Focus on
INTEGRATION
Connecting Learning to the Right Systems
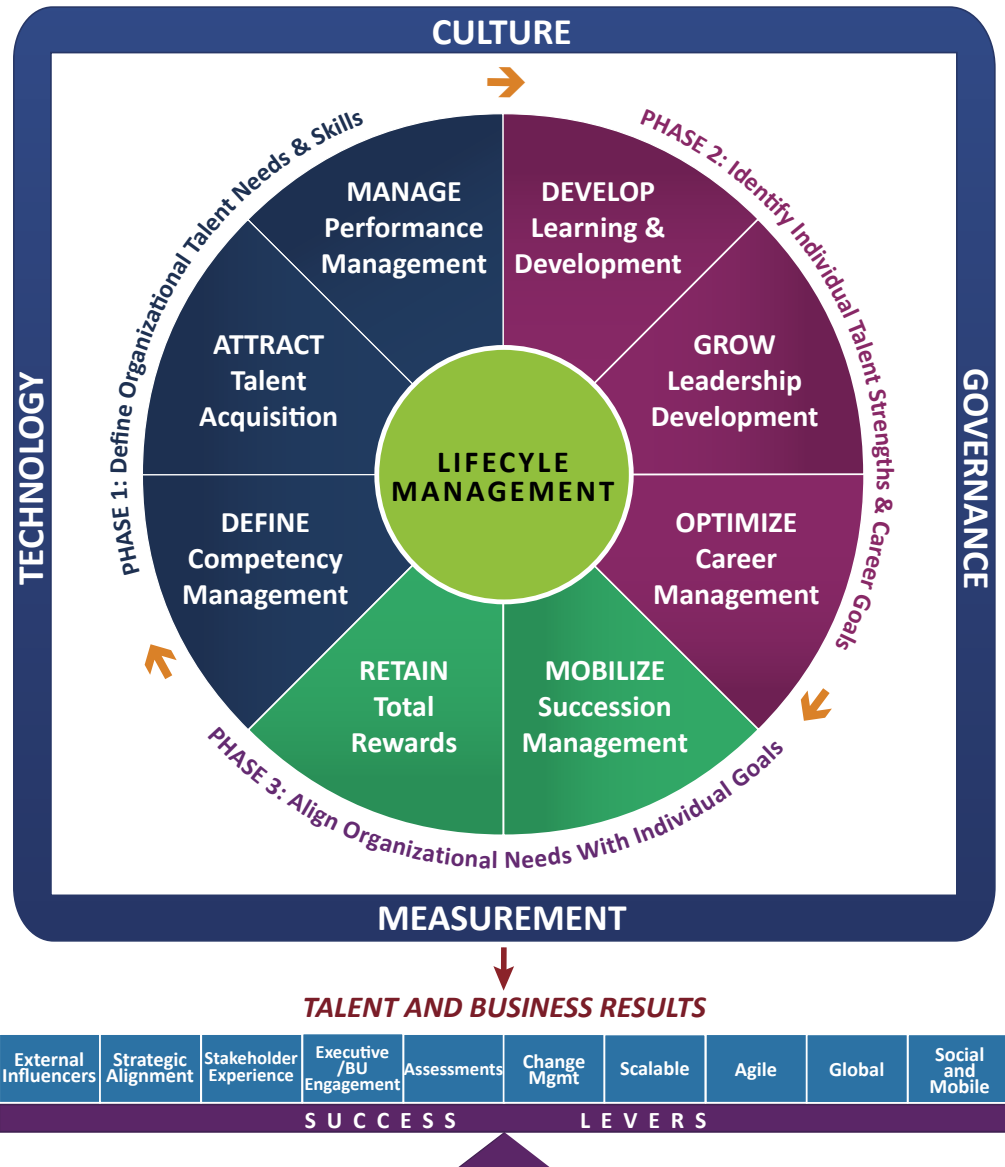
2017

Table of Contents

Integration Models

There are many different models and frameworks focused on talent management, but the common thread through all of them is that each talent process is inherently connected to the others, and not just via technology. These connections exist regardless, and technology is the tool to facilitate them.

