HOW TO CREATE LEARNING STRATEGY GOALS IN 3 STEPS

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The primary component of a Learning Strategy is a set of goals or objectives that need to be achieved around learning and development. There are several steps involved in generating a cohesive and comprehensive set of goals. The list of goals is generated using the following methods:

1. Conduct a needs assessment. A strategic needs assessment looks at the target audiences' characteristics and needs. For this step, you would use standard needs assessment processes and questions, but you will need to pay special attention to items that will make or break a training program. These items include:

- Attitudes about computer-based education
- Motivation factors around getting trained
- Hardware and software on typical computer platforms
- Experience levels with computers, and
- Internet connectivity and cost of that connectivity.

2. Review training team readiness. The next step in determining your strategic goals is to determine your team's readiness to develop and deploy training. In many cases, a lack of readiness may be the most difficult hurdle that you'll need to overcome. You'll need to assess your team's readiness both individually and collectively, and the Venza Group recommends doing this in a combination of one-on-one and team meetings. Be sure to do the following:

- Review eLearning solutions from suppliers, partners, or competitors
- Attend free Webinars from eLearning suppliers
- Pass out articles on eLearning that are applicable to your environment
- Discuss skills needed to deploy eLearning, including content development, course authoring, graphic design, technology administration, and virtual instruction, and Assess your team's interest in developing eLearning skills and making a shift in how training goals are accomplished.
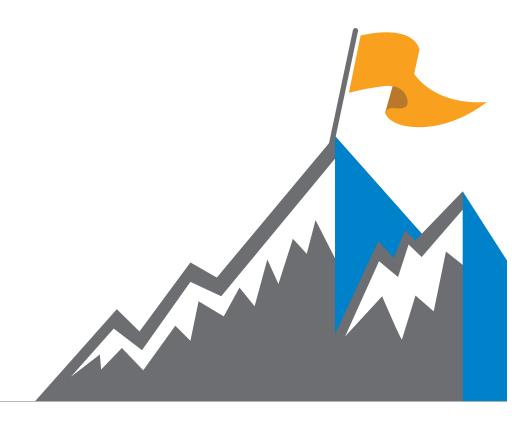
Following this process will tell you what skill gaps you will need to fill to have a successful program.

3. Obtain management direction. Management direction and buy-in for a Learning Strategy comes in two forms: top-down and bottom-up.

- **Top-down:** If your management team is asking you to establish a training program, then schedule a discussion to talk about why they want this type of program what they want it to accomplish. Ask them if there is a program that they would like you to use as a model and why they like that program.

- **Bottom-up:** If your management team is unaware of what a training program can do for them, then you will need to show them programs like the one you're proposing and discuss with them how this might fit in with the organization's strategic direction.

- Integrate management's comments into the goals for your training program. During meetings with your management team, make sure that they buy into the idea that your organization needs a training program. Also ensure whether they understand that there will be some investment requirements, but that you believe that long-term the investments will pay off.

Now, you're ready to draft the training program's goals. Ultimately, the goals of your program need to demonstrate the value of your training program to your organization. For example, goals may include statements about revenue generation, cost savings, customer retention, or market penetration.

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