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Implementation Mistakes That Can Derail Any HR Learning Solution

After investing time in researching and selecting a learning technology, it might seem like all your work is done. But if you want the new technology to take root in your organization and deliver the ROI you expect, deciding which solution to move forward with is only the beginning. In fact, the implementation process can be a critical juncture that decides whether or not your learning technology succeeds or fails.

Many organizations are guilty of underestimating the importance of the implementation process for a new learning

technology. According to respondents of the 2017 Brandon Hall Group Learning Technology Survey, 34% of organizations wish they'd developed a change management plan and also wish they'd budgeted more time for implementation¹.

But why is this process such a difficult one? And where do well-intentioned organizations get off track? These are important questions to consider before you kick off your company's implementation.

"The real reason learning technology implementations fail is that they're not

treated like a change issue," says Justin Brusino, Associate Director of Communities of Practice at the Association for Talent Development. "Organizations don't take the time to explore goals, build up the program, or communicate the change in a way the end users can understand. You can't stop once you've launched or inherited the program - you need to approach it as a true change initiative and go through that process like any other big organizational change."

This playbook explores the five most common implementation mistakes that can derail even the most sophisticated HR learning solution.



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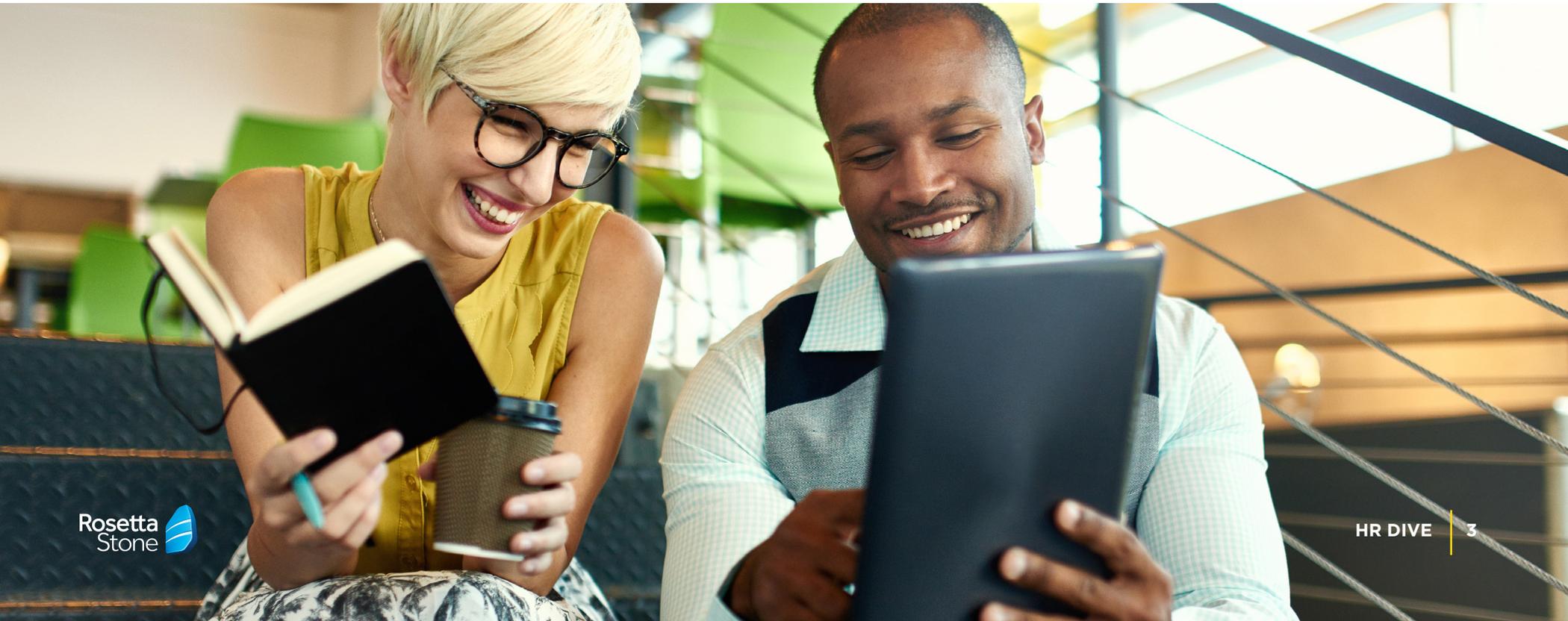
Proceed without understanding the value of learning for your organization

“Choosing and using a learning technology is a big decision that ties up a lot of money and resources,” says Brusino. “The marketplace is crowded, decision-makers must work under budgets and deadlines, and sometimes teams inherit platforms and services they didn’t get to vet themselves. This can prevent stakeholders from taking the time to understand why they’re implementing the technology

and what business challenge they’re trying to solve with it, which in turn can limit what the technology can do for the company.”