Brandon Hall Group's own Talent Management Framework (next page) perfectly illustrates the depth of these connections. The items within the wheel do not simply occur sequentially, but rather feed into one another to create a talent lifecycle ecosystem.
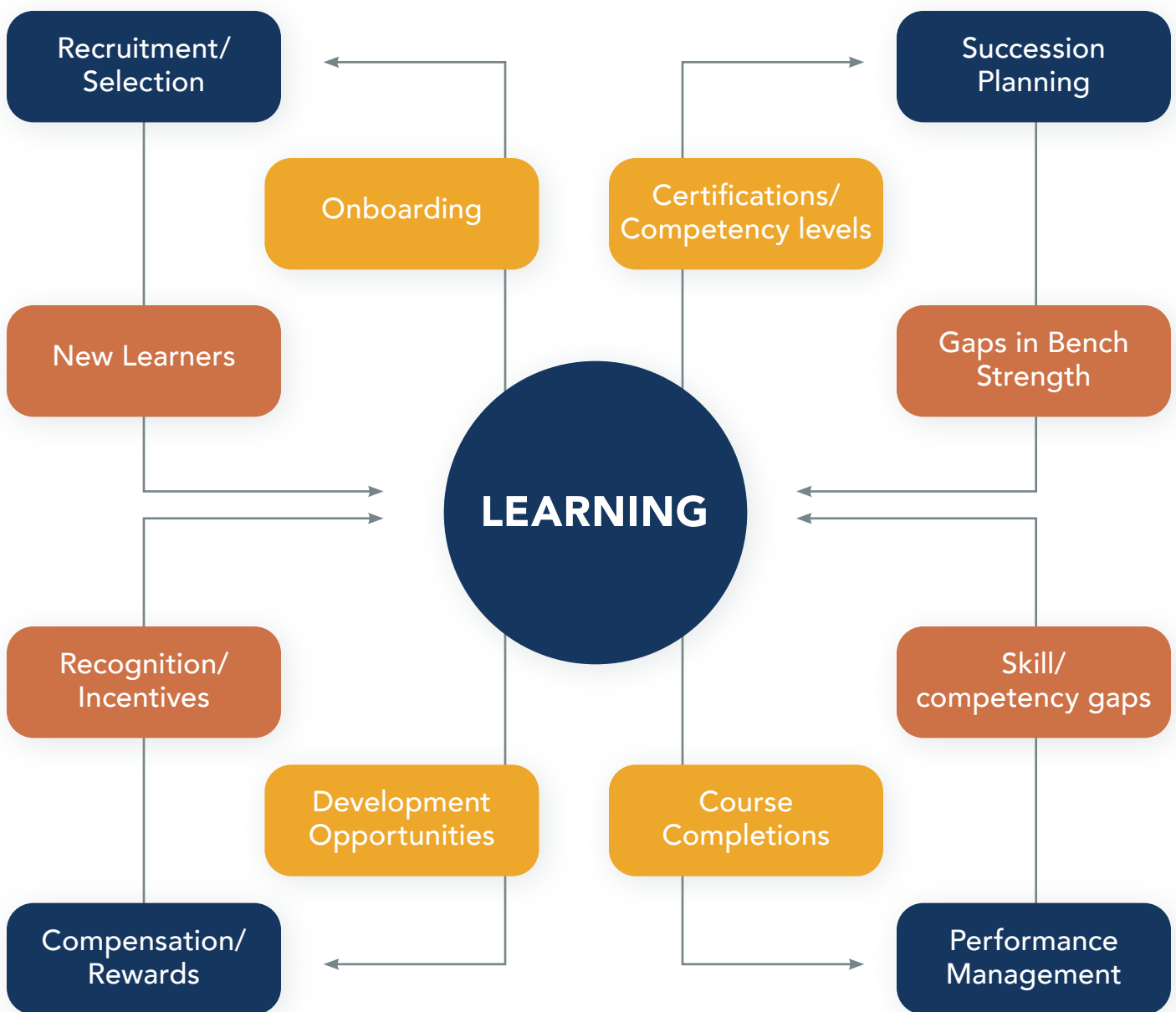
TALENT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Source: Brandon Hall Group

