Driving Growth for Your Legal Association

Table of Contents

DIGITIZE: EMBRACE DIGITAL EDUCATION 3

OPTIMIZE: DRIVE LASTING CHANGE 4

TRANSFORM: REALIZE YOUR ASSOCIATION'S VISION FOR ONLINE LEARNING 5

- ENGAGE MEMBERS IN NEW, INNOVATIVE WAYS 5
- HELP YOUR TEAMS MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR TIME AND EXPERTISE 6
- LEVERAGE DATA AND ANALYTICS 7
- SET UP YOUR ASSOCIATION TO ADAPT AND THRIVE 8

SEIZE THE FUTURE OF ONLINE LEARNING 9

Digitize: Embrace Digital Education

A few years ago, online learning was on the radar for many associations. Members were always in search of learning opportunities that could help them grow personally and professionally. When asked what their primary reasons were for joining an association, 42% of members said continuing education in 2016, and 51% gave the same reply in 2018.[1] By creating online courses, associations could make learning more widely available and drive growth. But it wasn't an urgent need. Members looked forward to in-person events, and associations enjoyed putting them on.

Today, the script has flipped—for everyone. According to a new McKinsey Global Survey of executives, responses to the pandemic have accelerated digitization efforts by seven years.[2] Digitizing learning programs is no longer an added benefit or extra revenue generator for associations. It's something they're relying on to survive now and thrive in the future.

To weather the present storm and drive lasting long-term change, your association needs the right technology, the right strategy, and the right partner to enable your transformation and drive you forward.

1 https://www.fsae.org/assets/docs/EducationCareerDevelopmentReport.pdf

2 https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-in-sights/how-covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-forever#

Optimize: Drive Lasting Change

As much time and many resources as organizations put into their digital transformation initiatives, the unfortunate reality is that the majority—up to 70%—don't lead to success.[3] 44% created some value but didn't meet their targets, according to respondents, and 26% reported no sustainable change.[4]
The biggest challenge the majority of organizations face is, in essence, not having an effective strategy in place to guide and communicate the change.

26%
reported no sustainable change in their digital transformation initiatives.

44%
created some value, but didn't meet their targets.

To help make your association's digital transformation strategy a winning one, you should understand the why, what, who, and how that underpin it.

What do you want to do?
Articulate your vision for online learning and how it aligns with your association's mission, values, and strategic goals.

Why are you making the change?
Communicate the purpose of your project—what you want to achieve and, at a high level, how you're going to do that.

Who needs to be involved?
Know both the stakeholders you need around your decision-making table and what success criteria they'll be looking for.

How will you go about it?
Factor in solutions you'll need to acquire, expertise that may exist within your association, and boosters and blockers you'll encounter along the way.

3 https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/increasing-odds-of-success-in-digital-transformation
4 Ibid.

Transform: Realize Your Association's Vision for Online Learning

Though it's not always straightforward, there's no doubt that a digital transformation can bring major results and benefits to not only your association, but its members as well.

> "One of the things members are looking for is an online learning experience that still provides the networking and social learning opportunities that they benefit from with face-to-face learning events."
>
> Kiara Graham, Learning Strategy Consultant, D2L

1. Engage Members in New, Innovative Ways

Access to continuing education is consistently at the top of the list of reasons members join an association. And their expectations are high. They want content that's up to date on trends and practices, is tailored to reflect the real-world needs of their industry, suits their schedule, and is going to be engaging for them.

"Many members might fear that they will lose out on these types of interactions in online learning, so associations need to be very intentional about making sure that facilitating connection and collaboration are key aspects of their digital learning strategy. For example, some associations may create an online community of practice where members can connect with other practitioners in their field. Online mentorship programs can also be a powerful way for associations to connect their members in meaningful ways to support professional development. These types of offerings can differentiate an association in the market and drive membership growth."

Learning occurs when members draw on the expertise of their peers and others through their professional community. Think about some of the different ways you could leverage video, as an example. In addition to sharing recorded sessions and hosting live discussions, you could enable members to submit assignments via video. They could be recorded asynchronously or synchronously and use a variety of assessment types, including question-and-answer styles, group compilations, sync activities, and individual videos. This accommodates many out-of-the-box assessments that are traditionally done in face-to-face training sessions, such as show and tell, role-plays, and hands-on demonstrations.

