

Absorb LMS Makes It Easy to Manage External Training

Absorb

Best Advance in Learning Management Technology

March 2018



Company Background



Company At-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Year Founded	2003
Revenue	\$24,000,000
Employees	140
Global Scale	Serve global clients from offices in Canada and Ireland
Customers/Output, etc.	Absorb provides hosted LMS to more than 650 clients across a broad range of industries. Clients include Uber, Airbnb, Johnson & Johnson, New Balance, Swarovski.
Industry	Learning technology
Website	www.absorblms.com

Value Proposition

With Absorb LMS, small and large companies across all industries save time and money when delivering and managing training and other content to customers and partners.

Clients choose Absorb because it saves time through actionable reporting workflows and configurable business and-automation rules (aka Availability Rules). The rules ensure users see only relevant or recommended content in the learner dashboard. In addition, the rules ensure that learners are enrolled automatically into required training on the same day user accounts are created in the system.

This year brought three major updates and new offerings, including a complete update to the learner interface that Absorb's team calls the New Learner Experience. It enhances investments already made in responsive design, improves social features and gamification, gives admins more power over the look and feel of the user experience, and significantly improves public-facing features and user experience with the addition of a new Public Dashboard.

Absorb also recently released a new Business Intelligence module/service to provide clients with powerful custom, graphical reports directly within the Absorb admin console, removing the need to export data into third-party analytics tools.

For the more than 150,000 customers using Salesforce, the Absorb team developed a native Absorb LMS Salesforce App that brings Absorb LMS directly inside Salesforce Classic and Lightning.

Those features solve several common problems.

- **“Set it and Forget it.”** The LMS requires less administrator time and frees company resources for more value-added jobs such as creating content that drives business goals.
 - Automatic Enrollment rules for courses and curricula can be configured by the user's department, group, location, language and more than 40 other criteria.
 - Custom fields can be used to target content at external users based, for example, on the products or services they've purchased or their reseller type or location.
- **Absorb LMS Salesforce App.** This launch allows Salesforce.com users to natively manage and interact with their training data and learners.
 - Sales teams can quickly assign and sell new training to clients, operations can report on training ROI and customer service teams can ensure their clients have the most up-to-date product training.
 - Actionable Reports speeds up most admin actions by requiring fewer clicks. Example: With three clicks, an admin can go from viewing a list of users to the personal transcript of a single user to seeing extremely granular, learning-object level reporting for lessons in a single online course for that user.

General Absorb LMS benefits:

- Intuitive software means sales and marketing staff can quickly assemble courses from existing videos and documents, add Absorb Assessments and manage the entire LMS with no prior LMS experience, with less than six hours of training.
- A better user experience by curating content for learners based on their job, location, language, company etc. Learners are more engaged with content based on leaderboards, ratings, recommended training, comment and other content types.
- “Deep” custom branding ensures a company’s external users are engaging in a platform that truly represents the company’s brand in every way and on every page of the LMS dashboard.
- The robust API offers flexible integrations with any CRM or database platform.

Testimonial

“Absorb provides a single point of comprehensive administrative function for the efficient management of all of our post-graduate learners, learning assets and records within the context of healthcare regulation. It is an excellent fit to our need for segmented course listing, pricing, and service with a degree of front-end configuration flexibility that gives us ample room to enable creative business strategy and market growth.” – **Greg Roberts**, Director, Continuing Education, Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College

Product or Program Innovation

Absorb experts build thoughtfully designed software that supports all learning by reflecting and anticipating clients’ needs, including the need to do unexpected things. Absorb does so by creating intelligently crafted workflows.

Absorb, widely ranked as a top LMS, is offered under a variety of flexible-license models at below-average pricing. For companies that use the LMS for external training, Absorb offers an a la carte license model that incorporates a flat, one-time per-user (“all you can eat”) fee with a flat support, hosting and maintenance fee that includes upgrades and 24x7 admin technical support.

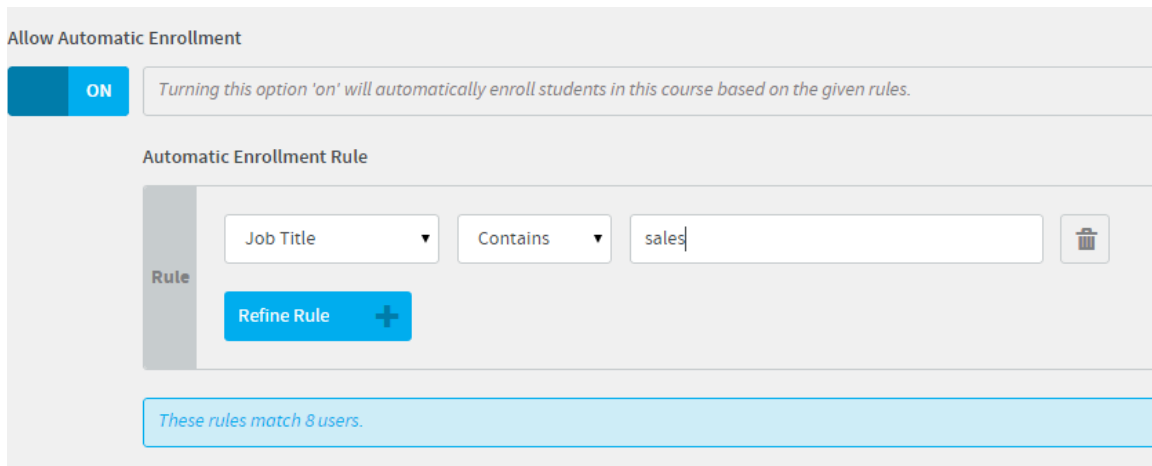
According to Cost of Licensing data published by Capterra, that license model places Absorb at a whopping 68% below-average industry pricing for 5,000 users. Because a client only pays for users under a one-time fee model, the benefit increases to significantly more than 68%-below average in the years after a company acquires the user

licenses. Absorb also offers an active-user model for companies that have large numbers of users who only go into the LMS once or twice a year (such as seasonally).

