The Extended Advantage:

Strategies for Training Learners
Outside Your Organization

schoox

Table of Contents

Introduction

You've likely heard the term "extended enterprise learning" at conferences, in articles, and from your peers. If you're not one hundred percent clear on what this term means, the simplest definition is training for people who aren't employees of your organization. We'll dig into who these people are and why training them is a smart thing to do, and most importantly, we'll examine why this type of training has become not just increasingly popular, it's become critical.

Even with the growing excitement about extended enterprise learning programs, the extended learning ecosystem is not new. It's just rapidly gaining traction and pacing to match the importance of internal employee training.

Any person responsible for employee training can confirm that it's hard enough to motivate employees to get energized about training. Now, take that challenge to the next level when it comes to educating people across your extended enterprise — people whom you may not have as much leverage over as you would with employees, whose jobs may be affected by not completing training, or who might face punitive consequences from their management were they to fall out of compliance or fall behind in skills development.

You've likely heard the term "extended enterprise learning"
…the simplest definition is training for people who aren't employees of your organization.

Here's the good news: there are clear strategies and practices to engage your extended enterprise. Once you prove to them the benefits, everyone wins. They do better in their intended endeavors with your company, and you do better for several meaningful and lasting reasons, to be highlighted here.

Let's jump in. In this eBook, we'll discuss why extended enterprise learning delivers significant value, whether you're training franchises, partners, suppliers, contractors, customers, or members. We'll share the key benefits across your organization regardless of your focus in the extended business ecosystem. And we'll offer tips regarding the technologies and capabilities required to deliver this type of training more efficiently and successfully (for you) and more engagingly and smoothly (for them, your learners).

Even with the growing excitement about extended enterprise learning programs, the extended learning ecosystem is not new. It's just rapidly gaining traction and pacing to match the importance of internal employee training.

What are the most impactful benefits?

With extended enterprise learning, you can deliver targeted training experiences to various stakeholders outside of your organization. In doing so, you reap the rewards in key business areas that most companies have at the top of their priority lists — things like better customer experience (CX), stronger brand recognition, expanded market share, and increased flow in revenue streams.

Let's look into each of these benefits categories and how extended enterprise learning enables you to:

1 **Codify consistent customer experience:** By building clear, strategic learning content and delivering it to your extended enterprise, you gain greater control over how customers experience their interactions with you. Learners know precisely what's expected to meet CX standards and have clarity about how to ensure top-notch service. It's all in the training. Once consumed, there's no confusion about what explicit processes and procedures must be met to uphold the company's CX promise. And, from the customers' side, they're ensured the same great experience whether they visit a location in Seattle or Sante Fe.

By building clear, strategic learning content and delivering it to your extended enterprise, you gain greater control over how customers experience their interactions with you.

schoox

2

Boost your brand with targeted training: Think of your extended enterprise as not just extensions of your business but as brand ambassadors. They are, after all, representatives who are the face of your brand, often literally. For example, your customers who buy from a retail agent don't know (or care) whether that person actually works for you. They care about getting what they came for without any hiccups or difficulty in communication. Training is vital to protecting the integrity of your brand.

3

Secure stronger, broader market share: As you train your franchises, partners, suppliers, contractors, customers, or members, you inherently extend your reach in the market by delivering on the two bullets above – creating an excellent CX and building a strong, reliable brand. Customers want to do repeat business with you because they can count on your company to exceed expectations. Also, word-of-mouth marketing is alive and well — mainly in social media – so as people have positive interactions, they'll spread the word, and your business will enjoy the ripple effects.

4

Generate repeatable revenue streams: If you sell your training to any of the groups in your extended ecosystem, this can serve as a reliable and potentially lucrative way to generate revenue. Your investment in an LMS can quickly translate into ROI as you recoup your costs by charging for learning programs. Also, in the case of partners, the more knowledgeable they are about your products, the more confident and successful they'll be selling, which translates directly into higher revenue for you.

How can you empower your extended enterprise?

Setting up your extended enterprise for success begins with understanding the particular challenges of each group and utilizing the right approach and technologies (like an LMS) to tackle them.

