

# D2L

## How Associations Can Use Learning to Drive Engagement



# Your Mission Is at the Heart of It All



Your association must keep its members engaged to grow and thrive in the long term—something that's getting tougher with changing demographics and rising competition. Scaling program delivery or expanding your offerings holds promise, but it can also introduce new complexities that put strain on already stretched staff.

You need smart strategies and scalable tools that remove friction. Learning programs can be a powerful way to boost engagement and deliver value efficiently and effectively.



# The Role Learning Can Play

For associations, learning can serve two important functions:

1. **Fostering deeper connections** between your association and its members
2. **Opening up new potential sources of income** to help your association diversify how, where and when it generates revenue

Your association might already deliver education, whether through on-demand webinars, via bespoke in-person sessions or during your annual conference. Taking learning online doesn't have to replace any of the activities you're currently doing, but it can be a fantastic way to augment them and strengthen engagement with your membership.

Leaning into online learning can also be a great way to expand your reach to new audiences—supporting long-term resilience, sustainability and growth. It's an investment in your association's future that helps it deliver on its mission to support the stakeholders it serves.

It comes down to what your association can do to amplify its impact. Learning isn't the only tool you have in your toolbelt, but when used strategically, it's an important one.



THE BRITISH SOCIETY OF LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

# Engaging International Audiences Through Learning

Andrew Howie, chief finance and commercial officer with the British Society of Lifestyle Medicine (BSLM), shares how the organization is using learning to broaden its reach—even for learners who might be in a different part of the world.

“Our Learning Academy is the main driver of growth within the business,” says Andrew.

Income from education now represents over 50% of turnover, and BSLM has doubled its revenues over the past three years. Since January 2023, the association has provided education to over 2,500 individuals and has delivered 70,000 hours of high-quality online learning to people in over 25 countries.

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# What Does Effective Learning Look Like?

## 1. FLEXIBLE

Members learn best when programs are tailored to them, but homing in on what they're looking for isn't always easy. According to [MGI's 2025 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report](#), grappling with diverse membership needs was the biggest stumbling block that got in the way of associations offering a more compelling value proposition to their members.

When thinking about how you can craft high-quality online learning experiences that deliver the value members are looking for, you should:

- **Consider the specific learning needs your members have.** Are there conditions such as age, location or socioeconomic status that might impact what technology your members can access and where they can use it? Ensuring functionality across multiple devices allows them to learn wherever, whenever.
- **Determine whether there are opportunities to tailor material toward different audiences based on their needs.** For example, how comfortable are your different members with using new platforms and tools? Are some typically eager to jump in the deep end, while others need to take it slower to get used to the water? Wherever your members fall on the continuum, think about ways you can ease and personalize their journeys. You could include helpful tips at important milestones or give them several ways to engage with content. You could take a nod from competency-based systems too, setting up courses so they can move through them at their own pace.
- **Understand what's driving members to pursue learning through your association.** Is it something they have to do as a requirement for their current roles, are they looking to change jobs or start a new one, or are they simply interested in the topic? Understanding this will give you important insights into what timelines learners might be working toward (whether fixed or fluid) and where their motivation is coming from (whether internal or external), which can inform how you build your programs.



## Helping Public Safety Officials Get Ahead by Reducing Certification Time

The International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA) is a membership organization of 22 local sections that provides certification programs across a wide range of disciplines. The programs are prerequisites for working with the Department of Transportation and must be renewed by public safety professionals every three years.

“To me, our old process was alarming, because we’re in the Amazon world now and everybody expects Amazon-speed delivery. It’s not just inconvenient; it affects people’s lives. In many public agencies, your job classification and your pay are based on your certification. So, if you were due to move up and you can’t get the certification in time, you’re delaying your career progression,” said Toby Cummings, executive director at IMSA.

Adopting a learning management system to provide a platform for delivering training and exams, and that would integrate with its existing association management system, has created a much more streamlined process that will remove barriers to career progression. IMSA members will be able to apply for new jobs or promotions with full confidence that they will have the opportunity to gain the certifications they need, as and when they need them.

