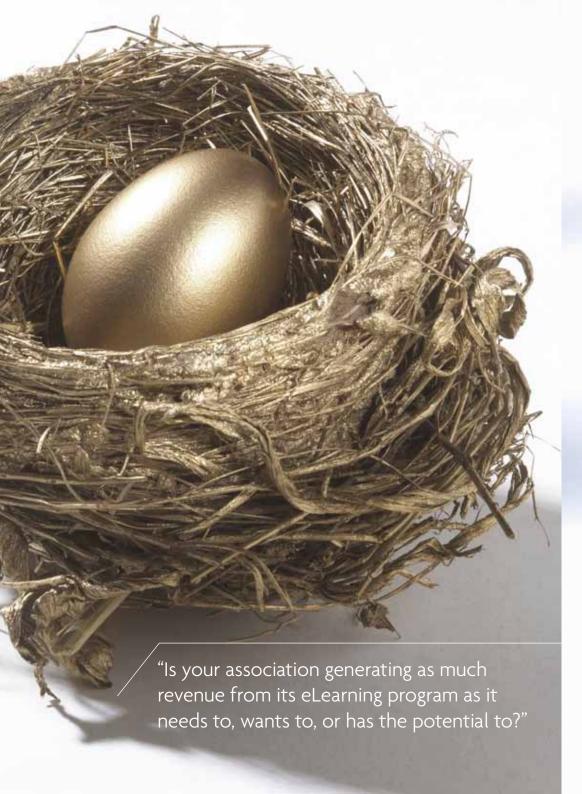# WBT SYSTEMS

Association Learning

Getting more bang for your buck!
8 Quick Tips to boost eLearning revenue

Introduction

More than ever before, eLearning has gained a significant foothold in association education initiatives. If your association has taken the plunge, you will hopefully be gaining from the many benefits. Not only does it provide a valuable member service, leading to higher member retention rates, it can also generate an important and additional source of non-dues revenue.

But is your association generating as much revenue from its eLearning program as it needs to, wants to, or has the potential to?

This handy guide provides 8 quick tips to help you boost revenue from eLearning. It's written for Associations and Professional Bodies, but a lot of the information applies to any organization looking to get more from their eLearning program.

This is the fifth in our series of eLearning reports and guides for Associations. Other publications focus on getting started with eLearning, social & mobile learning and open source systems versus learning solutions. The full list is at the rear of this guide and can be downloaded from the resources section of our website.

We do hope you glean a few useful nuggets and tips for your association. We'd love to hear your feedback, thoughts or suggestions for follow up reports, so feel free to get in touch with us by emailing marketing@wbtsystems.com.

"Is your association generating as much revenue from its eLearning program as it needs to, wants to, or has the potential to?"

8 Quick Tips to boost eLearning revenue

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1. **Don't undervalue online training**

2. **Reach a wider audience**

3. **Launch your eLearning initiative**

4. **Offer good value promotions**

5. **Promote specific courses**

6. **Make demo versions of courses available**

7. **Create a positive experience**

8. **Tailor the learner experience**

01

Top Tip: A good starting point for eLearning is to offer access to recordings of your annual conference sessions at a reduced fee.

Don't undervalue online training

When pricing your association's training offerings, it is important to assess their value, and then price accordingly. Many associations are guilty of devaluing online learning courses and webinars as there is typically less administration overhead and no hard costs associated with things like booking a room or organizing lunch, so the event is perceived as creating less of an impact. However this is not the case!

It's important that you put aside assumptions and consider the qualities and features your members are likely to value when it comes to training.   Online learning that is engaging and delivers important educational messages is every bit as powerful and effective as attending a classroom training event, so don't be afraid to charge good money for it. There are also significant benefits - members can take the training at a time and place that suits their own schedule and there are no costs associated with travel expenses.
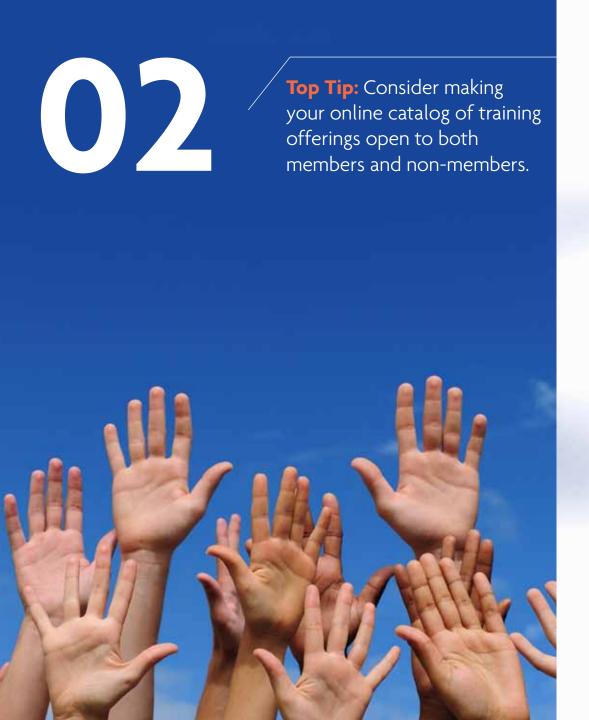
A good starting point for determining the cost of an online course or program may be to consider the comparable charge for attending a face-to-face version of the course, and then price the online session at a percentage.