Franchises

There couldn't be a clearer example of the necessity for extended enterprise learning than the world of franchises. These businesses are decentralized by nature, so whoever is ultimately responsible for ensuring training is delivered (and completed) consistently from the hub out needs to rely on technology to manage and track success. The additional challenge with franchises is that the parent brand may not be able to dictate how their partners manage their business operations beyond the boundaries of the franchise agreement. From a learning perspective, this could mean requiring compliance training but merely offering customer service training.

It's a complex undertaking that will vary across business models, so the right LMS is crucial. Whether onboarding new franchises or offering ongoing training to keep the various teams up to speed, a strategic program must be sketched in advance to consider all of the factors and moving parts. This plan can then be implemented within the LMS. Some good news here: the LMS eliminates scalability concerns, as new businesses can be added to the master account while assigning different admin authorities and provisioning access to systems and resources by role. From an individual store/location perspective, it must be easy and intuitive to control one's franchise and report back up to the central ownership or parent brand.

Improving customer retention by just 5% can increase profits by **25–95%**.

Partners

Partner training often requires a multifaceted approach with separate courses and modules for onboarding, product, sales, marketing, and even operational business training. Providing this education directly affects sales, so it is one of the most valuable types of extended enterprise learning.

For partners to easily access training – from day one through their ongoing learning — the LMS needs to be incredibly intuitive so that they can find what they need quickly and conveniently. As products change or are added, for example, they should be able to grab new information in an easily digestible way (think mobile) at their convenience.

Notably, any business that helps deliver your product to the customer is a partner, including suppliers and contractors, not just resellers. However, the learning curriculum for these different groups may vary significantly.

Customers

We live in a world where many products that used to be simple are now digital and complex. Who would've guessed 20 years ago that you may need training courses to operate your toothbrush, coffee maker, or watch?!? But here we are, and this is increasingly the norm. Rather than having your customers search for online videos to get answers, you can take control of your message, methods, and brand by offering customer training. The numerous benefits include increasing engagement and loyalty, reducing customer service and support inquiries, and seizing opportunities to market new products.

> Franchisors can deliver onboarding content in digital form via LMS, so franchisees have instant 'anytime, anywhere' access to the information and guidance they need to set-up their business, comply with franchise standards and accelerate their path to profitability.

John Leh, CEO & Lead Analyst, Talented Learning

With an easy-to-use, easy-to-access LMS, your customers can find the training they want to become more committed to your products and better maximize their experience with them. This all leads to longer-term relationships, upsells, and advocacy. Most companies today know that it's pricier to acquire new customers than to retain the ones you already have. So, serve up those courses and keep them coming back.

Membership Organizations

Whether you're a club, professional association, non-profit, or for-profit organization, training keeps members feeling part of the program and more committed to the purpose. It's a unifying element, even if members don't directly interact with each other, because it sets the collective tone for how and why they're members in the first place. Training not only satisfies existing members by bringing them up-to-speed on the latest information and updates, but it also attracts new members due to the fact that people want to join a group that actively engages them. It's no fun to join the club and never hear any welcoming cheers, not to mention never receiving invites to the parties.

For membership organizations, ease of use with the LMS is the number one requirement. Members may have vastly different levels of technical savviness and comfort in digital platforms. Keep it simple yet valuable. As you build your learning community, you will be able to see via LMS reporting what content is getting the most action. This will help you know your members' preferences and offer more of that — and less of what's not resonating.

What tools do you need for ease and speed?

Time to roll up your sleeves and talk tech. What LMS features are most needed to educate, engage, and energize the extended enterprise?