CULTURE

PHASE 1: Define Organizational Talent Needs & Skills

PHASE 2: Identify Individual Talent Strengths & Career Goals

TECHNOLOGY

GOVERNANCE

MANAGE Performance Management

DEVELOP Learning & Development

ATTRACT Talent Acquisition

GROW Leadership Development

LIFECYLE MANAGEMENT

DEFINE Competency Management

OPTIMIZE Career Management

RETAIN Total Rewards

MOBILIZE Succession Management

PHASE 3: Align Organizational Needs With Individual Goals

MEASUREMENT

TALENT AND BUSINESS RESULTS

External Influencers	Strategic Alignment	Stakeholder Experience	Executive /BU Engagement	Assessments	Change Mgmt	Scalable	Agile	Global	Social and Mobile

S U C C E S S   L E V E R S
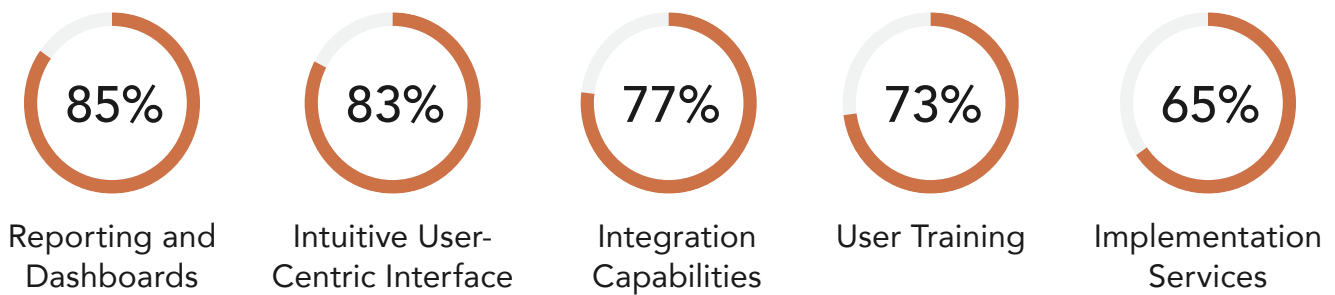
Learning at the Center

Using learning as an example, we can see just how the connections with other processes exist in both directions. For example, the records within an LMS can show which employees have reached certain certification or competency levels, which informs the succession planning process by identifying employee readiness levels. In turn, gaps in bench strength that are identified via the succession management process can be addressed with targeted learning initiatives to bring employees up to skill level.

Recruitment/ Selection

Succession Planning

Onboarding

Certifications/ Competency levels

New Learners

Gaps in Bench Strength

LEARNING

Recognition/ Incentives

Skill/ competency gaps

Development Opportunities

Course Completions

Compensation/ Rewards

Performance Management

Importance of Integration

Integration is important enough to organizations that it is one of the top three services they want from their learning technology providers. It is seen as more critical than even implementation or user training. Companies are looking for providers with experience and expertise in integrating with enterprise systems.
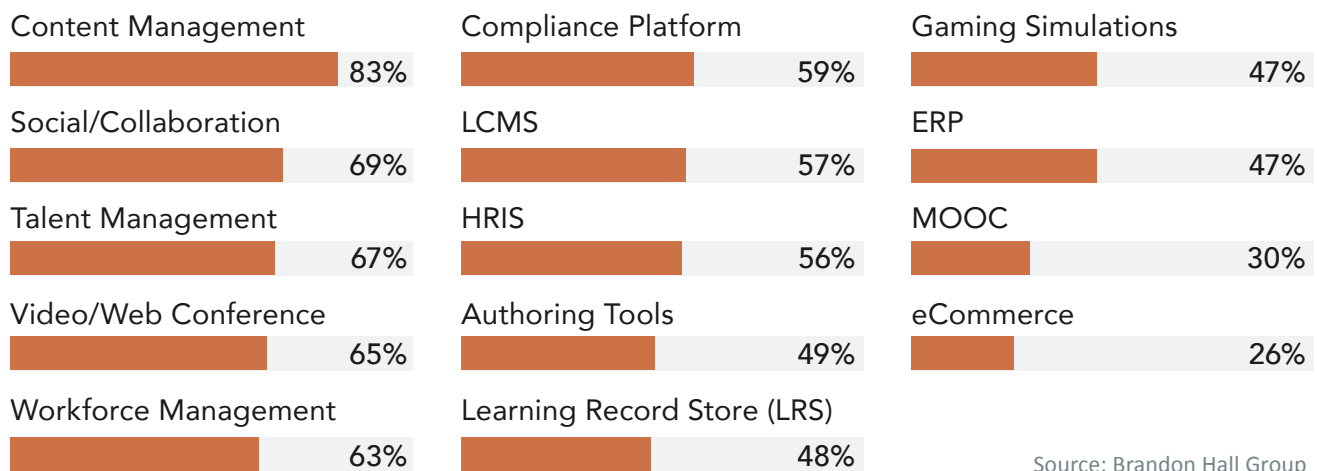
Critical/Essential Provider Services