Absorb has proven to save LMS admins up to 50% of administration effort, which means the LMS can be administered by existing staff, such as the training lead on a sales or marketing team. Absorb invests heavily on intuitive design for ease of use, creating an interface that includes actionable reports and several automation rules.

For example, the Automatic Enrollment Rule would be set to automatically enroll all learners with the word “sales” in their field “job title” in a particular sales-training course. In the case below, eight people would be subject to that enrollment rule.

Figure 1: Automatic Enrollment Rule

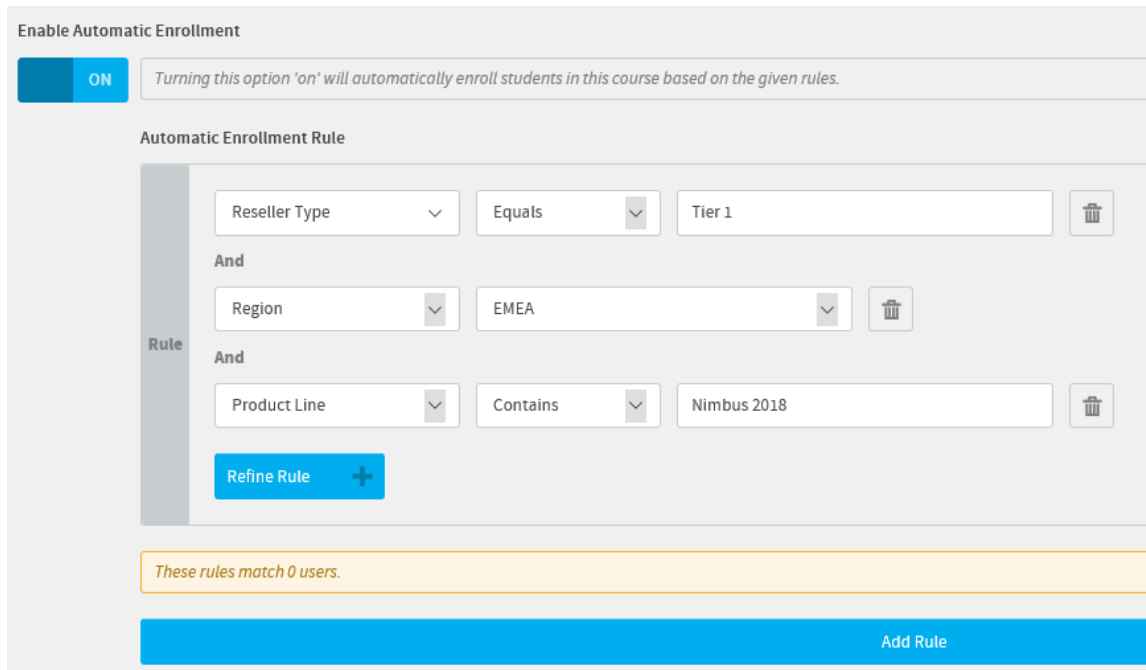


The screenshot shows the 'Allow Automatic Enrollment' toggle set to 'ON'. Below it, the 'Automatic Enrollment Rule' section is active. The rule is configured with the field 'Job Title' containing the text 'sales'. A 'Refine Rule' button with a plus sign is visible. A status bar at the bottom indicates 'These rules match 8 users.'

Source: Absorb 2018

Rules can be simple or complex based on a combination of custom fields such as Reseller Type + Region + Product Line and/or any other combination of standard and up to 40 custom fields. These same filters apply to self-enrollment rules and visibility of content, such as billboards, polls, news Articles, leaderboards and FAQs.

Figure 2: Slightly More Complex Rule



The screenshot shows a web interface for configuring automatic enrollment. At the top, there is a toggle switch labeled 'ON' and a text box stating: "Turning this option 'on' will automatically enroll students in this course based on the given rules." Below this is the 'Automatic Enrollment Rule' section. It features a vertical sidebar on the left labeled 'Rule'. The rule is composed of three conditions connected by 'And' operators. The first condition is 'Reseller Type' (dropdown) 'Equals' (dropdown) 'Tier 1' (text input). The second condition is 'Region' (dropdown) 'EMEA' (dropdown). The third condition is 'Product Line' (dropdown) 'Contains' (dropdown) 'Nimbus 2018' (text input). Each condition has a trash icon to its right. A 'Refine Rule' button with a plus sign is located below the conditions. At the bottom of the rule configuration area, a yellow banner states: "These rules match 0 users." A large blue 'Add Rule' button is positioned at the very bottom of the interface.

