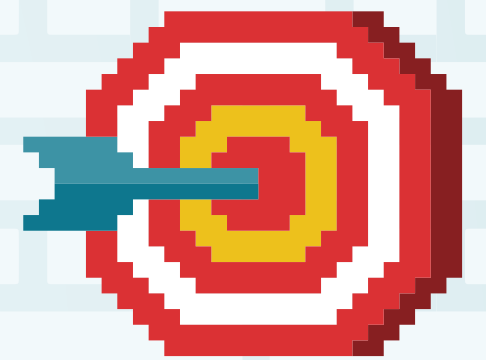
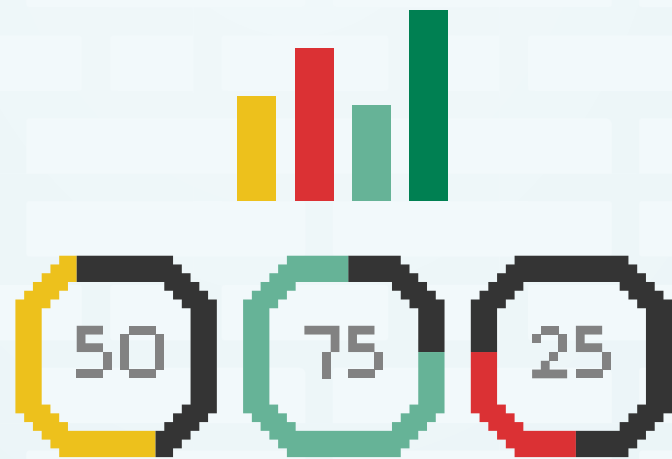


Game On:

Level Up Your Learning Strategy

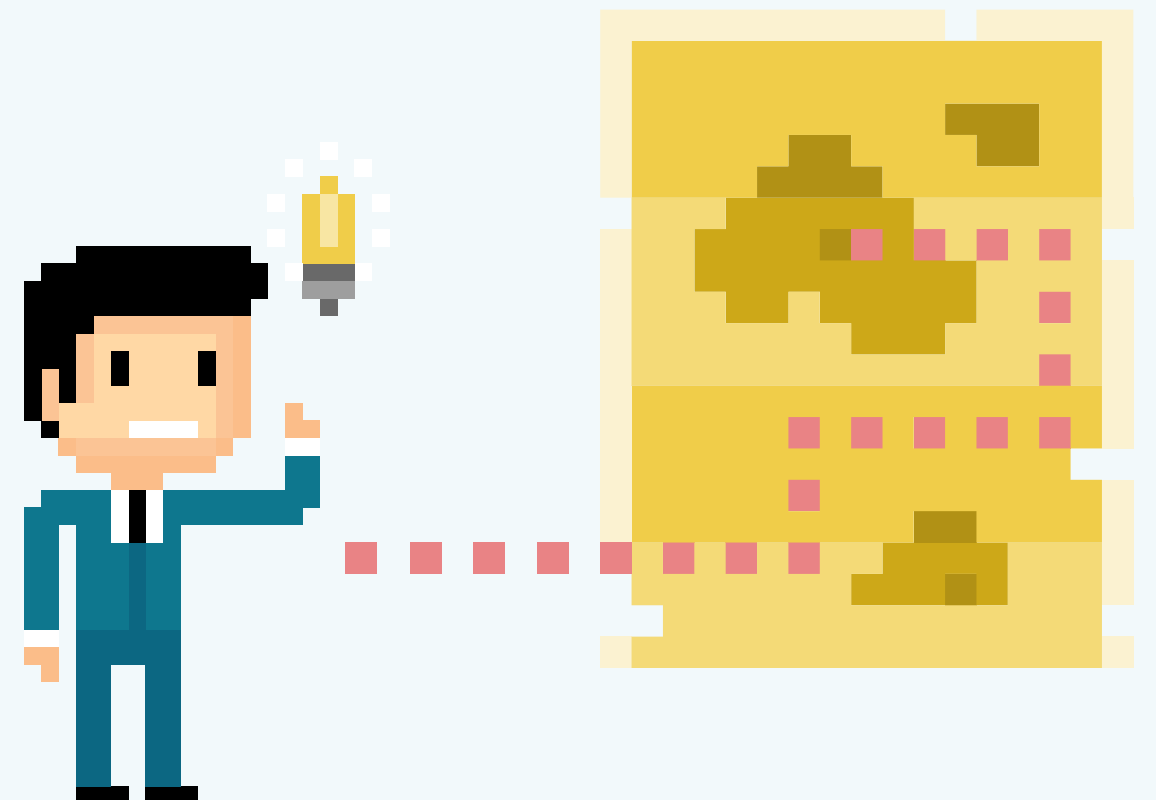


Strategies to Drive Engagement, Impact, and Growth



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Navigating a career is like undertaking the hero's journey in a video game. What might have started out as a seemingly straightforward mission often winds up sending players down a variety of unexpected paths with plenty of challenges, side quests, surprises, and triumphs along the way.

