CONDUENT

An argument for outsourcing.

Increase readiness and sustain adoption with a strategic
technology product roll-out.

Adoption of new technology products is critical – both for companies who design, develop, implement, service, and sustain new products in the market, and for clients who procure, pilot, implement, sustain, and measure the success of those products.

For product companies, limited- or non-adoption of what they bring to market can mean death of a product, a product line, or in extreme cases, the company itself. Companies who implement new enterprise products are judged by the business improvements those products make, or conversely, the ineffectiveness or lack of adoption of those products, which ultimately costs an organization in time, resources, and money.

There are numerous macro-level issues related to product roll-out that amplify the importance of getting these critical initiatives right the first time. These issues can include:

• Rapid economic changes.

• Disruptive technologies.

• Technological convergence.

• Social and mobile technology surround.

• Crowd buying practices.

• Hyper- competitive environment.

• Complex products, which must align culturally, technologically, and in accordance with an organization's workflow.

Any one of the aforementioned factors could be enough to make a new product roll-out daunting. But the mashup of these current realities can create havoc if new technology products are acquired and introduced recklessly in a company. The destructive ripples of hasty implementation can have long-term consequences for both the client as well as the product company itself.

Product adoption is integral to — and a critical measure of — a technology product company's success. Adoption provides the following key benefits:

• More adoption means more license fees gained from clients; more license fees means greater annuity-based revenue, which drives value of a product company.

• Adoption validates the client's hypothesis for investing, which provides marketing cache and other benefits to the product company.

• Greater adoption is typically related to higher levels of use of a product's feature sets; greater use of features increases the propensity to continue use of current product and readily adopt next versions.

• Greater adoption increases efficacy of users, who in turn become market mavens and in effect, an extensible sales force that evangelizes to peers and potential new clients about the product.

• Adoption drives feedback (about features and technical issues) and is key to supporting the overall product management lifecycle.

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New technology product initiatives are some of the most strategic and critical initiatives an organization can undertake. The process of implementing an enterprise-wide technology through its many stages (from identification of need, to selection, procurement, implementation, integration, readiness, and adoption) can cost a company millions of dollars. This often requires out- of-cycle investment and approval at the most senior levels of an organization. New technology products can create significant change in a company's workflow, practices, processes, sales, and operations. Consider the following examples of high- impact technology implementations:

• A new handheld logistics optimization technology across a fleet of field service trucks for a large satellite television company.

• A new Client Relationship Management (CRM) application across a large hardware manufacturing company.

• A new order Point of Sale (POS) system inside a large Mobile Network Operation (MNO) direct and channel retail organizations.

• A new time tracking system inside a global company.

• A new healthcare technology for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).

• A new full body scanning system for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

• A new Learning Management System (LMS) in a Fortune 500™ company.

All the cases above highlight the significant company investment that must be made for a technology product roll-out to be successful: project teams established, financial models created, procurement teams created, and in most organizations, sponsorship attained at the CXO level.

In many cases, initiatives will be featured in annual reports as ways to drive revenue, gain efficiencies, or minimize costs. Understanding the critical and strategic nature of these types of roll-outs can create uneasiness for many stakeholders. Not exempt from the turmoil is the learning organization (or organization responsible for end-user training), which has ultimate responsibility for successful new technology product readiness. Their angst is understandable: successful roll-out and adoption is the difference between fulfilling the promise of a compelling business case for investment and failing to deliver expected returns. In situations where a new product initiative is so strategic and critical, many organizations may ask: "Why would we ever outsource training to support

something so important to our company?" or "How can anyone who isn't in our company train people who are?" There are multiple thought-provoking responses to these questions:

- If the company has no business unit dedicated to new technology product roll-out, training, and associated change management, decision makers should consider getting outsourcing support. There is a core set of competencies and skills associated with new technology product training and facilitation; if your organization doesn't do this as part of its core and critical business initiatives on a regular basis, it is prudent to consider selective outsourcing. Is it wise to put the return of your company's investment in an expensive new technology product at risk by trying to lead a critical activity for the first time?

- Outsourcing support can provide the requisite scale in an organization that is seeking to implement new product roll-out training against an aggressive timeline, without having to over-hire for peak demands, or manage a variable contract workforce. Have you considered the amount of investment required to prepare trainers, or the amount of cost involved with having full-time employees on staff hired for a specific new technology product initiative that gets delayed?

- Outsourcing enables the core internal training team to focus on owning the strategy for implementation, ensuring training is implemented appropriately. Who will drive the overall strategic vision for the training implementation if all of the internal staff is busy delivering tactical training to the field?

- Outsourcing ensures the core learning activities of an organization continue to happen. If all a company's internal resources are focused on a new technology product roll-out, who will provide training and support on legacy continuous training programs, such as onboarding, management, leadership, sales, technical, and compliance?

- Outsourcing to the companies that develop the new products can also be perilous. Often these companies have deep expertise in software or product development— and perhaps professional services related to product configuration and implementation— but little or no expertise in change management or translating product features to a targeted, relevant learning experience that takes into account the specific needs of various learner types. Has your proposed new technology product training content been vetted by learning professionals to ensure it will provide maximum opportunities for learning transfer and success?

The bottom line is: a marriage between a solid learning organization and a new product company's Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) often will result in a technologically-sound offering with the highest probability of resonance and knowledge transfer to the end user.

Leveraging a strategic approach during the implementation of new product training is critical to its ultimate adoption and success in an organization. Some best practices in this process include:

Best Practice	Reason
Ensure new technology product roll-out addresses a critical business initiative of the company	Any initiative not aligned with a company's critical business initiative(s) and executive sponsorship is destined for failure.
Involve the learning organization early in the planning process	Training for new technology product roll-outs is often an afterthought. For most success, it is best to integrate the learning function into the roll-out as far upstream in the process as possible.
Think beyond initial roll-out training	While initial training is important, don't forget how to sustain what your end users learn. Also, remember that end users need different levels of skill and knowledge with a new technology at different times. For example, someone who has never used Microsoft Excel doesn't typically learn how to create pivot tables the first day.
Consider multiple modalities and access points for learning	Everyone learns and accesses information differently. Training has the best chance to succeed when it engages learners with different learning styles as well as different learning modalities, e.g., classroom, eLearning, on-the-job training, etc.
Assess rhythm of business, new product launch dates, end-user efficacy, and other factors to create the best overarching readiness plan	Timing can make a big difference. For example, if you are implementing a new Order Management System in a company, it is probably best not to do the training at the end of a month or quarter or during a new major marketing campaign.

New product roll-out initiatives can be stressful for all parties involved: the client, the supplier, and the intended end users. The process doesn't have to be stressful, though, if an overarching strategy for training is developed well in advance of the actual roll-out. At Learning Services, we believe that selective outsourcing of new product roll-out training will provide the necessary scale and help ensure the appropriate instructional soundness of learning that gets delivered. This will maximize adoption, shrink time-to-competence of the end users and provide a win- win situation for both clients and new technology product companies.

A Sample New Product Roll-Out Training Plan:

Make Adjustments to Training as Required	Identify Success Factors for New Product Rollout Training	Determine New Product Rollout Outsourcing Strategy
Measure Effectiveness		Create New Product Rollout Readiness Team
Implement New Product Training (IAW Schedule)	Develop Training Schedule · Build or Modify New Product Training (by Role)	Select Outsourcing Partner

About the Author

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