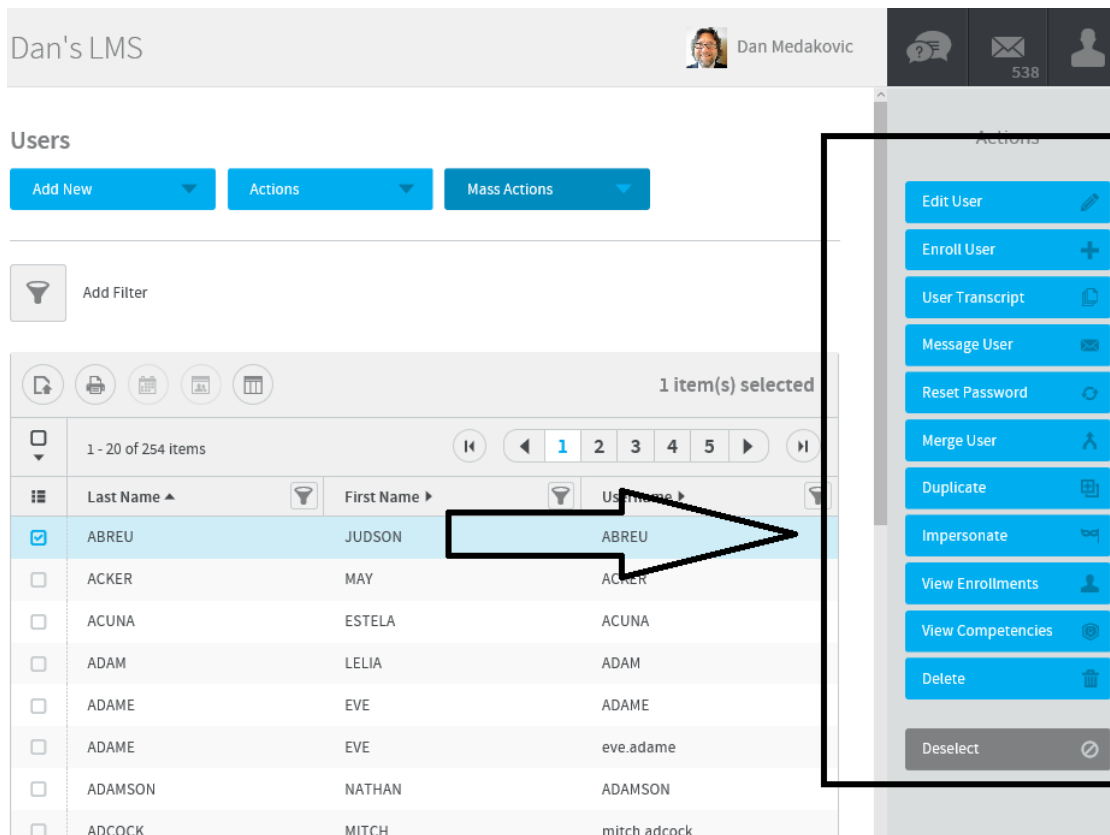
Source: Absorb 2018

All reports feature selectable data objects that enable/relate to a context-sensitive sidebar on the right-hand side of the screen (placed where most users would reach with their thumbs if using a tablet or phone).

Selecting anything from within the admin interface takes the user to a list of context-based shortcuts built from more than a decade of learning how clients would like to ideally work with their users and courses.

Select a learner and the following options and shortcuts appear: Edit User, Enroll User, User Transcript, Message User, Reset Password, Merge User, Duplicate, Impersonate (see the learner interface exactly as the learner sees it), Deselect, and shortcuts to the following reports: View Enrollments and View Competencies. Selecting multiple users, gives the admin access to the “mass actions” button.

Figure 3: Options and Shortcuts



Source: Absorb 2018

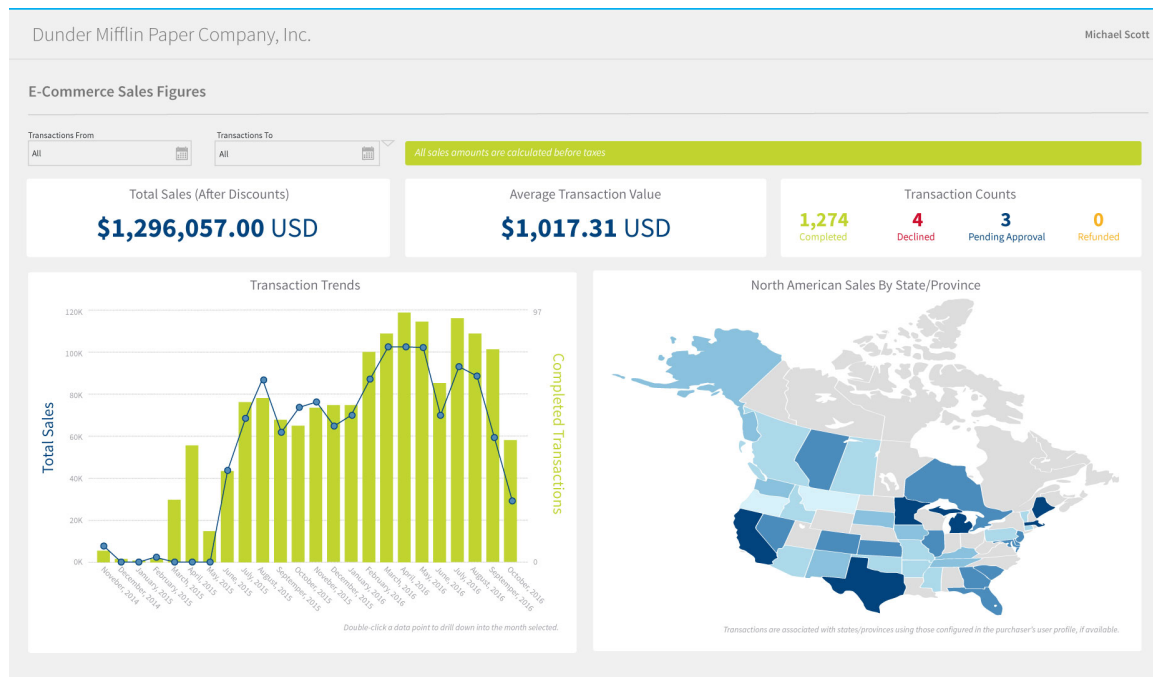
Full-Service Business Intelligence

Every choice should be informed and every action measurable. The Absorb team recognizes that each business is unique and comes with its own set of reporting needs. Though they may be niche, no one can argue their importance in the context of eLearning strategy.

