elb LEARNING

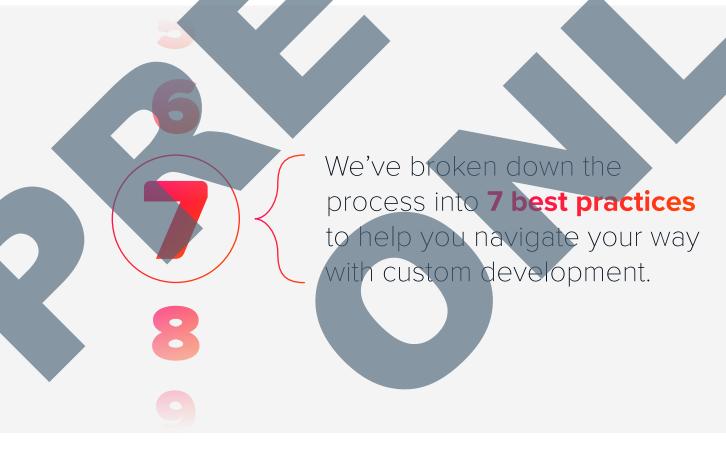# 7 BEST PRACTICES

to Ensure Success When Outsourcing Custom Course Development

Building a learning program is a complex puzzle.

The cornerstones of agile instructional design, learning solutions, learning strategy, and modern technologies join forces to engage learners and provide a learning experience. Both transforming behavior through training and creating a positive learning culture are achieved when all these pieces fall into place.

Do you lack technical skills to create the perfect courses for your learners? Have you run out of bandwidth? Or are you a compact team? Then custom development may be the path for you. The big question? How can you ensure success with your "puzzle"—custom learning content?

We've broken down the process into **7 best practices** to help you navigate your way with custom development.

1 Uncover Your Learning Objectives, Goals, & Success Criteria

It all starts with the big picture—the business goals to meet, the objectives to achieve, and establishing a robust learning design for the cause. A **Needs Analysis** is a fundamental prerequisite to designing any learning program and must involve the following steps:

a. Identify Business Needs
Critical for this step is asking the right people the right questions. Is the C-suite looking to address skill gaps or provide performance support solutions? Improve sales and revenue while building relationships with customers? What does the organization aspire to achieve? The objective of this exercise stands as a cornerstone during the design stage and helps assess and evaluate the success of the training program. Specifically, this is a benchmark for determining to what extent the desired learning outcomes have been achieved.

b. Understand the Gap
Once the business needs and objectives are identified, understand the gap between the knowledge and skills needed to achieve the objective and the general knowledge and skill levels of the workforce. The gaps identified are the areas to be addressed through effective training and development. For example, the manufacturing industry has identified gaps in critical thinking, muscle memory and digital skills among the workforce, with the advancement of technologies and automation.

c. Define Decisive Training Goals
With the first two steps in order, make key decisions at this stage that will assist in achieving the goals. Construct a design strategy to formulate the flow of the course, and the standardization of the training program. Do you want to collaborate with SMEs for their technical prowess and create accurate and sound learning content? Decide on the extent of their collaboration.

For instance, for a custom solution project aimed at improving customer relationships, ELB Learning would partner with distinguished SMEs, i.e. Bronze to Gold medal holders of sales championship programs, who bring their unique expertise, analytical insights, and add greater value to the custom solution.

Additionally, evaluate key aspects such as time frame and frequency of training, and training methodology - traditional classroom training, eLearning, or a blend of both. And do you have a training budget in place?

d. Factor Learner Needs & Competencies
Understand your demographic by identifying what motivates your learners and recognizing their readiness to undergo training. Further, assess learners' preferred learning style and techniques, and how they learn and retain best. Psychological elements and socio-cultural aspects too can have a significant impact on the success of the training program. For example, if your learners are millennials, they may be comfortable with the concept of pinning content to a board, similar to Pinterest.

Most recently, ELB Learning provided custom training solutions to young leaders of an international fraternity. Considering the demographic, ELB deployed **custom illustrations** to replicate video game avatars in its value-based training modules aimed at understanding realistic scenarios, policies and forging healthy relationships in the fraternity. This solution paved the way to higher pledge retention rates and increased involvement among members while providing a "lit" experience.

e. Plan for Assessments to Measure Success
A pre-assessment and post-assessment strategy will help determine the extent of success with learning outcomes and learning objectives. This will serve as an indication of knowledge accumulated after instruction. Use this data to further invest in effective learning solutions for the workforce.

At ELB Learning, we drive the learning design stage towards strategic excellence. Armed with a thorough needs analysis, the custom solutions architect will lay out the proposed course so that the client can witness the overall experience. This is achieved through a systematic process of **visual storyboarding and scripting** to solve your training challenges. It is a snapshot that details the optimal solution with the course content, recommended learning strategies, instructional concepts, and activities; meticulously connected to the learning outcomes. We constantly engage and review with our clients before transitioning to the phase of course development.