



Learning Experience Platforms for Nonprofit Success

Using LXPs to Drive Community Engagement



OVERVIEW

What's inside

- The need for learning tech in the nonprofit sector
- Retention as a result
- What part learning & engagement play in nonprofit success
- Difference between LMS & LXP

There is no doubt you have noticed the evolution of accelerated technology over the last two years. With that evolution, technology has morphed into every single field of work. With new work models, technology and innovation are essential for every organization to grow and thrive. The benefits of technology are endless, including social connectivity, streamlined communication, and remote collaboration.

Like other community-oriented tools, learning experience platforms (LXPs) offer particular benefits for nonprofit organizations. From reduced operating costs and information sharing to enhanced partner engagement and user-driven employee learning, LXPs are a prime example of how technology can be a more efficient method for boosting donors, community outreach, and more within nonprofits..

Rapid innovation has drastically changed the use of technology at work. In a single day, you may connect with coworkers via Zoom, share your thoughts or test ideas on Twitter, and employ advanced artificial intelligence. Common ways of working, learning, doing business, and connecting all reflect evolution of the technology we use every day, and we still have areas to explore. Technology enables more consistent communication, encourages engagement, and enhances learning experiences, and it's no longer just a luxury – especially for nonprofits with narrow operating budgets.

According to a [report from cloud software firm DOMO](#), internet users conducted 4.5 million Google searches every minute in 2020. What does this mean? It illustrates how we've grown so accustomed to connecting instantly with each other, and information, and expect the tools to do so to always be close at hand. As training, learning, and engagement evolve, the nonprofit sector has much to gain.

The Nonprofit Sector Needs Engaging Learning Technology

Among the many challenges of operating a nonprofit, connecting and engaging the people it needs to succeed remains the most persistent.

“ Even the most well-designed presentation deck or procedures manual can fail to foster the human connections so vital to inspiring interest, commitment, and donations.

• Creating community within a nonprofit requires employees, partners, volunteers, and donors to feel aligned and committed to the values and mission of the organization. Nonprofits rely on effective communication and an engaged community to keep their good work alive.

Meaningful learning and engagement opportunities make communication and community challenges easier to navigate. Consider the number and variety of people who must be informed, involved, and firmly on board: employees, affiliates, partners, volunteers, community advocates, board members, and local, national, and sometimes even global authorities. Whatever the scale of your nonprofit organization, it will benefit from meaningful learning and connection.

To achieve both, nonprofits need a comprehensive learning experience, which incorporates all the technological capabilities people expect in a user-friendly platform while remaining authentic to the organization's brand and cause. The ideal solution offers opportunities for, and even encourages, stakeholders to add input, discover subject matter experts, and connect around issues of interest and concern. Further, high-impact technology platforms allow nonprofit organizations to stretch their resources and do more with less.

Traditional training consists of formal, one-way content dissemination, typically supported by presentation decks, printed policies and procedures, and testing to prove new knowledge retention. These methods technically deliver the needed content, but they're often inconvenient, time-consuming, and offer little in the way of feedback and creativity. These traditional training programs may also be dull to the point of alienating those most necessary to the success of your nonprofit organization.

A [learning experience platform](#) custom-equipped with interactive content and enhanced communication and connectivity, is a superior solution for nonprofits. While a traditional learning management system (LMS) is suitable for delivering required training, ticking a compliance box, and achieving standardization, it does not extend much beyond the basics. Even the most well-designed presentation deck or procedures manual can fail to foster the human connections so vital to inspiring interest, commitment, and donations. An LMS is a tool for disseminating basic information, but to gain the hearts, minds, and imaginations of your community, you need an LXP.

Investing in Learning Experience is Investing in Retention

It's no mystery that training is a significant investment, but continuous access to training and upskilling is proven to reduce staff turnover – and boosting retention is a worthy effort in a highly competitive job market.

“ The way that our network uses our Community Hub to interact with each other has certainly improved communication from affiliate to affiliate.