You will also need to factor in any fees and charges associated with content development, as you need to ensure that at a minimum, your costs are covered.

Finding the right price point for courses is not an easy task and the bottom line is that if uptake is poor, it's clear that you've either got the price wrong or that for whatever reason, the course is not of interest to your members. Assuming the former, it's important that you revise and re-set course pricing on a regular basis particularly at the start of a new venture into online learning.

This can be done by reducing a particular course fee, or you might consider offering a discount coupon that is emailed to potential attendees. Sending out a coupon also helps to market the course and increase awareness.

Through an iterative process it's important that you find the right price point so that costs are covered and you are making an adequate financial return.

02

Reach a wider audience

When it comes to eLearning it's all about scale. Consider how it differs from the classroom -- if you provide additional training days for more learners, your costs go up considerably. You also have extra trainer and venue fees, catering, printing and so on.

Costs on the other hand don't increase with self paced online learning, so the idea is to build numbers or critical mass. One way of doing this is to ensure your training products and services are accessible.

If you have a Learning Management System with an online catalog of offerings, start by making these offerings open to both members and non-members.

You may also want to consider reaching out to affiliates in other geographies or new target audiences that you couldn't previously cater for using traditional training means.

Also, ensure your learning system is optimized to enable training purchases and courses to be taken on mobile devices. This closes the learning gap between the classroom and everyday life by allowing learning to take place on popular devices. Learners have multiple ways to stay connected to their learning experience and are more likely to make frequent training purchases.

03

Launch your new eLearning initiative

What we now know that is "if you build it, they will come" approach doesn't work. It is not enough to just provide eLearning content and make these assets available to your members. You need to promote the use of eLearning to your audience on a regular basis.

Growing anticipation is a great way to ensure early adoption of a new online learning program. Start by organizing a formal launch of the initiative followed by regular updates on progress. These updates should be sent out to members in an eZine, e-newsletters or marketing campaigns, so that they feel part of the process and are ready for the launch. Any such circulations

should be as "complete" as possible and not give rise to questions or concerns for members, otherwise it may result in a flood of calls and emails to your education department.

Giving the system a name like "Association Learning Academy" or "Member Learning Network" is a good way to create brand awareness and differentiate the offering.

It may also be worth running a competition for members to name the new system or provide a prize for the first few members who log in.

Top Tip: Organize a formal launch of the initiative, followed by regular updates on progress.

04

Offer good value promotions

Encourage participation in your eLearning program by incentivizing your members to take courses.

You can do this by offering price promotions such as early bird discounts, course bundling, bulk discounted prices and group learning activities. For example, if a learner buys course B in addition to A, they get a discount of 20 percent off the total price.

Most learning systems will also support the use of coupons and tokens as an additional incentive to buy. For example, offer the use of a coupon code to get discounts off a particular course.

Additionally, you may want to use an expiration date or limit the coupon to the first 100 registrants. Again, a good Learning Management System will have all the necessary functionality to facilitate these kinds of promotions.

Top Tip: Early bird discounts, course bundling, bulk discounted prices and group learning activities are a great way to entice learners to purchase.
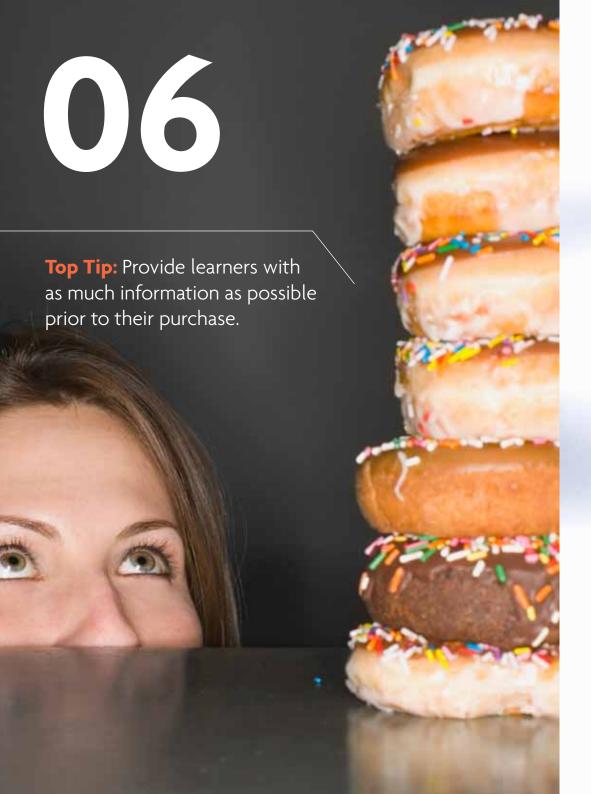
05