Absorb's Business Intelligence Module gives clients the ability to gather actionable insights from the LMS like never before.

Not only are the reporting capabilities in the Business Intelligence Module completely ad hoc, the visual representation of data is customizable as well — right down to the colors. That means a company can have custom-branded, ad-hoc reports built right into the Absorb LMS admin interface or can set up reports and dashboards to export and email to relevant stakeholders in a variety of file formats.

Figure 4: Business Intelligence Dashboard



Source: Absorb 2018

Unique Differentiators

Absorb Software Inc. was founded to create an easier-to-use LMS. Over the years, its customer promise has been refined: “Software intelligently crafted for you, your enterprise and your learners.”

As with past major updates, the Absorb New Learner Experience once again sets the bar for what an online-learning experience should be. Administrators have more tools to craft the perfect learning experience, creating a personal, intelligent and engaging experience.

The new learner interface incorporates years’ worth of client feedback, Absorb experts’ own experiences and modern social-learning functionality.

Details of Absorb New Learner Experience enhancements:

- Completely redone learner interface that is even more mobile friendly and also takes full advantage of widescreen monitors when available.
- Major improvements to the ILT enrollment process, including a calendar-based view.

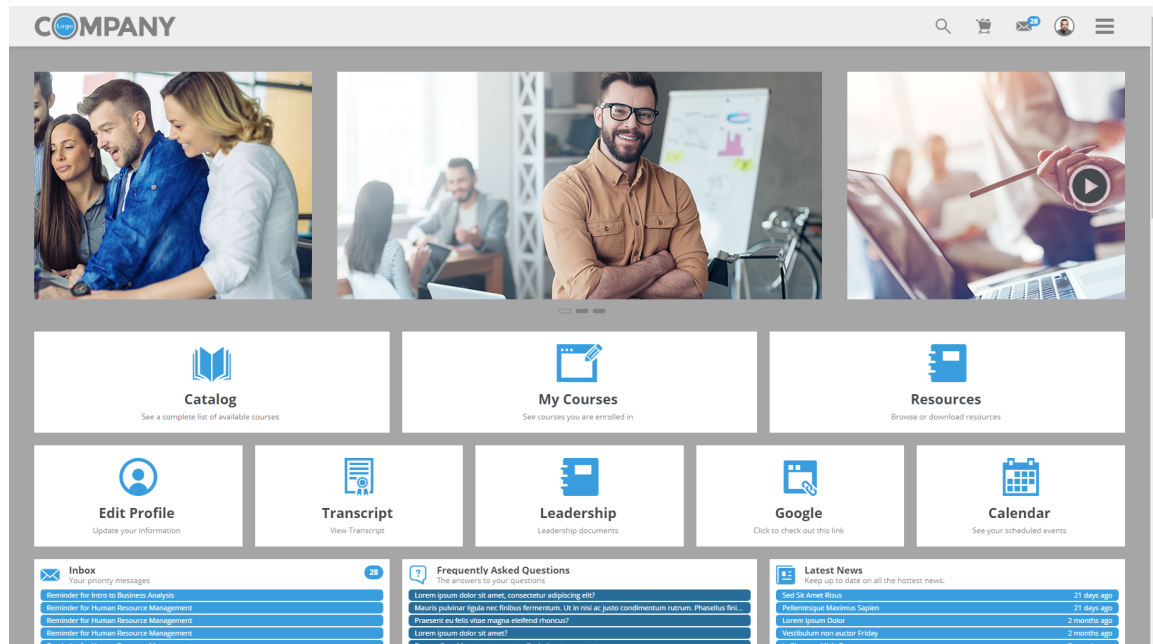


- New leaderboards for tracking and motivating learners whose achievement also can also be targeted using the flexible rule-based system.
- Various social learning enhancements, including:
 - New course ratings.
 - Improved commenting with notifications.
 - New course sharing.
 - New course recommendations.
- A new concept called course flagging allows learners or admins to highlight certain courses as mandatory, featured or pinned.
- A new public dashboard that offers a rich landing-page experience for external users; it includes the catalog, various mercury elements, billboards, FAQs and more.
- Completely redone and improved search with relevance-based search results, in-line filtering and more.
- Greater admin control over the interface, including tiles, menu items and additional customizable elements.
- Seamless interface-update process for existing Absorb customers; includes previewing and configuration.
- Still highly brandable.

Highlights

Seamless responsiveness across all devices, including wide-screen monitors. On any device, there is no need for apps to access full system features. Admins control look and feel of layout.

Figure 5: New Learner Experience in Wide-Screen Monitor



Source: Absorb 2018

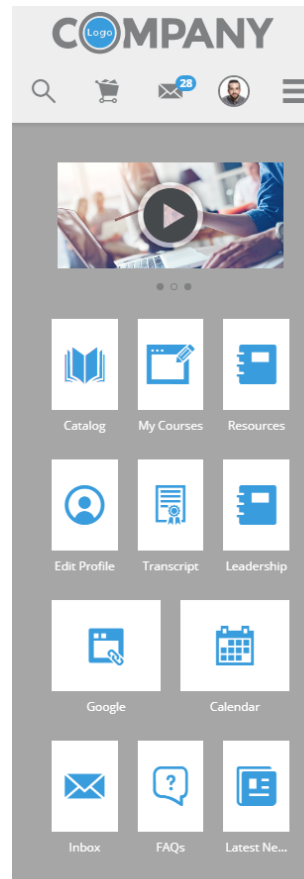
Automatically adjusts based on client customization of the dashboard; no design team required.

