

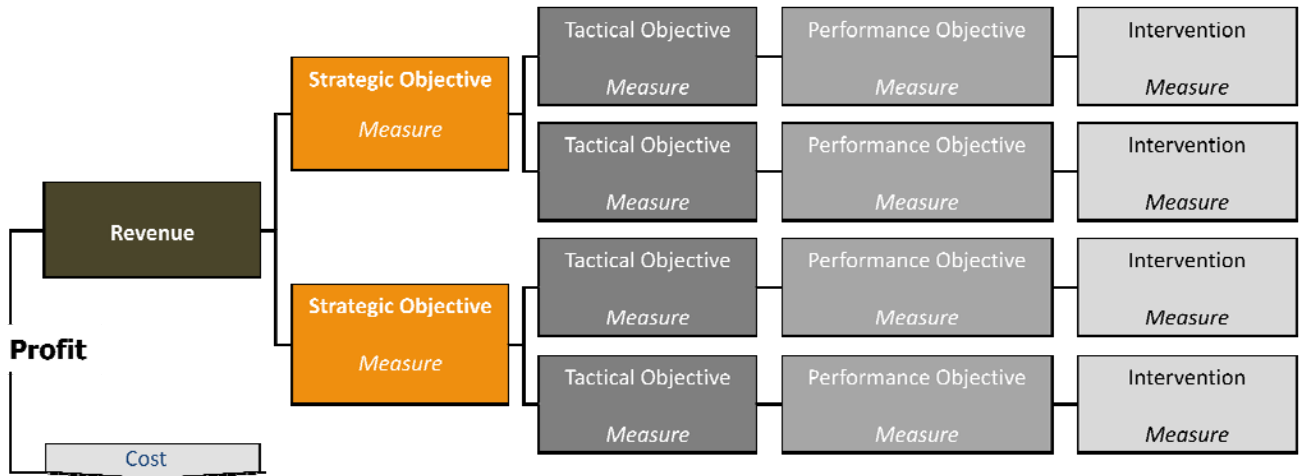
Six Steps to a TEIL* Strategy



*Technology-Enabled Informal Learning

1. Measure and Learn

Begin with the end in mind. Understand and articulate the business challenge you face, and develop a hypothesis that describes how a learning plan (including informal components) would improve business performance. Demonstrate the connection between your proposed learning program and business impact. We recommend creating a measurement map that links learning and performance objectives to business outcomes, and identifies specific associated metrics. Following is an example:



2. Assess Readiness

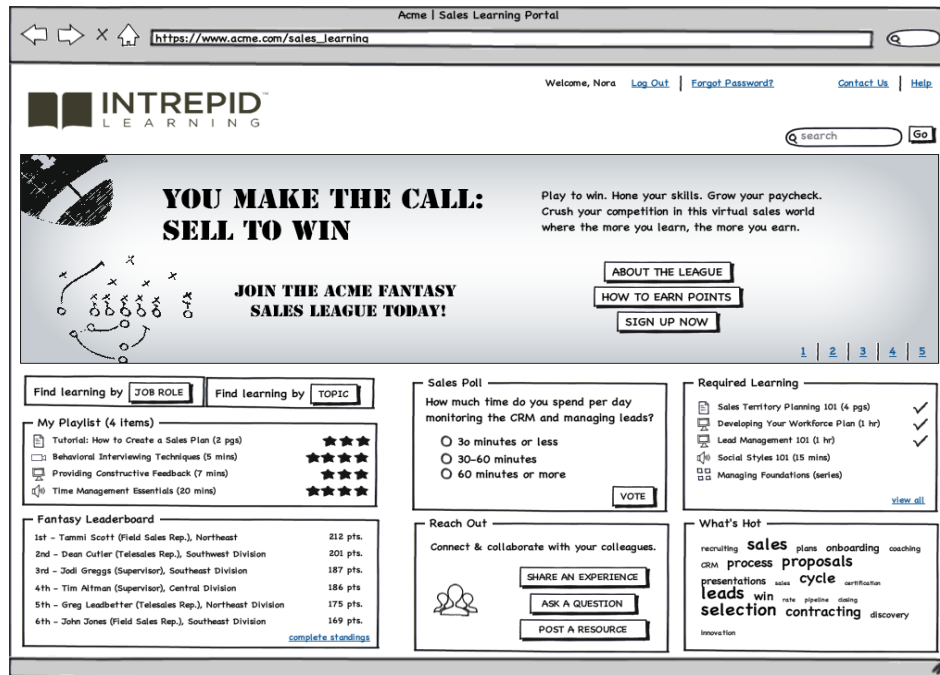
Evaluate your organization and team’s readiness to support and adopt informal learning solutions. We recommend evaluating readiness in four areas—demand, culture, capability and support, and technology. We also recommend defining objective criteria to conduct your evaluation. This will help to quantify, validate and substantiate your assessment beyond a “gut check,” and provide actionable data to drive discussion within your organization regarding strengths and gaps related to TEIL readiness. Following are some of the questions you may wish to consider to assess readiness, and a sample rubric you might deploy:

- a) **Demand.** Does organic demand exist for informal learning solutions? Are you “pushing” the idea or responding to clear requests for solutions from your colleagues? To what extent is your population geographically diverse, with expertise distributed? Is there a heavy reliance on tacit knowledge, and do you project a big impact from an aging workforce?
- b) **Culture.** Does your culture promote collaboration and information sharing, or the opposite? Does your culture support experimentation and piloting new, unproven ideas? Is your organization part of a regulated industry—if so, does this have an impact on information sharing? Are mobile devices commonly used as productivity tools (tablets, smartphones, etc.)? Is the use of common social networking sites encouraged for business purposes (e.g., Twitter, Yammer, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)?
- c) **Capability and Support.** Do executives understand and support the value proposition of informal learning leveraging technology? Do you have the TEIL expertise in your organization necessary to design solutions? Is there enthusiasm or resistance on your team for TEIL solutions—are they considered an exciting opportunity or a threat to the status quo? Do you have budget allocated or available to fund analysis, design, development and technology for a TEIL solution? How might you measure the impact of a TEIL solution?
- d) **Technology.** Has your organization invested in informal learning or collaborative technologies? Do your learners have access to mobile devices—which ones? What is your organization’s position regarding security – heavily regulated vs. relatively open? Is your organization an early adopter of new technologies?

Culture: Is informal learning a fit for your organization?		
Operational culture of your organization (command – consensus-driven)?		1
Amount of regulation your organization's workplace? (significant – minimal)		2
Placement on the technology adoption curve? (laggard – early adopter)		2
Are people using mobile devices (phones and tablets) to support their work?		1
Target organization's attitude toward consumer-oriented social networking? (discourages – encourages)		2
	Score	1.6

3. Support Workflow

Observe and speak with your learners. What is a day in their life like? How could an informal learning offering fit into their processes? What type of information are they looking for? We recommend building a persona for the learner and wireframes to rapidly prototype solutions. Consider guiding principles such as relevance, ease of use, ease of access (RSS, games, pull, etc.), and content freshness when prototyping your solution. We recommend validating draft interface designs through usability studies with your learner population. Following is a wireframe screenshot for a TEIL portal solution:



4. Select Appropriate Technology

A really cool iPhone app won't help much if your learners aren't permitted to use iPhones! Based upon the learner workflow, a PDF job-aid at the point of need or a quick "how-to" video may be just as effective as an immersive simulation or eLearning module with high production value. Does your culture support social learning, based upon the observations above? Today's sales teams often interact with five or more systems to learn about products and find the information they need? Can you collapse or integrate these down to three, or two, or one? Also, validate the performance and security of the system. Can it support your global workforce? Waiting five seconds for a page to load is too long.

5. Deliver Relevant Content

The best technology will fail if the valuable stuff—the content—isn't there. Based upon the business problem you are facing and what the user is looking for, can they find the information quickly in small, actionable chunks? And if they can't find it, do you have processes in place to respond to their queries and questions? Do you have the team in place to update the materials as business needs change?

6. Leverage Best Practices

Weight the content that works. Look back on your measurement map, and reflect on the analytics you have gathered. Was your hypothesis correct? How are your learners consuming and rating the materials? Looking at your star performers, what content are they using? Can you create a best practice package of these materials? Continue to amplify formats and content categories that are getting the most use. Archive materials that are no longer relevant.

Call to Action!

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