85%	83%	77%	73%	65%
Reporting and Dashboards	Intuitive User-Centric Interface	Integration Capabilities	User Training	Implementation Services

Source: Brandon Hall Group

Companies want their learning technology to connect with a multitude of systems – from other learning technologies (LCMS, Authoring tools) to enterprise systems (HRIS, ERP)

Critical/Essential Provider Services

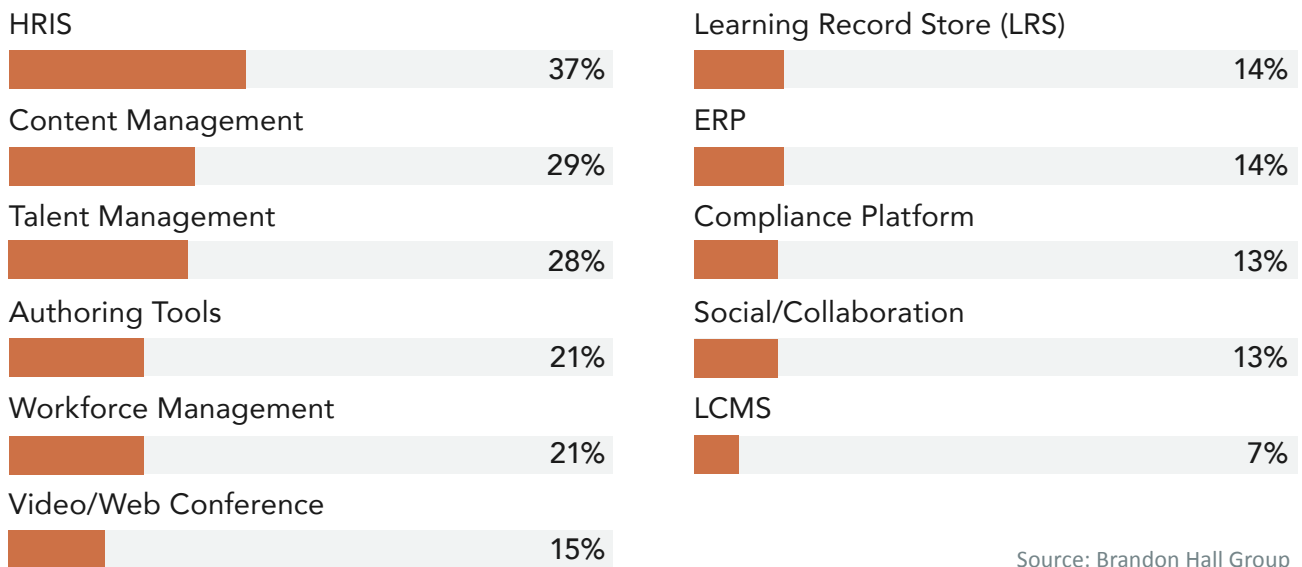| Content Management	83%	Compliance Platform	59%	Gaming Simulations	47%
Social/Collaboration	69%	LCMS	57%	ERP	47%
Talent Management	67%	HRIS	56%	MOOC	30%
Video/Web Conference	65%	Authoring Tools	49%	eCommerce	26%
Workforce Management	63%	Learning Record Store (LRS)	48%		

Source: Brandon Hall Group

Current Levels of Integration

Despite being seen as important or even critical by many organizations, in actuality there is not a lot of integration actually occurring. The platform most commonly integrated with the LMS is the Human Resource Information System, and only 37% of companies say this integration exists.