[Learn more](#)

# Effective Learning Is Also:

## 2. RELEVANT

It's easy to slip into the mindset that being entertained and being engaged are the same. But that's not the case.

In our competition-driven world, your learning programs are up against not only the offerings from other organizations in your space but also distractions like streaming providers and social media. That might make it tempting to present your work—learning included—as entertainment.

However, focusing on getting attention won't build genuine connections with members. To set your association apart, you need to focus on delivering real value in relevant, captivating ways. Think about how you can:

- **Tailor course content and structure to reflect the need.** This comes down to understanding what the course is aiming to achieve and what learners are looking to get out of it. For example, if you're dealing with hands-on concepts that people will immediately apply in their personal lives or at work, give them chances to practice through in-module knowledge checks, role-play scenarios, virtual simulations and more.
- **Create opportunities that foster connections.** Learning programs can help members connect with your association—giving them compelling reasons to stay actively involved and keeping them up to date with the work you're doing. They can also allow members to get to know each other, nurturing community and togetherness.
- **Listen to what your members are looking for.** Whether launching a brand-new program or iterating an existing one, learning should reflect learners' real-world needs. Your members rely on your association to deliver experiences that meet that mark.



## Keeping Information Security Professionals on the Cutting Edge

(ISC)2 aims to ensure its 150,000 members in 175 countries stay on top of the latest cybersecurity developments. To deliver greater value to its members and to help them stay ahead of evolving threats, (ISC)2 launched its Professional Development Institute (PDI), which offers courses to educate members about the newest developments in the field.

“We had to rapidly develop a really meaningful portfolio that would resonate with our membership, we had to communicate the value to our members, and we had to get everything up and running on a pretty aggressive schedule,” said Mirtha Collin, director of education for (ISC)2.

“We’re refining our building process and continuing to expand our catalog, with a goal of reaching 40 to 50 courses that we can continuously refresh to keep providing the best possible value for our members. Our relationship with D2L is going to be key to making that happen,” Collin continued.

The impacts of the changes were clear. Within the first year, the number of members who enrolled in at least one course doubled. Plus, of those who enrolled, the completion rate nearly quadrupled. Satisfaction scores were also significantly improved—ranging from 92% to 99%.

[Learn more](#)



# Effective Learning Is Also:

## 3. LASTING

Because you lead an association that's dedicated to helping members, education could become your most impactful strategy. By providing learning opportunities, you unlock a world of possibilities for those eager to learn.

When you're thinking about offering or expanding educational programs, there's one question you need to ask: **How do you want the learning you provide to impact people's lives?**

It could be by supporting members through a challenging period by providing mentorship and coaching. It could be by helping them take the next step in their professional journeys by giving them access to training or accreditations they wouldn't be able to access otherwise. It could be by equipping them with skills that help them help others within their communities.

What "impact" looks like to you will uniquely reflect your association's work and your members' needs. What matters is that it leads to lasting change for everyone.



## Creating a Gold Standard for Marketing Excellence

The Canadian Marketing Association (CMA) launched the Chartered Marketer (CM) designation—a first-of-its-kind program—to provide learners with a deeper knowledge of emerging trends and help them thrive in their careers.

“Marketing was practically the only profession in Canada without a formal designation, leaving practitioners without a clear way to show potential employers their skills and experience. Marketers also lacked a means of staying up to date with industry developments, such as the ethical challenges created by new technologies,” said Gabriele Janes, senior advisor, learning at the CMA.

“Initially, we weren’t sure whether it was even possible for us to offer a program covering the full spectrum of modern marketing—but that’s what we’ve achieved. With help from D2L, we have developed a comprehensive designation program that helps learners become well-rounded, innovative professionals. Today, we believe CM designation will become the gold standard for marketing excellence in Canada and a must-have for aspiring CMOs,” said Stephen Ghigliotti, associate vice president, curriculum development at the CMA.