Figure 6: Learner Experience: Standard Monitor or Tablet



Source: Absorb 2018

Figure 7: Absorb Mobile Layout



Source: Absorb 2018

The new Public Dashboard:

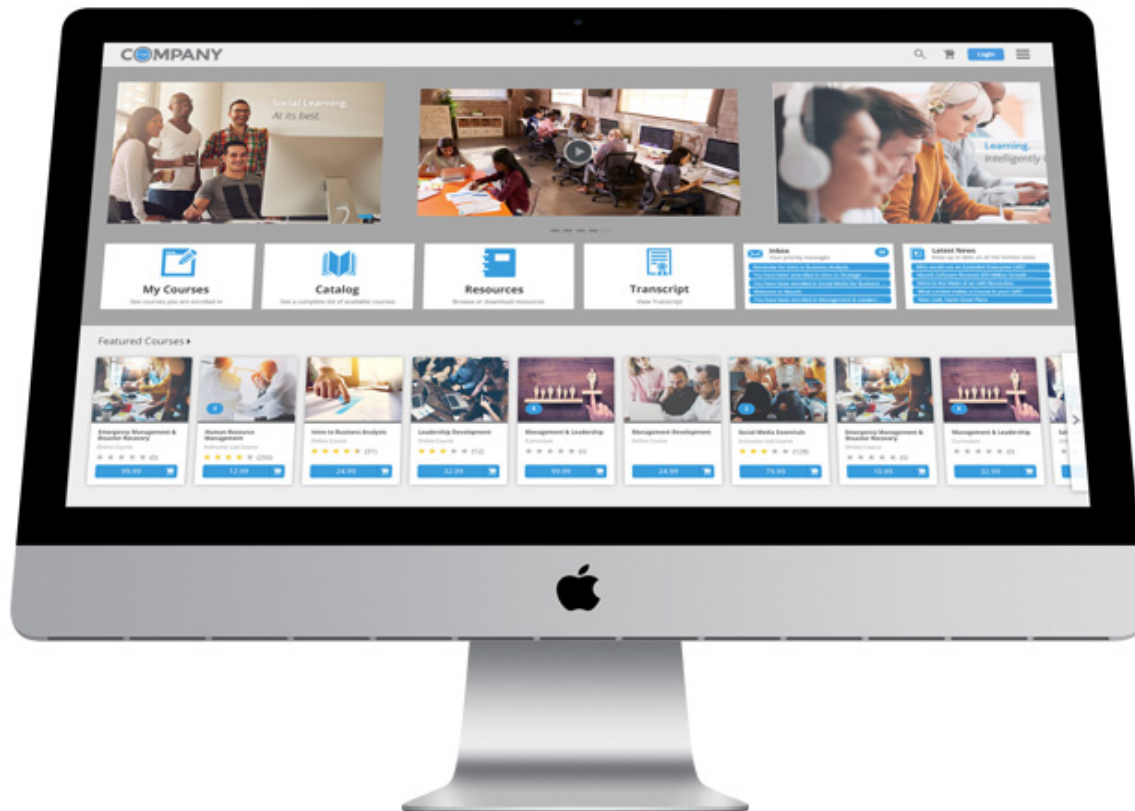
- Empowers e-commerce, extended enterprise etc.
- Improves curb appeal of landing page to be more than just a login.
- Mercury elements allow for CMS-level functionality.

The new Public Dashboard gives a company's LMS the powers of a Content Management System. Before learners are required to log in, the admins offer content that makes sense to the company business, and can customize the experience to showcase the company's FAQs, news articles, featured courses, video billboards and more.

Selling courses? The Public Dashboard acts as the company's storefront.

Different audiences with multiple login requirements? The company's Public Dashboard can direct all learners to the proper login.