After careful discussion of the value of learning for your organization, you may be surprised to discover where your real needs lie. Kathy Thal, Associate Manager of Client Success at Rosetta Stone, shares the

example of a restaurant chain operating in a country that was experiencing a large influx of refugees applying for jobs. Exposing the need to train large groups of new employees in the restaurant’s official language in order to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction was a pivotal realization the organization wouldn’t have uncovered without a thorough discovery process.





HERE'S A LIST OF QUESTIONS YOU CAN USE TO EXPLORE YOUR COMPANY'S LEARNING NEEDS:

- Where do we see inefficiencies in our organization?
- How do our meetings run?
- Where are our locations?
- What unique challenges are they experiencing?
- What safety concerns do we have?
- How do customers rate their satisfaction? What can we do to improve that?

Hear how [Steven Dornsife from PayPal's Global Learning & Development organization](#) recognized the need for language training across the organization and shares success tips for implementation.

2

Assume your team members all have the same needs

If you're of the mind that learning is one-size-fits-all, it's time to reconsider. To have the best adoption and success rates, learning experiences need to be customized to employee demographics such as age, experience level and learning style². Otherwise, you might find yourself in a situation where an employee loses interest in a lesson because she is required to begin at the most basic level of study or usage plummets because traditional classroom-style lectures fail to resonate with modern, visual learners³.

"If you don't consider the individual learning styles, proficiency levels, or technology habits of your employees, you might end up with a learning solution that doesn't actually meet the needs of your learners," says Hunter Balmer, Implementation Associate Manager at Rosetta Stone. "For example, we work with some clients in the fast food or manufacturing industry whose employees may not have a personal email address or a laptop at home. Making sure those employees can access the program through a mobile device becomes a crucial part of the implementation process."

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— HUNTER BALMER, Implementation Associate Manager at Rosetta Stone





AS YOU WORK THROUGH A LEARNING AUDIT OF YOUR ORGANIZATION, USE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE THE NEEDS OF YOUR LEARNERS:

- Do employees prefer short, bite-sized lessons (microlearning), or more traditional styles of education?
- How much time are we willing to have employees commit to training and development during the average work week? Does the format of the lessons fit that time budget?
- Do levels of employees tend to have the same amount of experience? Or will more advanced employees benefit from different starting points?
- How much digital literacy do our employees have? How much support will they need in accessing the technology?

Curious about how technology is shaping employee engagement? Hear from Marriott International, Amgen and Rosetta Stone on how [the corporate learning landscape has changed](#).

3

Expect your employees to know what to do with the new technology

As one of the champions of your learning solution, the purpose behind the technology makes perfect sense: you know the leadership team is behind you, you have all the details, and you've vetted the technology yourself. But all the knowledge in the world won't help you get your team on board with the new technology if those details stay siloed in your office. That's why at this point it's

vital that you let your team in on the specific, realistic goals of the program, show them clear buy-in from the leadership team, and keep the solution front-of-mind with a full marketing plan.

“If you don't take the time to set clear goals, show leadership buy-in, and build up the marketing for the learning technology, your

implementation won't be successful,” says Brusino. “Take the big-picture how and why and break them out into specific, realistic goals and get the leaders who have bought into the process to communicate their support down the team. Then treat it like a marketing initiative – frame it in a way that helps employees understand why you're implementing the solution and what it's going to do for them.”

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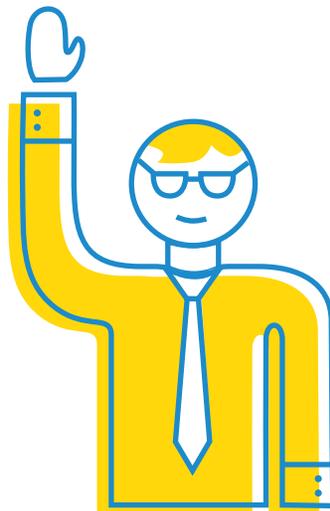
READY TO MAKE YOUR LEARNING TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION MISTAKE-PROOF? USE THE FOLLOWING CHART TO BRAINSTORM REALISTIC GOALS, CAPTURE LEADERSHIP BUY-IN AND DEVELOP MARKETING IDEAS:

SET REALISTIC GOALS



- How can we measure inefficiencies, and how will we know when we've seen progress in them?
- How long are meetings now, and how do employees rate their value?
- How will we measure improvement in the unique challenges our locations are experiencing?
- What is our current rate of safety incidents per month? Per quarter? Per year?
- How can we measure changes in customer satisfaction?