Another thing you may want to think about is when you engage members. Can you create opportunities leading up to an event to communicate with them? Thinking about opening a special discussion board or releasing a course designed to get them up to speed? How can you continue the conversation after the event is over? Consider avenues like peer-to-peer networking groups or supplementary course content.

2. Help Your Teams Make the Most of Their Time and Expertise

For years, associations have relied on manual processes for everything from issuing certifications to communicating with members. Transitioning to online learning can help open doors to streamline many of those workflows—reducing administrative burdens for your association's staff and you to grow and scale.

"One of the biggest benefits a digital transformation offers is the ability to reduce administrative overhead by automating certain tasks. For example, many associations follow up with their members via email after a training event to provide additional resources, materials, or content. These communications are often manual today. They could be prewritten and automatically scheduled to send," says Kiara.

> "Associations also sometimes struggle with members enrolling in courses, but then they get busy in their professional lives and don't complete their courses. Automated 'nudges' can be used to remind members of the learning opportunities available to them and encourage them to continue working through the content."
>
> Kiara Graham, Learning Strategy Consultant, D2L

3. Leverage Data and Analytics to Assess the Impact of Your Programs

Metrics can help your association make sure it's on the right track—generating better results in the long term—and enable you to iterate and improve programs over time to meet the needs of your learners. But not every association will have the same data needs. It's important to make sure that the information you collect reflects what your association, its stakeholders, and those creating and managing learning experiences expect to see.

"Data can play a vital role in driving an association's learning strategy. With in-class events, it can be very difficult to understand and track what content is most effective and engaging for your members, and often learner satisfaction is determined using paper surveys that are collected by the facilitator or instructor and sometimes left to sit in a drawer," says Kiara. "Having a learning platform with robust data and reporting capabilities can give associations incredible insights into exactly what pieces or types of content their members tend to gravitate toward and where they struggle or tend to drop off from a course. It can also streamline the process of gathering learner satisfaction data so that associations can be more targeted and effective with their content."

Unlock the power of your data with our Ultimate Guide to Learning Analytics.

Get the guide

4. Set Up Your Association to Adapt and Thrive

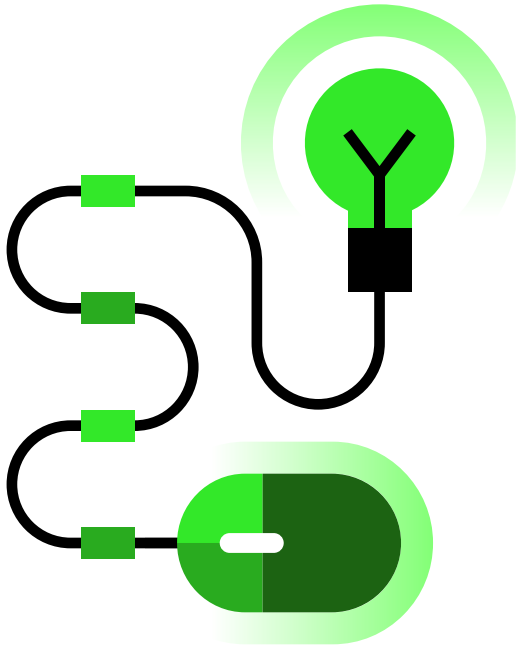
The future of online learning for associations will be a blended one—incorporating the in-person events that people look forward to alongside robust, engaging online education programs that people can access almost anywhere and that will help make your association more adaptable and resilient.

"Many associations may be competing with business schools or other professional development organizations when it comes to providing educational content to their members. Developing a learning strategy specifically for their members using insightful platform data to create content that is relevant, engaging, and effective can set associations apart from their competitors and position them as market leaders in education for their industry, which will ultimately grow membership," says Kiara.

At the end of the day, associations that understand what their members are looking for and can consistently deliver that value will be best positioned to drive healthy and consistent member growth. This is why it's crucial to have solutions and systems in place that will equip you to adapt to shifting needs and provide flexible training and professional development opportunities.