Figure 8: Public Dashboard



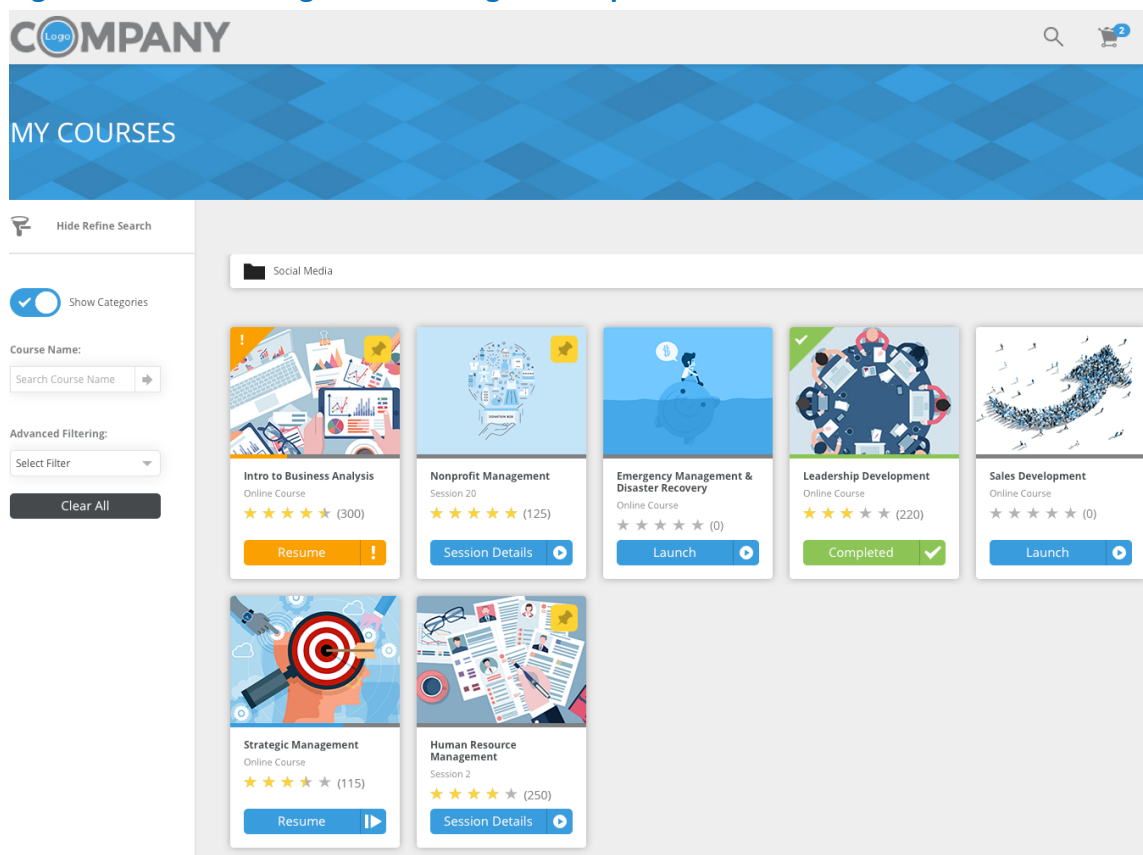
Source: Absorb 2018

Leaderboards include:

- Gamification that motivates learners through competition and rankings. Nothing encourages action like a little bit of friendly competition. The Absorb LMS leaderboards gives learners a chance to compete with their peers as they advance through their courses and curricula. Drive results with this easy-to-implement engagement carrot.
- Innovative rules-based targeting system to control who can see which leaderboard and who appears within each leaderboard.
- “My Department” targeting, which guarantees a leaderboard view that is relevant to everyone regardless of company or segment size.

- Social enhancements to help create the right learning environment where learners become a company's strongest asset and advocates. Absorb LMS allows learners to communicate and collaborate with each other in a threaded commenting section and then rate the courses they've taken. Take advantage of a learner's momentum by providing tailored recommendations of what courses to take next.
- Added course ratings, recommendations, improved comments.

Figure 9: Course Ratings & Visual flags for Required and Pinned Courses

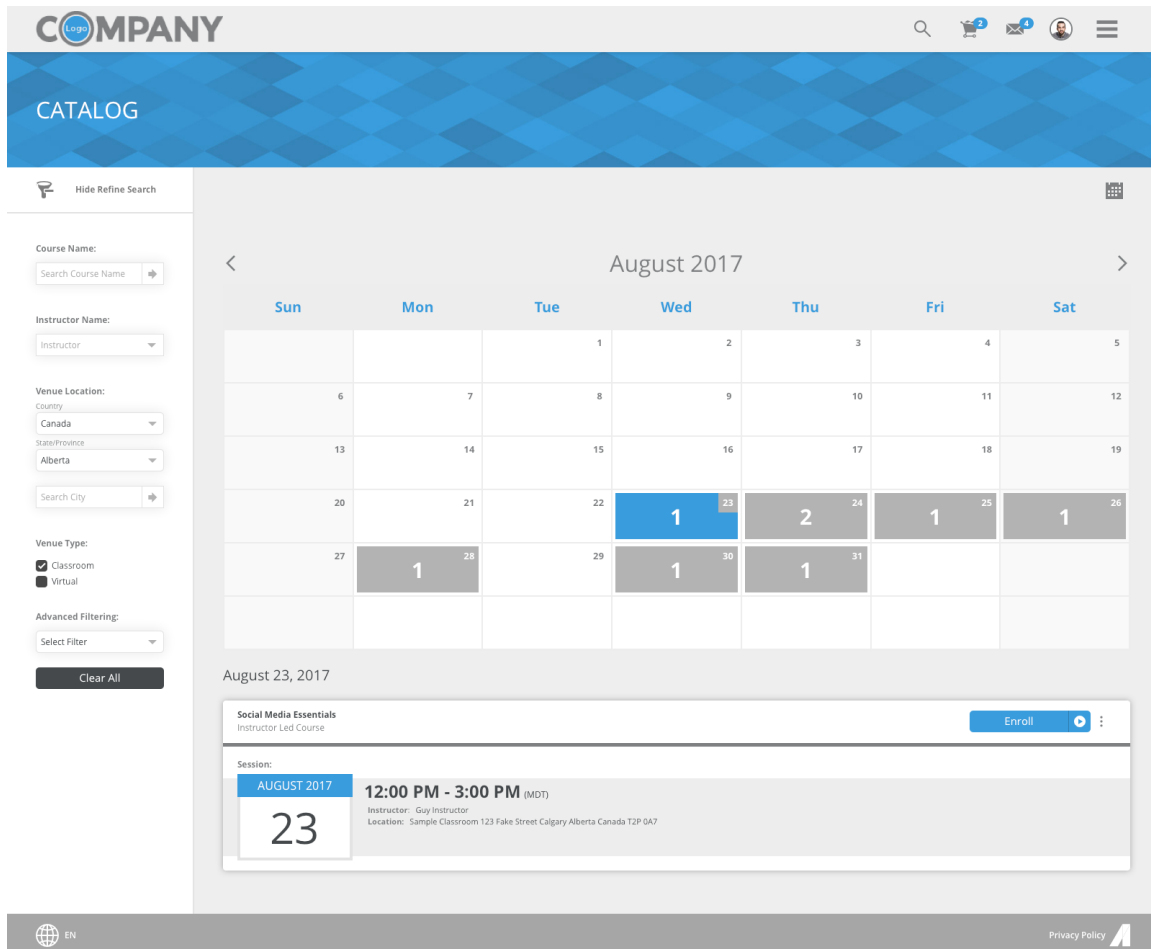


Source: Absorb 2018

- Improved commenting. If a user is deleted from the system, their comments are automatically cleaned up as well (deleted).
- Catalog Improvements to provide a calendar-based view, new searching, live filtering of results and multiple views for multiple audiences.