Promote specific courses

Once your association's online learning system is up and running, you can promote specific courses to generate interest. For example, you could list the top five most popular courses on the LMS dashboard, or create a news feed to promote the newest courses added to the catalog.

If you offer CEUs or CPDs, drawing members' attention to the number of credits associated with specific learning activities always works well. You may want to display the courses that offer the most points in a prominent position on the user's Learning Management System dashboard or homepage.

Click through adverts across the system can also generate awareness and promote new courses.

In addition, you can use your Learning Management System to suggest other relevant courses or offerings to your members that may be of interest during the checkout process.

For example, you've just put course A into your shopping cart. Members who bought course A also bought course B and C. This is a very effective way of increasing course uptake and maximizing the revenue potential.

Top Tip: Highlight the most popular courses, the number of CEUs associated with each course and suggest other relevant offerings during the checkout process to help boost sales.

06

Top Tip: Provide learners with as much information as possible prior to their purchase.

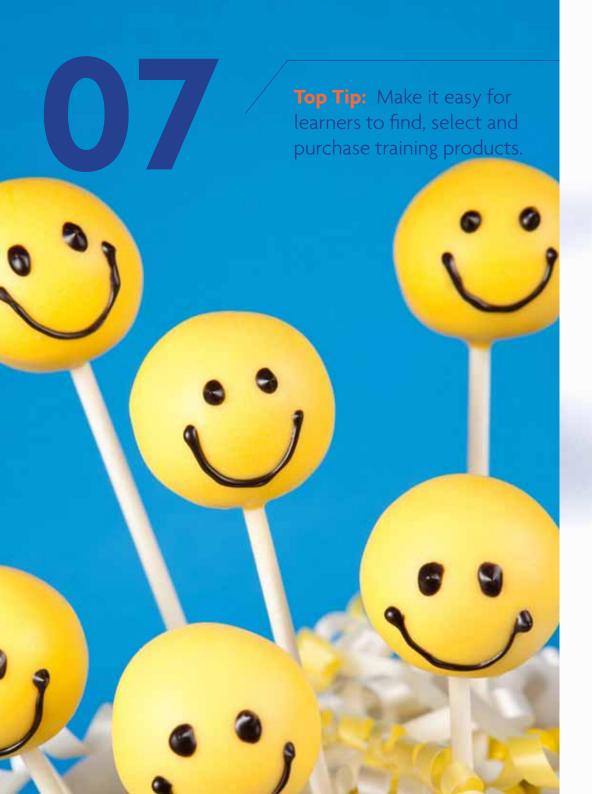# Make teasers or demo versions of courses easily available

Encourage learners to buy courses by allowing them to try out or sample a little piece of the course content before they buy.

Course teasers, where you give the learner access the first few pages of the content, can be very effective as a marketing tool to encourage purchases. The teaser is free to access but they have to pay to take the full course.

If demos are hard to create, then consider making available a simple preview as a teaser.

The goal is to provide learners with as much information as possible and entice them to buy.

You may also want to consider including a member feedback survey at the end of a demo for a new course, so that those who access the demo can let you know if they found the content relevant and whether or not they would purchase the course. This can also help you to set appropriate pricing levels for a new course, as you can ask members what they would be prepared to pay.
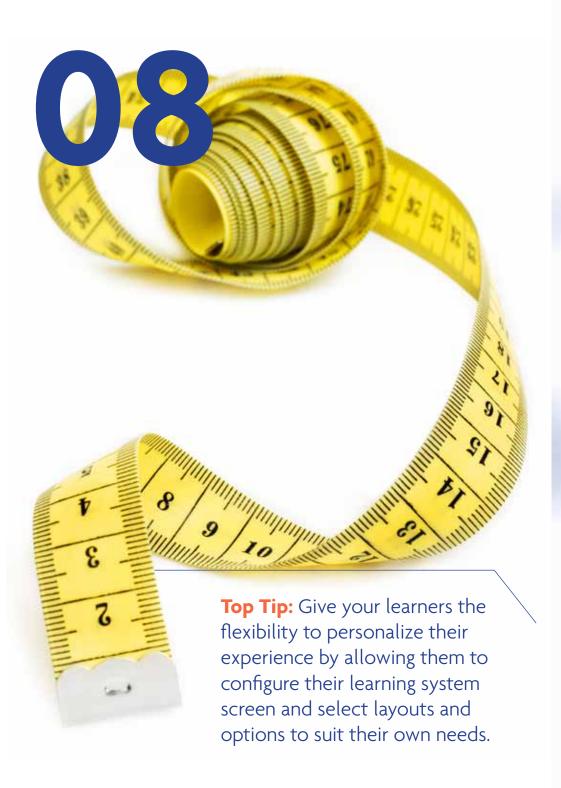
07

Top Tip: Make it easy for learners to find, select and purchase training products.

