

# 8 TIPS FOR GOING

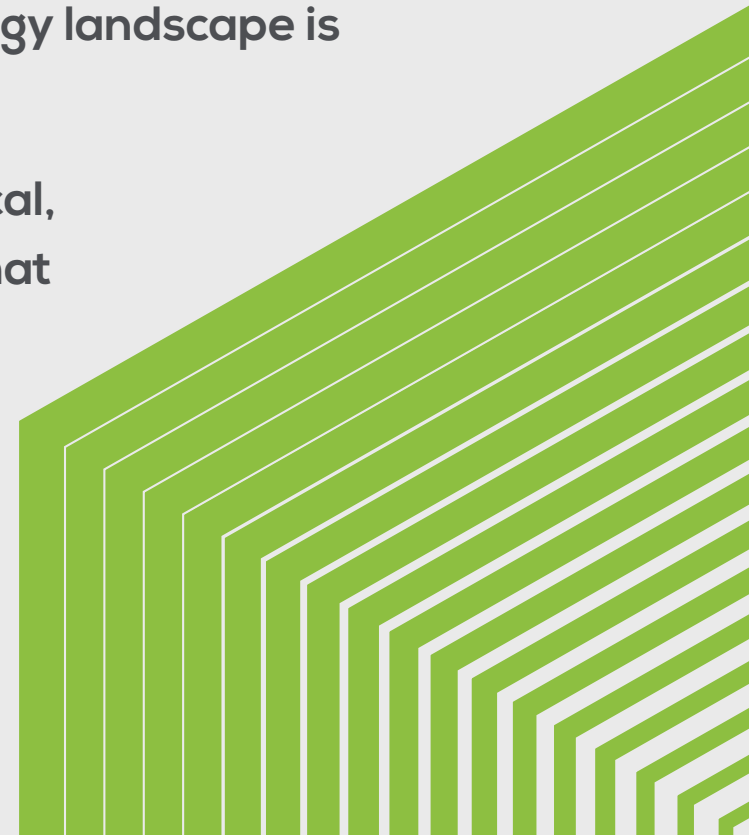
## Digital for Training Providers

Enterprise clients are asking for a “digital solution” and training providers are finding themselves evaluating options amongst a crowded and quite confusing landscape. Enterprise customer demands are vague and broad, and the technology landscape is confusing and changing on a daily basis.

But it's more than possible to “go digital” in a logical, thoughtful way. Following are some principles that can help training companies prepare for the full product and sales cycle involved in going digital.



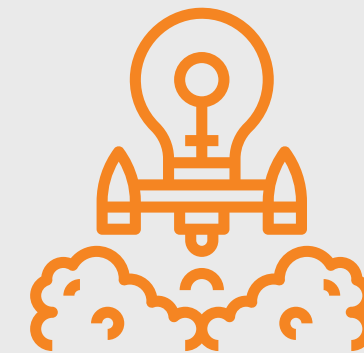
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**Partner Success**  
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# Think Big

**One Intrepid client went from zero to a multimillion dollar digital business by starting with a target of large-scale cohorts for their offerings. They didn't start small and go big after incremental growth, they thought big right from the start. And it has paid off, big time.**

Many content providers follow a business model of selling classes or participant seats along with facilitation. Thus, an implementation of 10 classes with 25 learners in each can be a big sale. Through a digital solution you can now put 1000 into one online experience and keep the same level of engagement. And do it more quickly. And have as much or more impact. So, dream big, not incrementally.



# Digital does not equal hands-off

Creating a system for in person training wasn't magical -- it took time and energy to get the right facilitators, create TTT programs, and such. It's the same with digital. Part of creating a knock-out digital solution is creating a learner experience from beginning to end: thinking about how people sign up, whether a moderator should keep the material fresh, how to keep participants engaged, etc. Thinking end to end, not just about the end product, is an integral part of the planning process.



**One of our partners thinks comprehensively by considering aspect like how to combine moderation and coaching with an online course, to how to promote and motivate learners to finish. They excel at thinking it through from start to finish. And their adoption and finish rates are reflecting this end-to-end effort at making the whole experience a special one for their customers.**

NO 2



# Know what problem your client is trying to solve

Knowing what your clients are looking to solve will ultimately save you time and potentially investment in technologies that may not meet their needs.

From what we're seeing, one or more of the following factors are driving the customer to ask for a digital solution. First and foremost, companies are looking for rich and engaging learning experiences at scale. If you consider how long it takes to roll out an initiative using instructor led classes, it's expensive and takes too long.

The second most prominent reason is to create extended learning over time so the skills are applied on the job.

The third is to match the way workers experience learning in virtually every other venue of life EXCEPT corporate training—smart phone apps, YouTube, googling.

Whatever the reason your customers are demanding digital, that reason should drive the kind of digital solution you invest in.