ENCOURAGE LEADERSHIP BUY-IN



- What are the most pressing priorities for our leadership team, key stakeholders, and board members?
- What data do we have to support the connection between a learning technology initiative and improvements in those priorities, such as gains in productivity, engagement, retention, and profitability?

PLAN A MARKETING INITIATIVE



- Work with your LMS provider to create or source posters, email templates, collateral guides, training videos, and other marketing assets to promote the new technology within your office.
- Encourage leaders to make learning a part of employee development plans so that stakeholders at every level within your organization understand that learning is a priority.
- Consider implementing learner engagement incentives to encourage participants to deeply engage with the learning solution's content.
- If feasible, host onsite or virtual company lunch and learns so that employees can ask questions and get hands-on demos of the technology.

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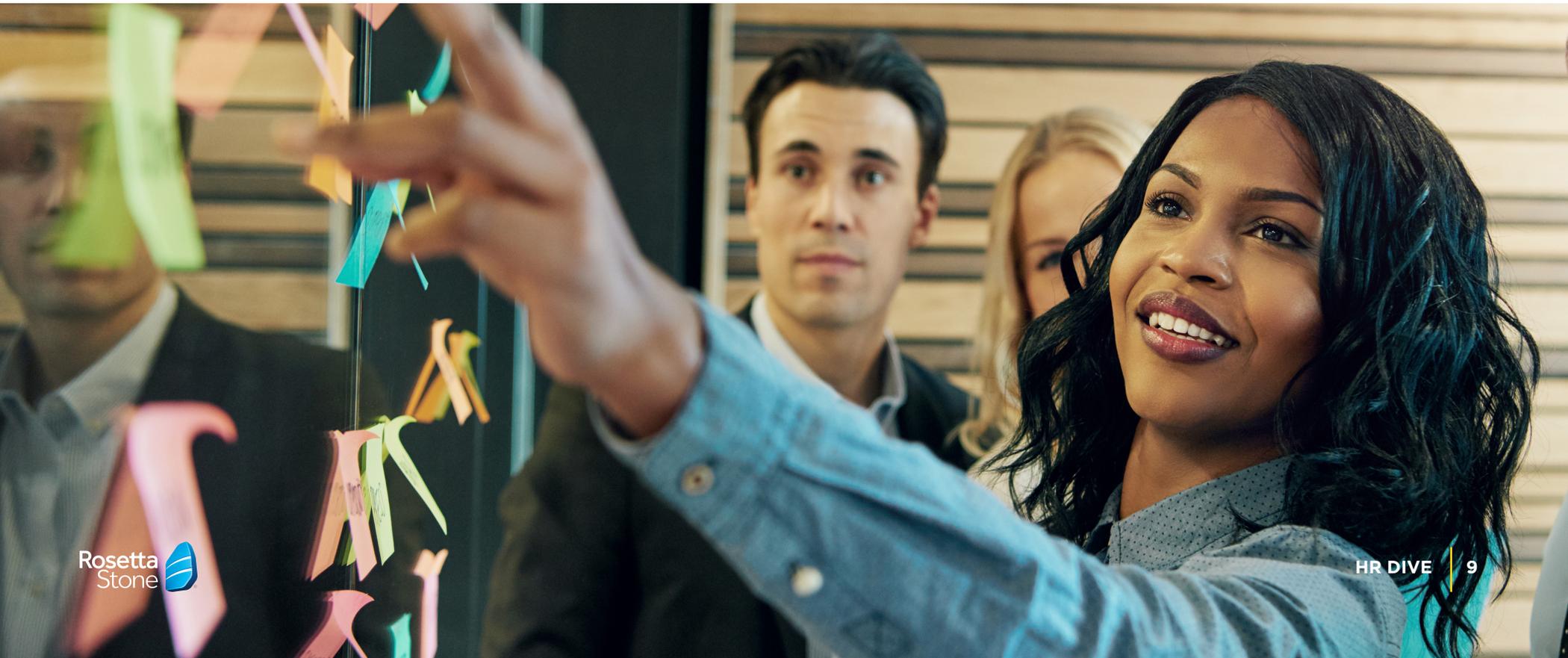
Announce the new solution and hope for the best

In many organizations, the status quo for launching a new technology is to schedule a company-wide announcement for the launch with a link to the login portal and check to see who's logged in a few weeks later. But if you want employees to regularly use your learning technology or, more importantly, for

your learning technology to have a positive impact on your company's goals, you need to approach the actual implementation with deliberate effort.