- Catalog design enhancements gives learners the ability to browse in a view most conducive to the content, quickly search for a specific session or easily refine results to narrow in on right the learning center for them.
- Virtual or in-person, ILCs are foundational to the learning experience.

Figure 10: Catalog Design Enhancements

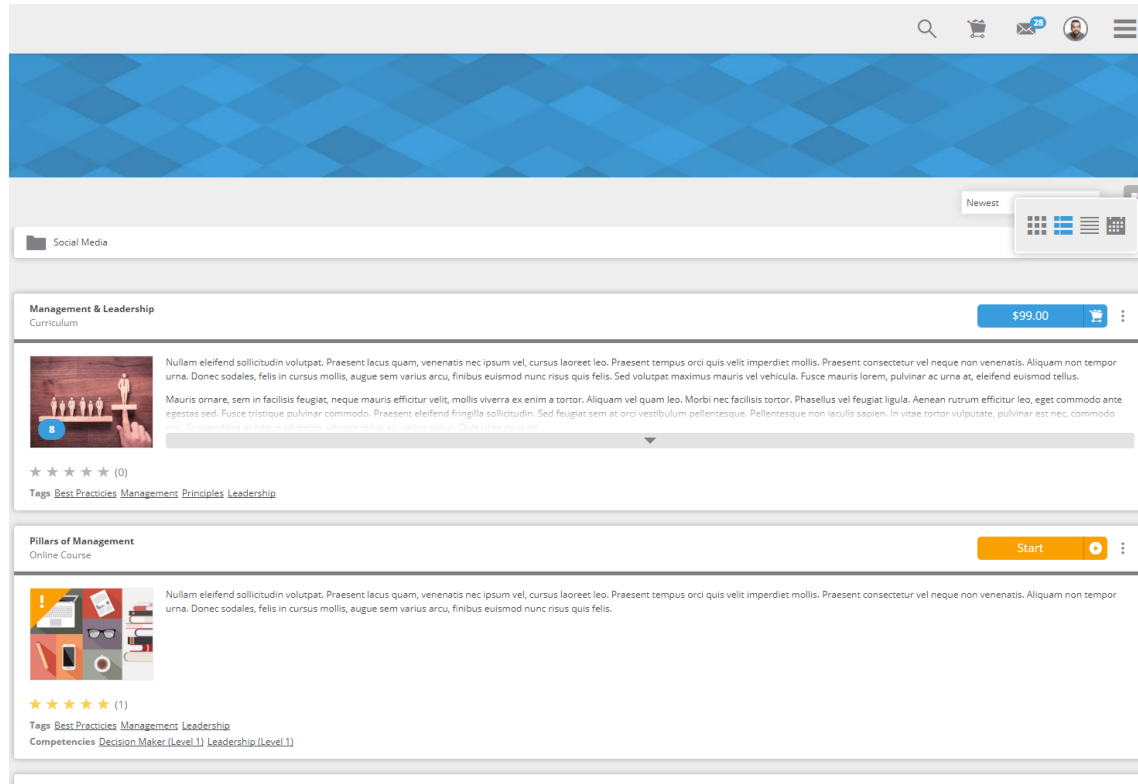


The screenshot displays a course catalog interface for a company. The header includes the company logo, search, shopping cart, and user profile icons. The main content area features a calendar view for August 2017, with dates 23, 24, 25, and 26 highlighted. A sidebar on the left provides search filters for Course Name, Instructor Name, Venue Location (Country, State/Province, Search City), and Venue Type (Classroom, Virtual). Below the calendar, a course card for 'Social Media Essentials' is shown, including an 'Enroll' button and session details for August 23, 2017, from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM (MDT).

Source: Absorb 2018

- Enhanced display of courses provides more room for course descriptions, ratings, tags, branding etc.

Figure 11: Enhanced Display of Courses



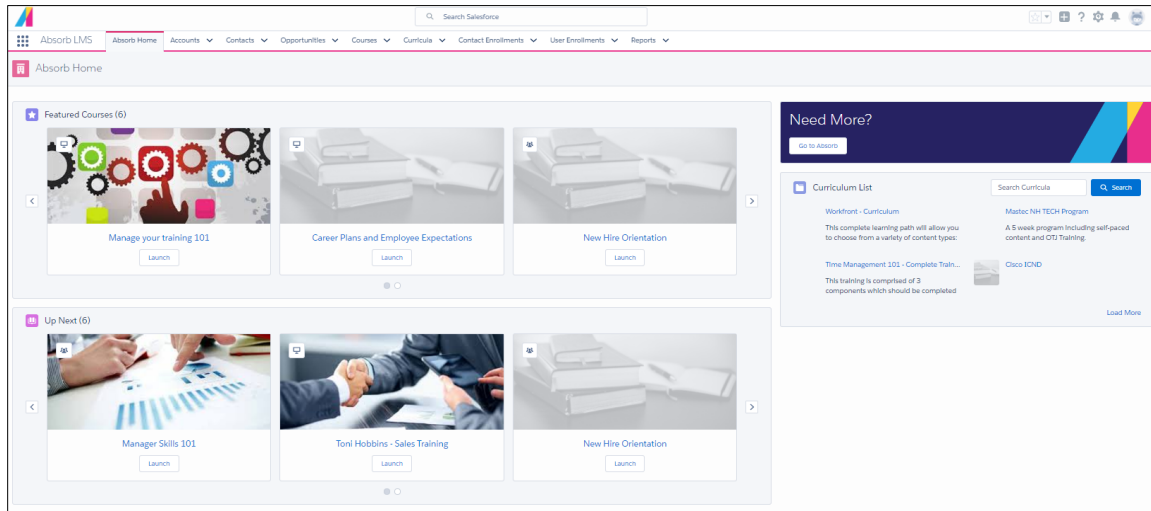
Source: Absorb 2018

Absorb LMS Salesforce App makes it possible for Salesforce users to easily enroll customers and partners into courses without leaving the Salesforce interface.