– Sally Werner, RN, BSN, MSHA,
Senior Vice President, Affiliate
Relations - Cancer Support
Community

Finding, hiring, and training new employees is expensive and time-consuming. It makes more sense to spend those dollars on preserving the resources already in place. Nonprofits face a similar dynamic: Reducing stakeholder turnover is vital for staying afloat and functioning at peak performance.

The introduction of LXP opportunities improves retention for business, and we can draw a line between for-profit business needs and those of nonprofits by acknowledging their similarities. A nonprofit operating on a national or global scale has much in common with a franchise corporation, with local chapters and affiliates comparable to franchisees. Each chapter is governed by the rules, policies, and procedures of the larger organization – and beholden to its mission, brand, and messaging – even as it strives to manage local employees and volunteers and provide them with consistent training, communication, and engaging activity that empowers local success.

An enhanced LXP allows these organizations to manage all the pieces – branding, training, communication, development, and engagement – on a single platform accessible to everyone who needs it. Wisetail works with nonprofits large and small to build custom LXPs to empower their success at every level of operation.

One such organization is [Cancer Support Community](#), or CSC. Founded in 1972, CSC offers support, networking groups, lectures, workshops, and social events – all free of charge. Today, CSC is a global nonprofit with a network of 45 markets, 50 affiliates, and healthcare partners in more than 175 locations. CSC works via three strategic arms: the Research and Training Institute, the Cancer Policy Institute, and the Institute for Excellence in Psychosocial Care.

CSC's way of operating was stuck in the past – a combination of emails, phone calls, webinars, and in-person meetings trapped employees in a seemingly endless cycle of communication without action. As a result, CSC faced many issues we are all familiar with: lost messages, information silos, too many locations for its content, and wasted time searching for said content. On top of that, CSC affiliates were spread across the globe and struggled with working across time zones. They were losing focus on their mission: supporting patients and their families.

CSC realized Wisetail's experience with franchise business models would solve many of their problems. They could customize the Wisetail LXP to suit their needs and authentically represent their brand. By surveying stakeholders, CSC discovered a widespread need for tools, templates, and resources that helped them establish their unique priorities.

Their partnership with Wisetail gave CSC the ability to leverage the work of each chapter and affiliate to improve and enhance patient outcomes and experiences. Affiliates are no longer required to wait for essential answers or send multiple requests to obtain information. Instead, they login to their Community Hub and find information ranging from bylaws to support group policy samples, branded templates, and social media messaging. They can even collaborate with their peers or subject matter experts to locate information or resolve problems.

Why Learning and Engagement is Important to Nonprofit Success

79% of employees experience increased purpose and motivation at work with gamified activities.

— Talent LMS, 2019 Gamification at Work Survey

Successful nonprofits enjoy a broad audience of learners and stakeholders, but they are often faced with limited resources.

We've established nonprofits benefit from going beyond traditional training methods and enhancing learning experiences to include effective communication and stakeholder engagement, but what specific tools does an LXP offer for empowering the nonprofit sector?

In nonprofit work, learning and engagement isn't limited to employees. It also extends to volunteers, sponsors, and the communities they serve. At the same time, nonprofits need to engage and retain donors, operate sustainably, and make the most of existing resources. All this factors into the equation when they balance operating expenses with the ability to provide what stakeholders require. Staff and volunteers who leave nonprofit work often describe inadequate training and low engagement as their reason for leaving. Combined with shortages of both time and money, these factors compound each other to raise significant obstacles to nonprofit success.

Training

Nonprofit operational support comes from the employees they hire and the volunteers who offer their time to help develop and further the organization's mission. Both groups typically require some training on the organization's processes and procedures, overall goals, and the communities served. Tight budgets may cause nonprofits to decide

“ Only 11% of nonprofits report managing digital resources effectively – even though they recognize the power of technology.

– How Technology Can Help Nonprofits Prove Their Value To Donors, NetChange

against devoting resources to training – an understandable choice that can nevertheless hinder their reach and their ability to engage and retain generous support. According to the [Training Industry Report](#), companies spent an average of \$1,111 on L&D per learner in 2020. Nonprofits may feel the costs for training are prohibitive, but an investment in comprehensive learning and development (L&D) holds potential for future cost savings, higher efficiency, and long-term, continuous outcome improvement.