**A telecom company needed to reinvent their sales team readiness because of new competitive threats. Their sales training provider was able to ask the right questions to understand exactly what aspects of their standard programs were relevant to the critical business need. As a result, they came up with a holistic approach that solved the telecom client's underlying business needs and avoided the pitfalls of cookie-cutter training when the stakes were sky high.**



# Know what problem you are solving for YOUR organization

**A leadership training provider had an immediate need: move away from a clunky LMS experience to a sleek blended-learning one. But they also kept in mind their larger organizational goals – to, in the long run, exponentially expand their offerings digitally. So they built out their first blended learning online component with the big picture in mind, and were therefore able to move to that exponential growth that much faster.**

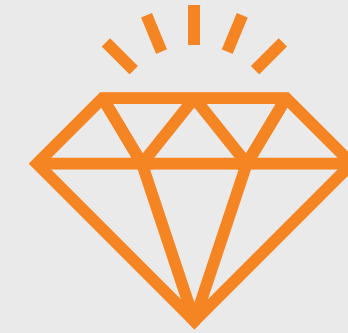
Many training partners go digital because clients are asking them to. Deep down many believe that nothing will match an in-person class. But, thinking about what digital does for your organization opens surprising avenues for growth and evolution.

For instance, many of the industry's gurus are ready to STOP being road warriors that come in for every high-powered key note. Imagine if your customers got to work/learn from the author of the book or the founder of the company through your digital course? And imagine the ability to keep them involved past retirement? The opportunities a digital solution provides can be surprising and solve some of your company's biggest challenges.

# Understand the cost of ownership and value prop in order to price appropriately

When partners go into digital with the idea that this is doing the same as in class, only on-line, they can miss key elements of the value chain. A better path is to think of how you are disrupting yourself from top to bottom including roles and support. Some typically overlooked costs are: moderation, on line coaches, assessments, customization, etc. These are also potential revenue streams. And if you propose a standard per head pricing model, with potentially thousands of people in one class, you may price yourself out of the market.

Consider pricing models that match the value you plan to deliver. Options for revenue include things like annual learner subscription pricing, or a la carte add-ons for site tailoring, integrations, and so on. The point is to think it through from top to bottom because it's all going to change. And that's a good thing.



**One leadership provider made what seemed like a smart move when they shifted to a blended in-person/online solution – adding a per-head cost. However, they soon realized the much higher value the online component brought to their clients, and were able to up the price accordingly. Their new, and returning, client portfolio has continued to grow by leaps and bounds.**

NO 5



# Be ready for the IT conversation

**One training provider learned the hard way that going after the easy answer, instead of understanding the nuances, created problems with clients down the line. Take the time to understand the ins and outs of your technology and your clients – they'll thank you for it. Or, at least, not yell at you.**

Training companies are used to talking about how their content can impact change in an organization. But they typically aren't ready if the buyer asks about whether their solution is SCORM compliant or if it plays nice with the LMS. These are basic digital selling questions/answers and it's important to arm your sales people with the IT basics and where to go to get further questions answered.



# Design differently

In a classroom, magic happens. Facilitators know to go faster or slower, provide stories that apply to the audience or company, manage table groups, etc. As a result, many content providers want replicate exactly what they do in a class but do it on line...because they know what works. We've found the most successful digital migrations involve crystalizing the Aha moments and then figuring out the best way to make that happen on line, which might involve totally different activities. A great place to start is to ask yourself what holds you back in the classroom experience, what CAN'T you do in person that you CAN do online?



**In a course on the topic of high-performance mindset, the provider was able to use the online platform to do something they would never have been able to do in a live face-to-face event: show comparisons, in a safe environment, of modeling different pros and cons of how to move people forward in a conversation.**

NO 7





## NO 8

**Don't be suckered by the easy administration of a "ye olde" e-learning technology and lose sight of the user experience. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter if something is easy to administer if that something doesn't appeal to learners and therefore sell.**



## Don't relegate the decisions to IT

Most founders of most training companies were deeply involved in the first roll outs of their in-person classes. They were often teaching the classes. When a training company brings content to a digital platform in a reimagined way, it represents the new iteration of a brand. It's personal. The online version represents the impact a company wants to have on the world. To make this just a technology buy can risk losing the very essence of your solution. That's why you have to think through the solution end to end. Your customer might want you to provide your IP just on their LMS, but what will the resulting quality of the experience do to your brand if it's not a great experience?

We've also seen the temptations for some IT shops to want to build it themselves. An open source solution looks quite easy and cheap and many IT groups are anxious to dig in and create a homegrown option. In general, unless your IT group is ready to become a product group and support a solution for the long term, the "quick and easy" route tends to be "slow and very expensive" path.

# Disrupt yourselves

In many conversations with training providers, they say things like “Can you help us know the common mistakes people make? Can we avoid them? This is our first time.” In short, they are nervous. Very nervous. My response has been to exhort them that if their bones are rattling and their teeth are chattering, they are experiencing the right level of gravitas. The modern training industry is in the midst of the most significant change since its birth. Thus it makes sense to have some apprehension.

But training providers who are moving digital should mostly be proud because they are leaning into the disruption...and having a learner’s mind. And in times of disruption, the only damning decision is to ignore it.

**So...disrupt yourselves, and think big when it comes to going digital.**



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