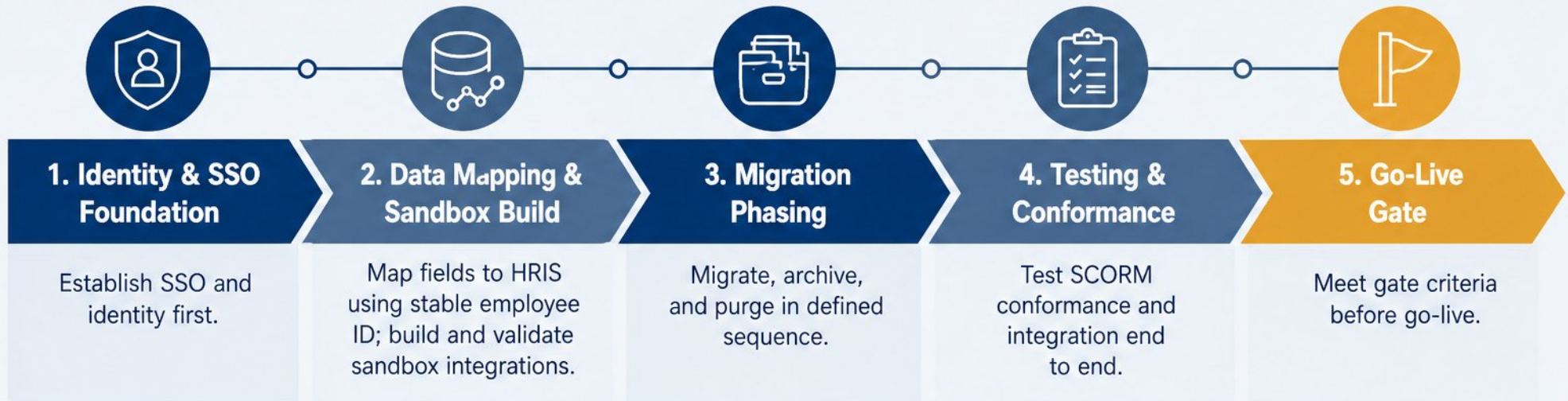
END-TO-END LEARNING LIFECYCLE

STALL-PRONE HANDOFFS

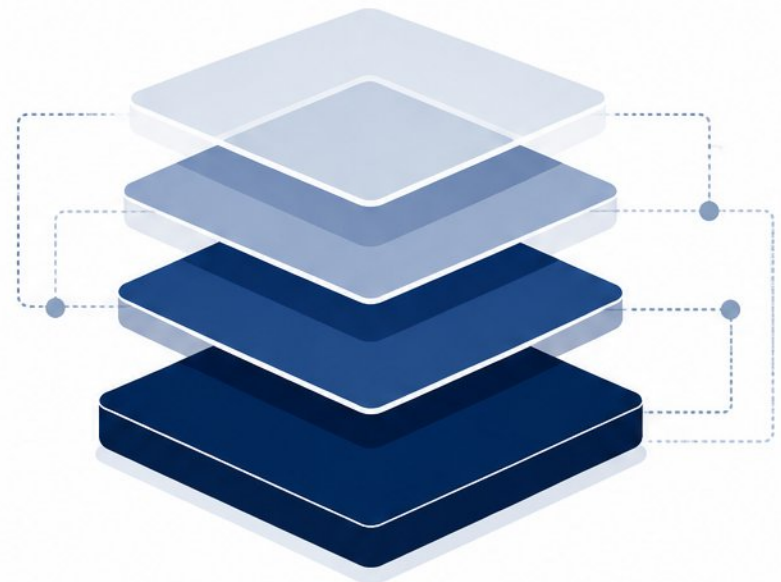


- Map the full learning lifecycle: intake, design, publish, assign, deliver, report, archive
- Learning ops is a project pipeline, not an HR ticketing queue
- One five-question intake form as the only route in; hold the line on bypasses
- Name an owner per stage — work stalls at handoffs, not inside stages
- Model onboarding, compliance renewal, and skills development separately
- Design governance up front: templates, versioning, review cycles, taxonomy
- Measure the function: median cycle time, intake quality, capacity utilisation

Implementation, Integration, and Migration



- Cloud deployment runs 3–9 months; on-premises 6–12
- Mid-market with HRIS, SSO, and compliance: 8–16 weeks
- Enterprise regularly exceeds six months — scope integrations first
- Do identity first: SSO before HRIS sync, every time
- Use stable HRIS employee ID, not email, as linking key
- Migration is a phase: migrate, archive, purge; test SCORM conformance
- Gate go-live on zero Severity 1 defects and one full HRIS sync



Data, Analytics, and Measuring Value

- ▶ Define reporting questions before evaluating any platform
- ▶ SCORM tracks completion; xAPI and an LRS capture behavior across systems
- ▶ Kirkpatrick structures evaluation, but most stop at Levels 1–2
- ▶ Highest-value joins: LMS to HRIS, CRM, and operational systems
- ▶ Use Return on Expectations and confidence-adjusted contribution, not causation
- ▶ Require mandatory fields, deduplication, role-based access, retention rules
- ▶ Report on a 30/60/90-day cadence, segmenting mandatory vs. voluntary activity