Community

Every year, major foundations and corporations direct billions of dollars to nonprofit causes, money earmarked for community transformation and improvement. In exchange for donations, nonprofit organizations must be transparent about how funds are spent and ensure compliance with regulations. Donors want to know their investments are put to good use. Consistent L&D and enhanced communication programs increase engagement in every sector, and this increased engagement is precisely what nonprofits need to secure funding and support their partners, affiliates, volunteers, and communities.

Stakeholder engagement is a continuous pursuit. Nonprofits always need new donors, more volunteers, and additional resources. LXP technology streamlines reporting and compliance procedures, allocates resources effectively, and increases donation opportunities. By using an LXP, nonprofits demonstrate operational efficacy and efficiency, increase their reach, and continuously improve their results.

Modern Changes

Most nonprofits recognize the power of technology in learning and engagement, but [according to a survey](#) conducted by [NetChange](#), only 11% report managing digital resources effectively, and 64% didn't believe they had the budget capacity to reach their engagement goals. Nonprofits could increase their ability to affect both internal and external audiences with access to the knowledge and resources they need to effectively leverage technology.

[The Training Industry](#) has identified the following [current training trends](#), which reflect the broadening role of L&D in every industry:

- Simplified, engaging training via LMS
- More self-directed, personal learning options via LXP
- Varied training methods using AI
- Determining effective L&D methods via data analytics

LMS / LXP – What’s the Difference?

To understand the advantages an LXP offers for nonprofits, it’s important to understand the primary differences between a traditional LMS and an LXP.

“ An LXP goes beyond training, testing, and recording to foster communication and community.

- An LMS is a software solution for delivering and meeting formal training and compliance requirements. This digital tool saves HR, L&D, and other training personnel significant time in onboarding, tracking progress, reporting, compliance, identifying learning gaps, and finally, delivering learning material. An LMS traditionally supports a one-way mode of employer-employee interaction, in which the organization delivers required content, and the learner accesses the platform to complete a training module and test for completion and / or retention. An LMS records all training information for easy compliance monitoring and regulatory reporting.

An LXP facilitates this same type of learning – and offers so much more. The learner experience ethos behind an LXP puts the learner in the driver’s seat without reducing administrative control. LXPs facilitate multi-participant communication between employers, employees, teams, and other authorized users within the organizational community. These enhanced learning platforms offer options for social interaction and gamified learning to drive learner engagement. An LXP goes beyond training, testing, and recording to foster communication – and community – among members of an organization and its ecosystem.

What to Look For

An effective learning platform must provide comprehensive learning management and incorporate a community space to boost engagement and add value for every stakeholder. Essential features include:

- **Branding and web design.** Look for an LXP capable of bringing your brand and voice to life – one which operates more like an internal website than an LMS.
- **Media options.** An LXP should deliver and track training, but should also offer a wide range of media options for rich, modern content, and a straightforward document management tool.
- **Communication tools.** Communication features can replace newsletters and emails, stand in for an internal blog, offer FAQ support, and provide a central location for important information.
- **Social features.** Look for social interaction features that encourage engagement in content and between learners. User contribution, recognition, social, and gamification features all support these goals.

An LXP solution offers nonprofits a range of business and community benefits that make the technology investment more than worth the initial cost. With the correct solution – one tailored to your organization’s specific needs – you can expect to:

- Save money on training staff, volunteers, and affiliates.
- Increase engagement with your donor community.
- Provide centralized, consistent organizational communication and updates.
- Track and report on compliance with training requirements.
- Give affiliate management visibility and community access.
- Build a cause-oriented community within a single platform.

Your technology investment should work as hard as you do. Look for a learning solution designed to help you turn your nonprofit organization into a thriving interactive community. Secure the hearts and minds of employees, volunteers, donors, and affiliates. They’re already motivated – help them get, and stay, connected.



Learn more at [wisetail.com](https://www.wisetail.com)

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