Critical Capabilities to Support Your Extended Ecosystem		
Type	**Feature**	**Outcomes**
Franchises Partners Customers Membership Orgs	Personalization	When the training reflects the brand but is tailored to a specific audience's needs, they feel guided, supported, and set up for success. You'll get: • Increased engagement • Higher completion rates • Deeper connection with the training content
	Learner experience	When the learning experiences are easy and require little-to-no training to understand, they are encouraged to do more, more often. You'll get: • Better retention of information • Increased trust in the value of training • Deeper loyalty to your brand
	Mobile learning	When admins and learners alike can rely on convenient mobile access, they know it's an anytime / anywhere model that we've all grown to expect and love. You'll get: • Happier admins and learners • Greater satisfaction with the training program(s) • Higher feedback scores

Critical Capabilities to Support Your Extended Ecosystem

Type	Feature	Outcomes
Franchises Partners Customers Membership Orgs	Org structure	When learning experiences are segmented and customized for unique audiences, and where the audience can administer learning for their learners, program management is much easier. You'll get: • Simpler reporting by groups, roles, etc. • Streamlined administration • More detailed drill-down analysis by audience type
	User permissions	When you can assign content based on groups, roles, etc., as well as provision users based on a CRM system, you automate formerly painstaking tasks. You'll get: • Significant time savings • Reduction in data management errors • Increased efficiencies across systems

> **The depth and ability to continually assess, learn, and act changes the game for how learning departments will operate and make investment decisions. It allows the organization to make faster, better, and more effective decisions.**
>
> **Josh Bersin, Founder & CEO, The Josh Bersin Company**

Measuring Success

Regardless of which of the extended enterprise groups you're most focused on, it's critical to measure your success. As you move forward with your extended enterprise learning intiatives, here are some key areas you should be prepared to measure:

› **Business impact:** While once the Holy Grail of L&D, it's now possible to correlate learning and business KPIs. Build training by starting with what the ideal outcomes will be, based on the goals of the business, and by working with key stakeholders to understand what results they wish to see. Work backward from there so that the measurable impacts are part of the plan from the start.

› **Speed to deployment:** As discussed throughout this eBook, extended enterprise learning is essential. There's no time to waste. Be sure to set expectations and thoroughly verify with your potential technology vendor how long it will take to get up and running. Set goals and timelines for project milestones so that your team is ready.

› **Learner engagement:** This can be tracked from initial rollout through the entire lifetime of your project. It's a rolling measurement and will differ depending on your program(s), but setting baseline goals is a good way to start. From there, tweak as needed and keep a close eye on how engaged people are using information from LMS analysis and anecdotal feedback from surveys, message boards, etc.

Regardless of which of the extended enterprise groups you're most focused on, it's critical to measure your success.

❯ Ease of ongoing administration: As your extended enterprise learning program matures, be sure to involve admins in the processes so that you can collect feedback on how well it's developing from the administrative side. They are your ears to the ground and can be extremely helpful in streamlining how you do things going forward.

❯ The typical metrics: You know them well, but they're still essential. Yes, we're talking attendance and completion rates, assessment scores/attempts, feedback scores, enrollment data, most/least popular content, etc. This basic information still goes a long way in shaping what's working and where improvements can be made.

…be sure to involve admins in the processes so that you can collect feedback on how well it's developing from the administrative side.

Conclusion

As discussed, organizations that are responsible for training an extended enterprise—potentially in addition to their employees—have some clear, differentiated challenges when it comes to these non-employee learners. Successful training implementation and ongoing engagement is predicated on:

- **Communicating the benefits of extended enterprise training**

- **Developing the right strategies to empower various extended enterprise arms**

- **Utilizing the right kinds of learning technology**

- **Understanding the metrics needed to measure success**

These building blocks help ensure a more effective and engaging learning program for your extended enterprise.

…organizations that are responsible for training an extended enterprise…have some clear, differentiated challenges when it comes to these non-employee learners

Ready to experience the extended enterprise advantage for yourself?

See how Schoox has helped organizations across a variety of industries extend learning to their partners, customers, membership orgs, and more. Get a personalized demo.

Get a demo

About Schoox

Schoox is workplace learning software with a people-first twist. People aren't cogs, and Schoox was designed for how humans actually learn. We keep learners curious by letting you deliver more kinds of content wherever they are, from the front line to the corporate office. And by making learning easy, accessible, rewarding, and fun, we help you get everyone more excited about their career development. Learners can "up" their skills, grow on the job, and get more done—and you can measure the impact of their awesome accomplishments.

More at schoox.com