

# How to...

## Manage an e-learning project



Effective project management is often the deciding factor when it comes to e-learning project success. Here are our top ten tips for making sure that you always deliver!

### 1 **Have a formal project kick off**

Before you start the project, make sure you understand the learning objectives, the client's expectations, the timelines and the risks. Also make sure that the client understands the approach that you are going to take.

### 2 **Start with the end in mind**

Define the end goal and end date first and then plan backwards from this point. If you have to deliver a working course by 20 March, when do you need the pilot? If the pilot is needed by 12 February, when do you need the first build?

### 3 **Keep it simple**

Your instinct may be to use a Microsoft project plan – resist this at all costs. Create a simple table of deliverables and feedback dates – something that is easy to maintain and easy to understand.

### 4 **Take an 'it's either done or it's not done' approach**

Track your project using milestones – tangible deliverables which are either done or not done. Avoid using percentage complete. Ask yourself what 80% complete means, when the other 20% will be done and how much effort it will take.

### 5 **Manage risks**

The key to risk management is to ask: what could go (horribly) wrong? Once you have a list, don't leave it in your desk draw. Actively manage it and try to mitigate the risk.

### 6 **Communicate, communicate, communicate!**

The biggest reason for project failure is lack of communication. Often people on projects just don't talk enough, becoming overly reliant on emails, plans and reports. As a minimum, arrange weekly team conference calls or meetings.

### 7 **Manage the subject matter experts**

Subject matter experts, who are balancing their role with their day jobs, can cause delays to your project and need to be managed. Communicate the process to them and make your expectations clear. Put your project dates in their diaries.

### 8 **Don't forget prototypes and pilots**

Your stakeholders will really understand what you are proposing when they see it. This is a good thing and helps to narrow requirements. Therefore you should build prototypes and you should always have a pilot.

### 9 **Don't be shackled by the plan**

Project management is a people business. Don't spend all your time updating the plan and documenting the process. Spend your time working with your team, understanding their issues and managing the risks.

### 10 **Watch your optimism**

It's natural to be optimistic and to believe that everything will go right. Try to keep a lid on this and keep asking yourself, what could go horribly wrong and how will I manage the situation if this happens?