Most Important Systems to Integrate with LMS

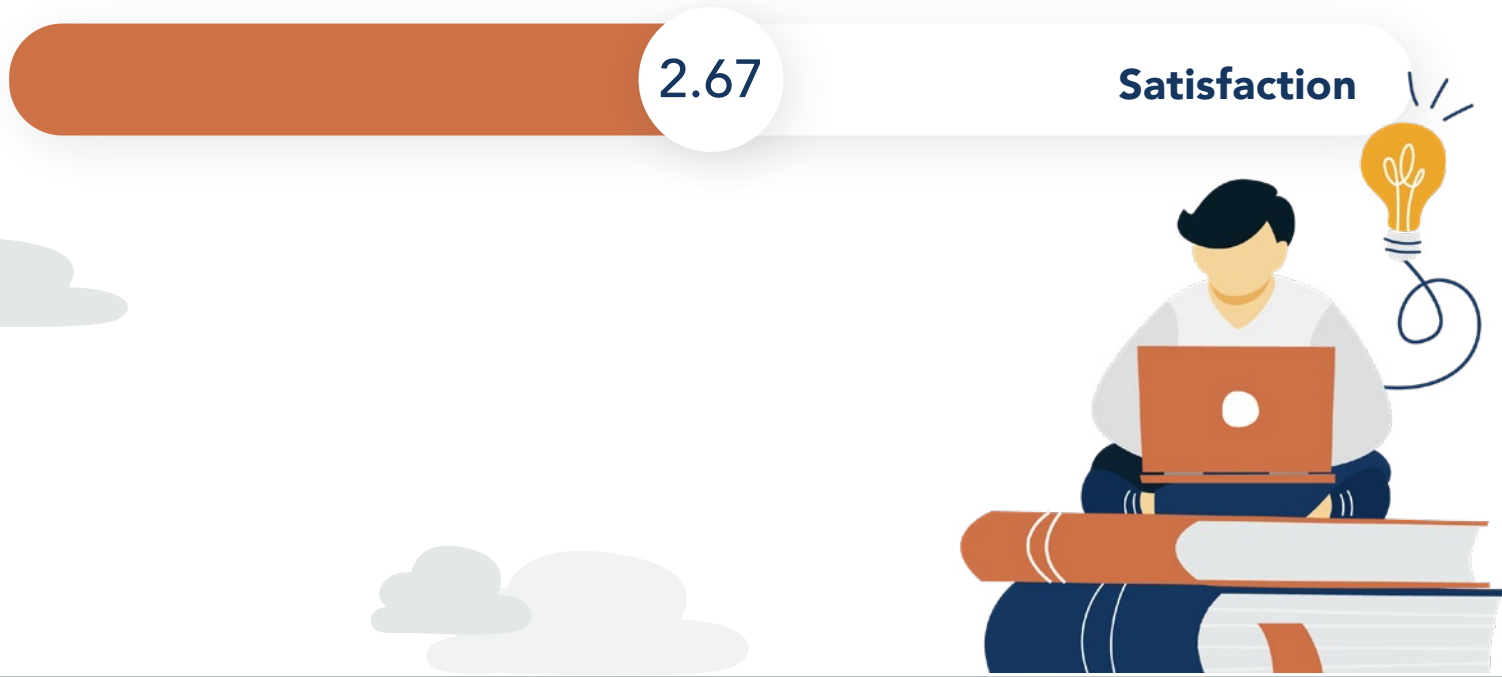| System	Percentage
HRIS	37%
Content Management	29%
Talent Management	28%
Authoring Tools	21%
Workforce Management	21%
Video/Web Conference	15%
Learning Record Store (LRS)	14%
ERP	14%
Compliance Platform	13%
Social/Collaboration	13%
LCMS	7%