Consider an eager computer engineering graduate dropping their quarters into the game of professional life back in 2010. With the rise of cloud computing, AI, and more, their career likely played out very differently than they imagined when they first hit start.

So how have they managed to level up their skills and stay competitive amid nonstop cultural and technological change? Adaptability has surely been key to this player's longevity. As the professional world evolved, they adapted too—asking questions like:

- ***Where do I turn for guidance?***
- ***How will I know when and how to pivot?***
- ***Where do I find the cheat codes needed to unlock new levels and forge ahead?***

Maybe they turned to a professional association or credentialing body.

After all, who better to provide the tools and skills needed not just to stay in the game—but to keep advancing?

This is the opportunity for learning organizations: level up your learning strategy and offerings to support the entire learning journey, from exam preparation to continuing education (CE) and beyond. In doing so, you'll not only better serve your learners but also build a stronger, more sustainable future for your organization through:



More long-term engagement:

An ecosystem that focuses on lifelong learning can both attract new learners and retain existing ones. As their careers advance and develop, professionals will continue to be drawn to additional learning opportunities with an organization they already know and trust.



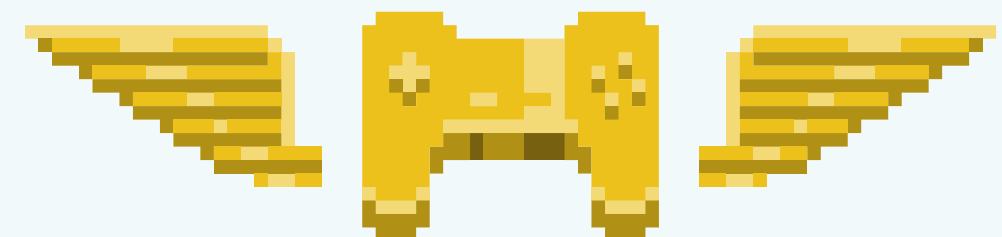
Additional recurring revenue streams:

As learners seek out additional learning opportunities over the course of their careers, they'll provide a steady source of ongoing revenue.



Greater learner success:

By better understanding the needs of more active and engaged learners, learning organizations can provide content that more specifically addresses those needs, resulting in greater learner success and satisfaction.



In the coming journey, we'll explore:

1

The Big Picture:

Learn why the backbone of any market-leading educational offering is a continual focus on **lifelong learning**.

2

The Foundation:

Professional credentials are key opportunities for learners to grow in their careers, which is why **exam prep** is a foundational element of lifelong learning.

3

The Ongoing Quest:

Find out how to help learners level up their skills throughout their career journeys with timely, relevant, and compelling **continuing education (CE)** content.

4

The Bonus Missions:

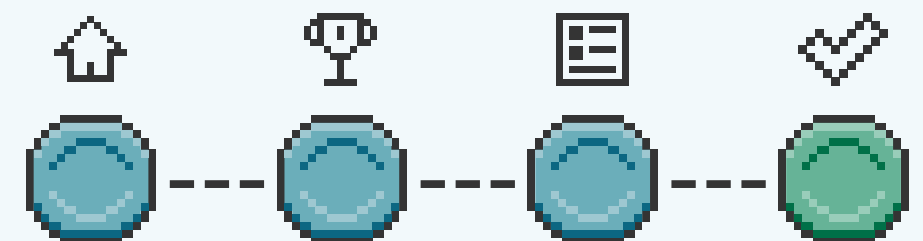
See how **microcredentials** can provide learners with a manageable and affordable way to quickly upskill in today's shifting professional landscape.

5

The Tech Imperative:

A great learning ecosystem deserves a convenient, intuitive platform, which is why your **learning management system (LMS)** stands as a critical piece of the puzzle.