Create a positive experience

If you, as an online buyer, purchase something from a website and find the purchase process confusing or difficult, you are unlikely to make a return purchase irrespective of the savings you made.

Today's web users are extremely savvy and have very high standards - they expect simplicity and intuitiveness during any online process. It should be straightforward for your members to search for and purchase courses. They should be able to find relevant training activities by applying comprehensive search filters, and then put selected courses in a shopping cart with a single click.

Where members are shown lists of the most popular courses, they should just be able to click on a course to purchase it, as opposed to having to go to a different "e-commerce" part of the system.

It's also important to have easy navigation with simple menu structures and quick links. If you create a positive user experience, your members will be much more likely to engage with online learning.

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08

Tailor the learner experience

Accommodating the training needs of your members will help you to maximize course uptake.

If you're running a course on a particular date, giving members the option to register their interest in that course ensures that if they cannot attend on the course dates outlined, you at least know that they are interested in attending future similar courses.

This enables much more effective course scheduling and also gives you the opportunity to make contact when that particular course is rescheduled in the future. This may mean the revenue potential is not missed.

If some of your training courses are expensive, it may not be appropriate to ask members to pay via credit card, so it's important that you can offer flexible payment options such as "invoice me" or debit accounts.

It's also helpful to give learners the flexibility to personalize their experience - configure their screen and select layouts and options to suit their own needs. Giving groups of users their own version of the catalog and their own specific news messaging can also ensure that valuable time isn't wasted looking at information that is not relevant.

Top Tip: Give your learners the flexibility to personalize their experience by allowing them to configure their learning system screen and select layouts and options to suit their own needs.

Cost cutting ideas

In addition to these revenue-boosting tips, don't forget that eLearning has the potential to save your association cash too.

A good Learning Management System should be able to easily and quickly handle many labor-intensive tasks like **sending out bulk email notifications**. The ability to deliver specific, customized communications directly to a member also help build both personal and professional value and will helps maximize touch points with members.

Significant savings can also be achieved in the area of printing and mailing. Managing certificates can carry huge costs, which often include preparation, printing and mailing. A good Learning Management System will **allow learners to print their own certificates.**

Read about more of these cost saving tips in our next report and in the meantime, feel free to get in touch to learn about how eLearning can help drive higher revenues at your association.

Visit us at **www.wbtsystems.com.**

"Don't forget that eLearning has the potential to save your association cash."

About WBT Systems

WBT Systems is the leading provider of e-Learning software for the efficient management and delivery of training and education programs online. TopClass, WBT's Learning Management System, is used by global associations and professional bodies across the United States, Europe and Australia.

TopClass is a web based Learning Management System that enables members, employees, partners, or any learners across an organization and in different countries to access training and events from a single online platform.

Other Association Reports

Other reports published by WBT Systems in this series include:

"Social and Mobile Learning – Trends in Associations Today"
A survey-based report that includes interesting insights into how associations are approaching learning in the areas of social and mobile, what their understanding of social and mobile learning is, why it is important, and what they are planning for the future.

"How e-Learning in US Associations Compares with the UK."
This is a complimentary, survey-based report that compares types of training offered in the UK and US, online learning formats, Learning Management System usage, functionality and implementation plans.

"A Practical Guide to Online Learning for Associations"
Designed for Associations and Professional Bodies, this is a brief guide that provides helpful information on the various stages of the e-Learning project lifecycle, from planning and system selection to implementation and launch.

"Open Source or Commercial Learning Management System?"
This report looks at the pros and cons of both commercial Learning Management Systems and open source learning solutions. We look at a number of key topics including license fees, IT resources, support, product roadmap and security.

These free reports can only be downloaded from the WBT website at
www.wbtsystems.com/resources

WBT SYSTEMS

Contact Details

WBT Systems Ltd.
Block 2, Harcourt Centre
Harcourt Street
Dublin 2
Ireland

WBT Systems Inc.
38 Spring Street
P.O. Box 801
Nashua, NH 03082-0801
United States

Phone
Toll Free: + 1 (877) WBT-7700
US: + 1 (603) 654-3500
Europe: + 353 1 417 0100

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System, TopClass, visit **www.wbtsystems.com**