HIGHEST-VALUE JOINS



KIRKPATRICK MODEL

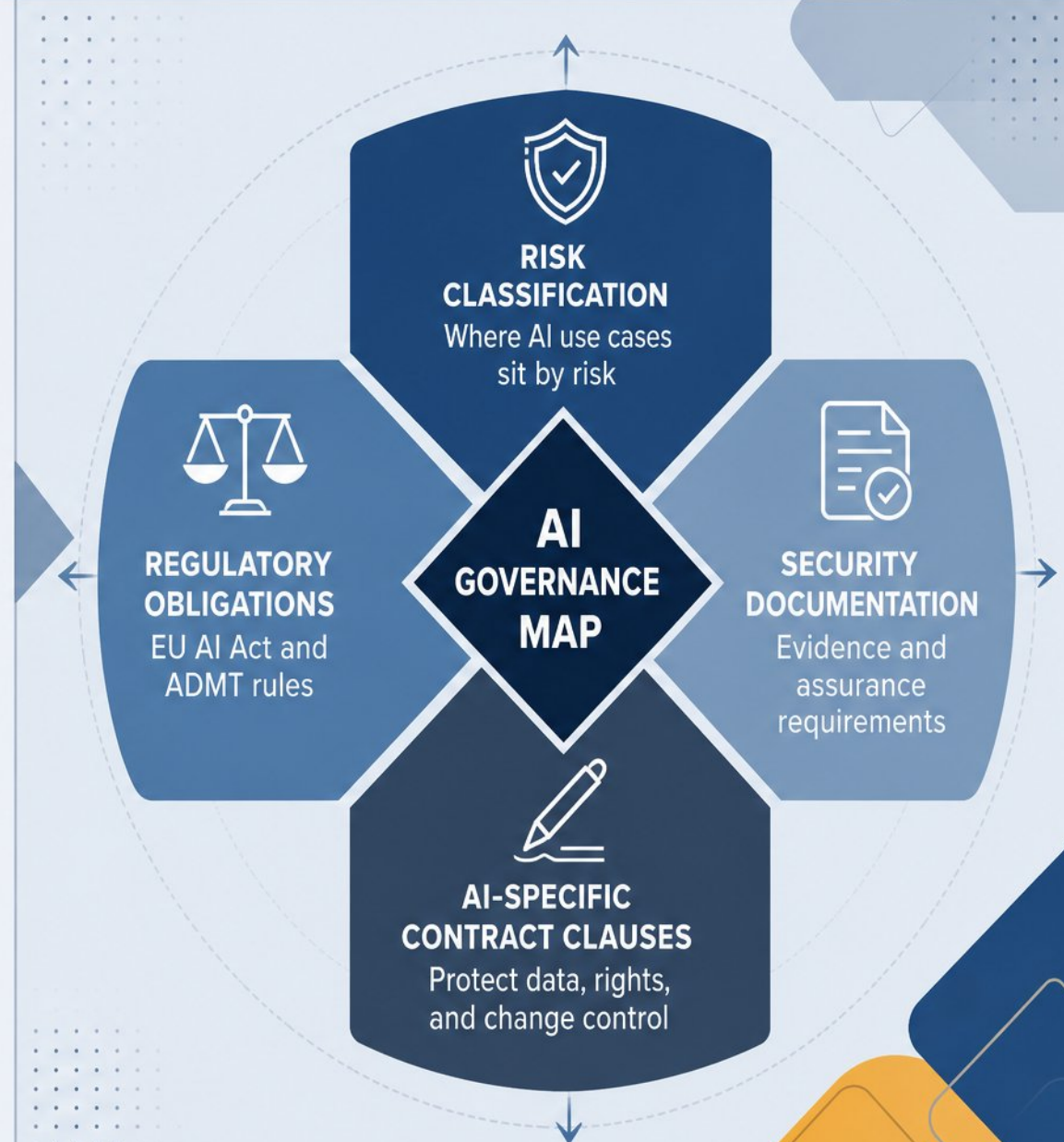


REPORTING CADENCE



AI, Security, and Compliance in Platform Decisions

- ✓ - Audit AI claims: training data, processing location, human approval
- ✓ - Govern before you buy — classify by function, not vendor label
- ✓ - EU AI Act high-risk obligations for workforce tools: December 2, 2027
- ✓ - Require evidence, not adjectives: SOC 2 Type II, ISO 27001, VPAT
- ✓ - Contract AI clauses: no data training, audit rights, model-change governance



Adoption, Support, and Continuous Optimization

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC ONBOARDING PATHS



WEIGHTED DECISION MATRIX

- ✓ - Design adoption per audience: learners, managers, admins, designers
- ✓ - Brief managers 3-4 weeks before launch — strongest usage predictor
- ✓ - Structural levers: SSO, role-filtered catalogues, sequenced mandatory content
- ✓ - Champions: one per 50-75 learners, chosen for peer credibility
- ✓ - Action thresholds: 65% login by day 30, 40% repeat by day 90
- ✓ - Segment voluntary sessions from mandatory logins in leadership reporting
- ✓ - Quarterly platform reviews; six-month vendor business review

ACTION THRESHOLDS THAT TRIGGER INTERVENTION



Applied Workshop: Requirements, Scorecard, and Action Plan



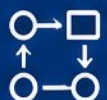
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- Exercise 1: Draft five testable requirements; tier each Must, Should, or May



2

- Exercise 2: Build a weighted scorecard—six categories, 100 points, disqualifiers set



3

- Exercise 3: Map one priority flow with named owners per stage



4

- Exercise 4: Name top three risks and pair each with a specific mitigation



5

- Exercise 5: Write three business-aligned measures, baselines, and data sources



- Wrap-up: 30-60-90 day action plan with owners and a decision date



- Self-check: every requirement evidenced, weights pre-agreed, every stage owned



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