Source: Brandon Hall Group
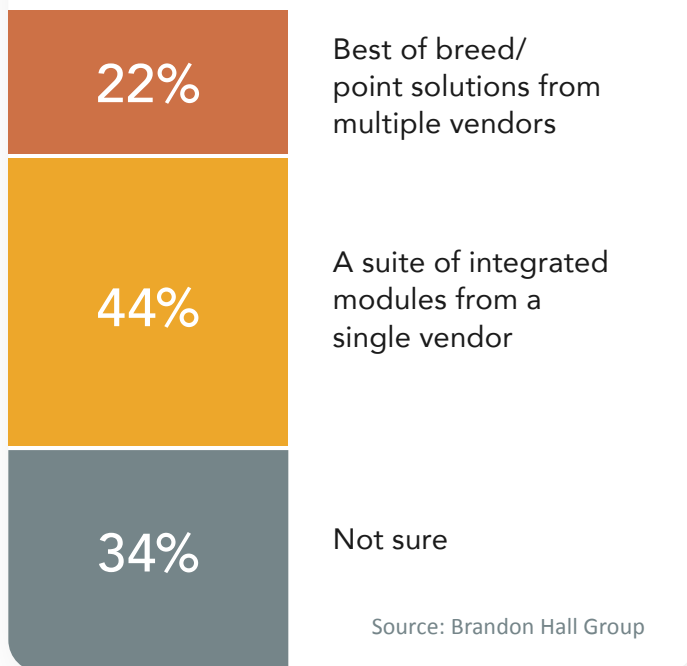
Satisfaction with Integration?

In general, companies do not care for the integration capabilities of their LMS providers, landing them in the top 10 things organizations like least about their solutions. And for those companies actively looking to switch providers, trouble with integration is among the top 10 reasons why. Overall, LMS integration scores a 2.67 on a five-point satisfaction scale.

LEAST LIKED ASPECTS OF LMS	REASONS TO SWITCH LMS
1 Ease of use of the system	1 Poor support from vendor
2 Ability to adapt to changing needs	2 Wish to move to Cloud
3 Reporting features	3 Platform lacks the social learning features
4 Analytics features to measure ROI	4 System is difficult to use
5 Social learning features	5 System appears outdated
6 Ability to integrate with other enterprise software	6 Inability to integrate with other enterprise software

2.67   **Satisfaction**

What Do Companies Want?

Preferred Platforms to Manage Integration

22%	Best of breed/ point solutions from multiple vendors
44%	A suite of integrated modules from a single vendor
34%	Not sure

Source: Brandon Hall Group

The jury is out when it comes to just how organizations are hoping to solve the integration challenge. While nearly half say they would prefer a solution that encompasses a suite of talent management technology modules and 22% say they would prefer to select individual solutions, more than one-third aren't sure which solution is right for them.