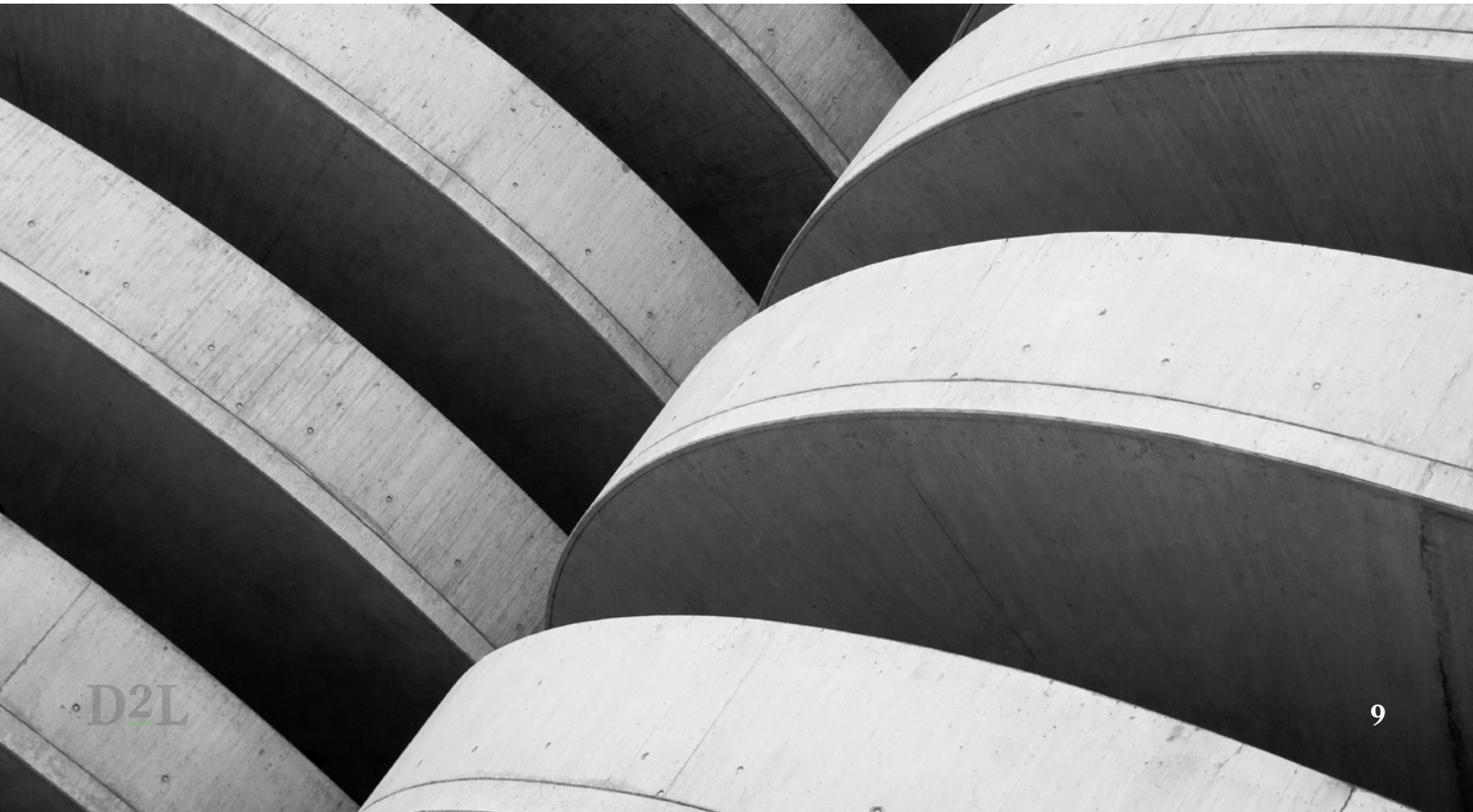
Seize the Future of Online Learning

Change can be overwhelming, frustrating, and scary. There's no doubt about that. But if the most recent past has taught us anything, it's that the cost of standing still can be much higher.



You need to evolve so you're ready to meet members' shifting needs and adapt to disruption—whatever its nature and whenever it happens.

Ultimately, a successful digital transformation means having the right technology to enable it, a solid strategy to guide and power it, and a partner with the solutions, services, and support you need to bring it all together.



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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 products—D2L Brightspace and D2L Wave—enhance the learning experience for millions of learners at every stage of life, from the earliest days of school to the working world.

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