“One of the most common implementation failure points is not making an intentional

training effort,” says Balmer. “Making sure users know what to do and how to get help is vital because new users can quickly get frustrated with a technology and put it aside if they have trouble logging in or don't understand how this new tool will help them.”





WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE THE PROCESS EASIER FOR NEW USERS? HERE'S AN IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST TO GUIDE YOU:

- Opt for a learning solution with a single-sign-on integration that allows employees to use their current employee ID and password to log into the system.
- Audit your technology to make sure your laptops, tablets, and mobile devices meet the minimum standards for the learning technology.
- Consider and plan for the unique requirements of different locations, as each implementation will be a little different.
- Ask your vendor about common technical problems their clients face and what you can do in advance to troubleshoot them.
- Test everything frequently so that by the time it's in a user's hands, it's a smooth experience.

5

Assume the learning technology is working for you

Because the ROI of learning and development can be difficult to calculate, some companies assume that collecting metrics is a lost cause from the start. But in reality, it's critical to actively monitor how employees are using the technology with key performance indicators (KPIs) – especially if past implementations have been unsuccessful for your company.

Not only can tracking KPIs help you understand how much your employees are using the technology, but they can also help you capture nuances around your organization's

learning needs, such as identifying knowledge gaps; calculating how much time employees have available for training; reassessing the difficulty or easiness of a given module; and identifying areas to target for company-wide learning initiatives.

Here are some common KPIs you'll want to monitor at 3-, 6-, and 12-month intervals:

- % employees enrolled
- % employees logged in within 1 month, week, etc.

- employee time in solution
- progress/modules completed
- performance/scores on modules
- which features are utilized most and least

Here are a few suggested specific goals from above you'll want to get feedback on at the same intervals:

- % decrease in inefficiencies
- % reduction in meeting times
- % improvement in employee rating of meeting value
- % improvement in unique challenges at different locations
- % reduction in safety incidents per month, quarter, and/or year
- % improvement in customer satisfaction





Troubleshooting Common Implementation Challenges

Change management can be complex, so even following this implementation guide to the letter may not ensure a problem-free learning technology implementation. Here are a few common implementation challenges you'll want to be on the lookout for:

- **Employees get confused by technology requirements.** Technological challenges can be a major source of friction that can derail a learning solution implementation. Prepare your end users to overcome certain technological challenges by giving them detailed instructions in advance and ongoing support after the launch.
- **You're not seeing traffic on the LMS landing page.** If you position your learning technology initiative as “just another benefit” and throw it up on the company intranet page, don't be surprised when you don't see a lot of activity in the technology. Word-of-mouth will not bring you the usage or ROI you're looking for, so make sure you follow through on an aggressive marketing program for the rollout.
- **No one's talking about the LMS.** If employees don't seem engaged with the technology, you need to get back to work on promotions. Consider developing a leaderboard to employees can see who's using it and how they're ranking. Be as transparent as possible with the results and benefits individual users and the company are experiencing with the technology.
- **Employees aren't finishing the modules.** It's natural to assume that adult learners will be intrinsically motivated to complete their professional development requirements. But unless those requirements are explicitly defined, it's likely that more pressing deadlines and tasks will get in the way of their best intentions – indefinitely. Make sure learners know what's expected of them, give them time during the work week to do it, and then hold them accountable. Then maintain ongoing communication to keep those requirements fresh in their mind email once a month via email or internal posting.

With the right support in place, you can successfully implement a new learning technology that helps train and develop your workforce, achieve long-term performance goals, and deliver a powerful ROI long after the first user logs in. But if you don't take the

time to ask tough questions, plan your goals and deployment, and monitor your progress on an ongoing basis, you won't achieve your learning solution's potential. Avoid the mistakes listed here to ensure the successful adoption of your new learning technology.

With the right support in place, you can successfully implement a new learning technology that helps train and develop your workforce.





[Rosetta Stone](#) is a global leader in technology-driven language and learning solutions for individuals, classrooms, and entire organizations. Our scalable, interactive solutions have been used by over 12,000 businesses, 9,000 public sector organizations, and 22,000 educational institutions worldwide, and by millions of learners in over 150 countries.

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Sources

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