[Learn more](#)



# Effective Learning Is Also:

## 4. AMPLIFYING

For associations, one key to amplifying impact lies in leveraging technology and innovative strategies to extend reach and empower more individuals. By doing so, you not only fulfill your mission but also create a network of excited, motivated members who can further spread your message.

By offering online learning programs, your association can maximize its mission's reach and inspire more people. Make sure that you:

- **Find solutions that will scale with you as you grow.** The right solution could allow you to expand your geographic reach and appeal to new groups of members. Ultimately, it comes down to one simple idea: The technologies your association uses need to propel you forward, not hold you back.
- **Look for opportunities to lean into what you already have.** Between members who might be subject matter experts in their fields and the content you've worked hard to create over the years, your association might already have a library of expertise it can tap into.
- **Don't be afraid to experiment and try new things.** Integrated e-commerce, for example, can make it easier for members to browse and register for the educational programs you have on offer. It can also give your association valuable insights into how different programs perform. What courses consistently attract the most attention? Which ones could benefit from an update, and which might need to be sunsetted? Are there any topics members are interested in that they're not seeing content for?
- **Keep your mission at the center.** You do important work that has real, transformative impacts on people's lives. All the initiatives you undertake—learning programs included—need to support, serve and advance your mission.



## Reaching Learners Around the World With a Digital Platform

The Irish Deaf Society (IDS) is a unique provider of education in Ireland, representing and serving the interests of the Deaf community. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it delivered all of its education in person, which restricted its ability to reach the full Deaf community. It swiftly transitioned online through online conferencing services, but realized the limitations of that approach and began looking for a solution that could deliver a more well-rounded experience.

In 2022, IDS launched its digital learning experience to widen its geographical reach, enable out-of-class learning and deliver a user-friendly visual learning experience.

“We have moved beyond the walls of Dublin,” says Paul Grundy, digital education officer with IDS. “We’ve had learners in Australia, Spain, the US, the UK and Canada.”

[Learn more](#)



# Finding a Partner to Help Make Learning a Membership Magnet

Maybe you're interested in providing learning programs but don't know where to start. Or perhaps your association's already delivering educational offerings and wants to expand its reach. In both cases, working with a learning partner can provide the guidance your association needs.

A learning partner brings expertise to the table, helping you develop a learning strategy tailored to your association's unique goals. The right partner offers technical support for online delivery that goes beyond just "fixing things"—it focuses on continuous improvement. Most importantly, the right learning partner supports your association's mission to have meaningful impacts on the members and industries you serve.

## Elevate Your Mission

At D2L, we've been serving associations as a learning partner for over 25 years. Our learning strategists and consultants have the expertise to help you create experiences for members that are customized to their varying needs, effective in cultivating meaningful connections, designed to drive lasting impact and amplified in reach.

## Your Catalyst for Growth

Partner with a team that's as dedicated to your association's mission as you are—from expert support with implementation to the optimization of D2L Brightspace itself.

**LET'S GET STARTED**

### ATTRACT AND RETAIN MEMBERS

Offer members a personalized hub of centralized content, communications and resources. Gamify interactions, reward achievements and enable member-driven capabilities to track progress towards learning goals, all in one place.

### CREATE ENGAGING CONTENT FASTER

With built-in course authoring tools, content creation is a breeze. Deliver blended, live or self-paced learning programs and connect members through communities of practice that engage them throughout their professional journeys.

### SAVE TIME AND EFFORT


Streamline how you deliver programs with scalable, adaptive learning that meets the needs of members while optimizing your workflows. Stay on top of member trends with real-time data and visualizations.




## ABOUT D2L


D2L is a global learning innovation company, reshaping the future of education and work. We're leading the way into a new era of personalized learning, driven by the belief that everyone deserves access to high-quality education, regardless of their age, ability or location. Our signature technology product, D2L Brightspace, enhances the learning experience for millions of learners at every stage of life, from the earliest days of school to the working world. Learn more at [D2L.com](https://D2L.com).

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