Customization

In an effort to integrate their learning platforms with other systems, many organizations rely on customizations provided by their internal IT department. This can be a good short- term solution, but in the long run, it is difficult to maintain these customizations in an ever-evolving technology landscape. Very often companies get stuck with an older, outdated version of an application because their customizations prevent them from upgrading.
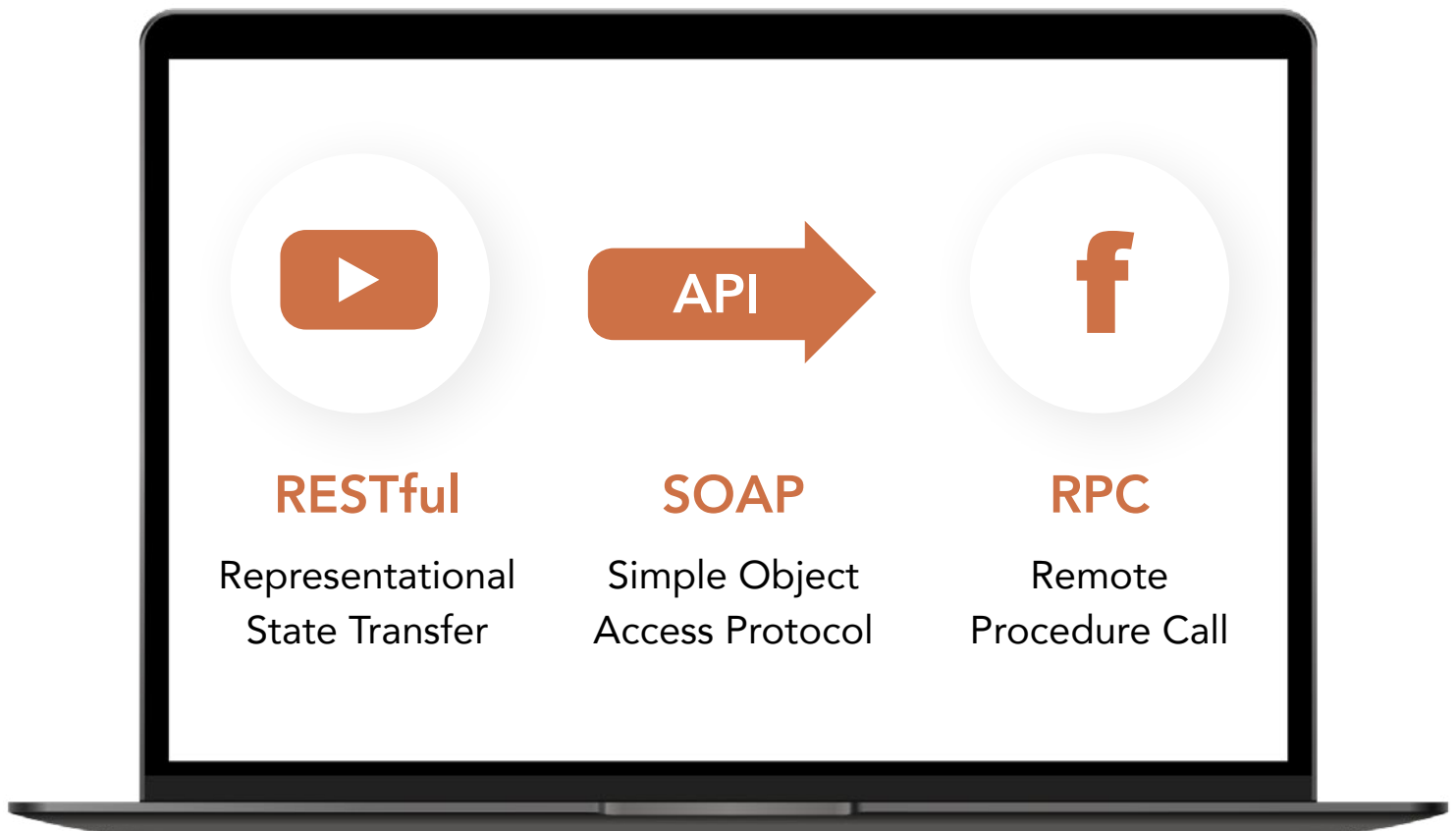
Many times, integrations involve customization:

▶ Be 100% sure of the need for customization

▶ Try to wait until most everything is in place

▶ Customizations often do not work with upgrades/updates

▶ Don't get stuck!

APIs are Your Friends

The most common way in which technology solution work with one another is via APIs, or Application Programming Interfaces. These bits of code allow one application to call up data or services from another. An example is how Facebook allows you to see a thumbnail of a shared video as well as actually watch the video within your newsfeed. The most common type of API in the talent management environment is the RESTful API.

RESTful

Representational
State Transfer

SOAP

Simple Object
Access Protocol

RPC

Remote
Procedure Call

System Integration

Key Practices

1 **Identify** current and future system integration requirements.

2 **Define** what needs to be shared between systems (now and future).

3 **Define** how often shared items need to be updated.

4 **Define** the value of each connection (business goal for each connection).

5 **Prioritize** each connection and begin defining requirements (APIs, scripts, middle-data-warehouses).

6 **Map** table to table (where is the data held in each system), theory first.

7 **Understand** your vendor's experience integrating with each of these elements.

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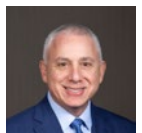
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