Although scheduled data-file syncs or Absorb's RESTful API are often used by clients to build custom integrations with external applications, there was huge demand for a native Absorb app that would be easy to configure and provide seamless integration and exceptional user experience. The new app automatically creates and updates users in Absorb as long as their Salesforce Contact is flagged for syncing. Absorb automatically pulls enrollment and completion data for courses and badges into Salesforce widgets and reports.

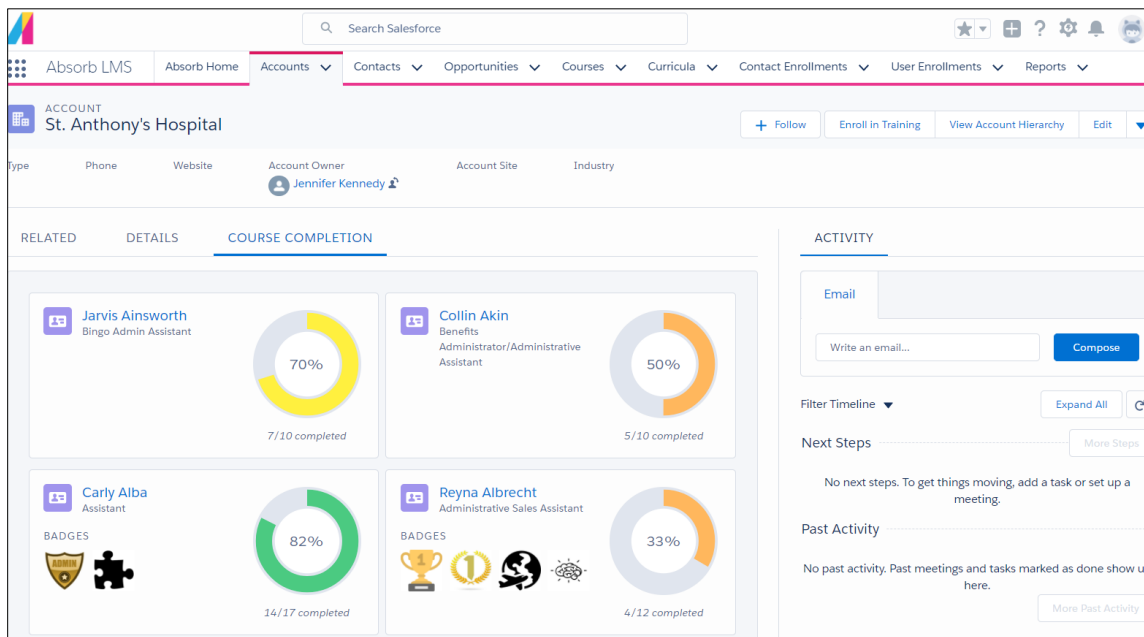
Salesforce reports can be built to co-relate sales data with training consumption providing for real ROI reporting!

Figure 12: Sales Rep View of Courses within Salesforce



Source: Absorb 2018

Figure 13: List of Contacts with Enrollment Progress



Source: Absorb 2018

Measurable Results

Case Study: COLA (Lab University)

COLA is a physician-directed organization that promotes excellence in laboratory medicine and patient care through a program of voluntary education, consultation and accreditation. COLA uses Absorb LMS to train employees in more than 7,400 medical labs around the world.

Since switching to Absorb LMS, COLA reports a significant increase in many key business indicators:

- Using the Absorb LMS eCommerce module, COLA is achieving higher course-sales revenue than in the previous six years.
- There has been a record-low number of support incidents, resulting in the highest customer satisfaction COLA has seen since launching its online learning offerings.
- COLA is attracting more new customers and more repeat customers than ever before.
- Overall, more courses are being sold than in previous years and more courses are being purchased per customer than ever before.
- New courses are developed and available from the Absorb LMS within hours, not days.
- COLA staff members are spending far less time managing the LMS platform and have far more time to spend on strategic initiatives, such as creating new revenue-generating education programs.

Case Study: Dale Carnegie Digital

Dale Carnegie's online division adapted Absorb LMS as the platform that would extend their world-famous, classroom-based training programs into the online environment.

This digitalization has resulted in a 50% increase in sales as Dale Carnegie is now able to reach more people in more ways.

After deploying the new Business Intelligence module, Dale Carnegie's LMS admin reduced custom-report creation time by 50% and increased customer satisfaction, according to the GM Dale Carnegie Digital & LMS Administrator.

Founded in 1912, Dale Carnegie evolved from one man's belief in the power of personal development to a global learning and performance organization with offices in more than

80 countries. The focus is on improving the performance of companies by improving their teams' performance.

Figure 14: Dale Carnegie



Source: Absorb 2018



About Brandon Hall Group

Brandon Hall Group is a HCM research and advisory services firm that provides insights around key performance areas, including Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, and HR/Workforce Management. With more than 10,000 clients globally and more than 20 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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