LET'S BEGIN



Level Up with Lifelong Learning: Build a Cross-Generation Blockbuster

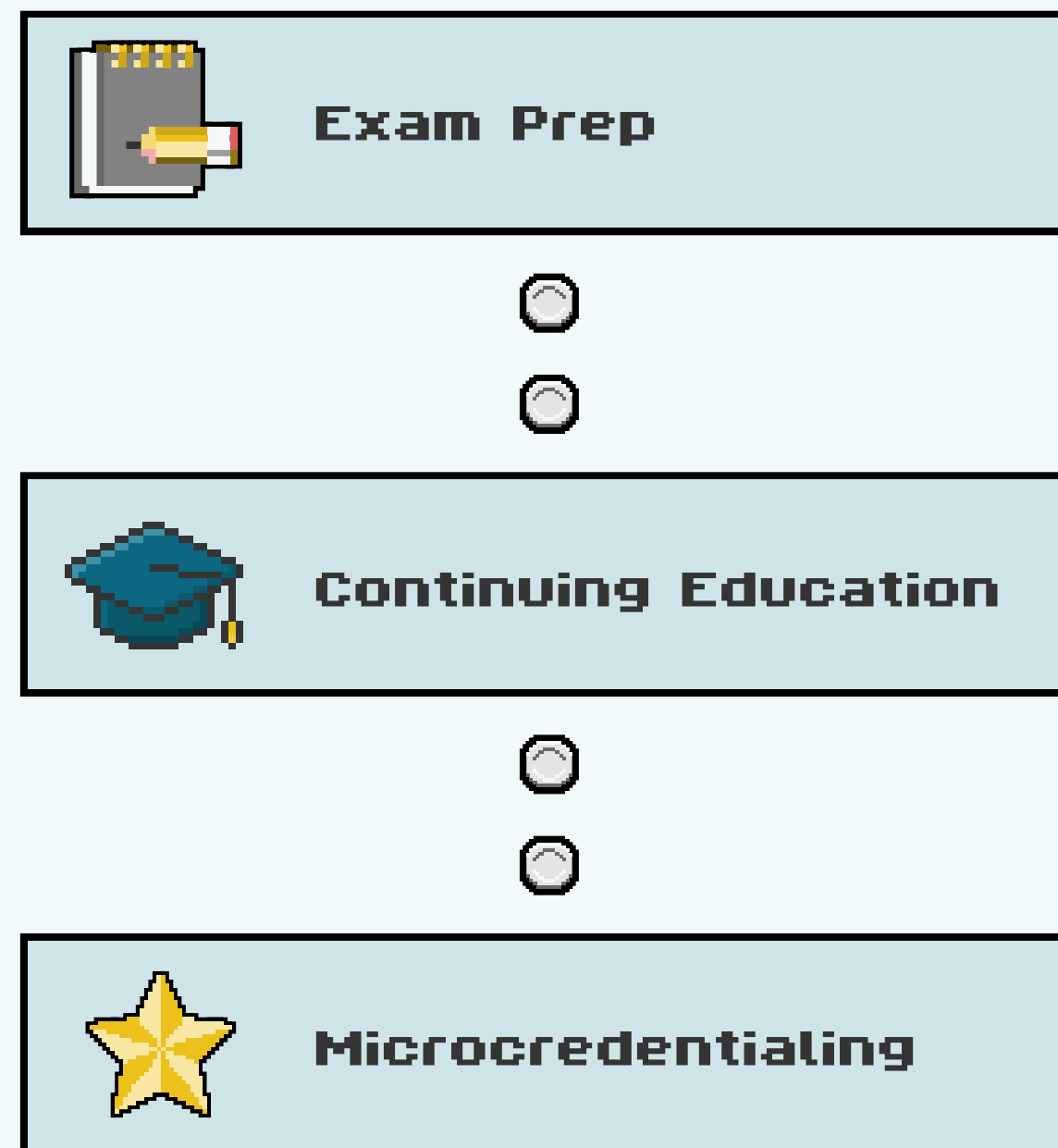
Every career path looks different, shaped by the individual choices a person makes along the way.

That's why focusing on [lifelong learning](#) makes so much sense for associations and credentialing bodies. By providing educational milestones throughout a career journey, such a system gives professionals the opportunity to pursue the path that best fits their needs and goals.

Lifelong learning, then, isn't limited simply to the formal education of a collegiate or post-graduate degree program. Rather, it's an ongoing, self-motivated pursuit of knowledge and skill development that can provide learners with:

- **Adaptability and career resilience**, particularly as AI and other technological advancements reshape roles and professions.
- **Enhanced employability**, as companies seek out new and specialized skills.
- **Personal growth and fulfillment**, as learners grow and evolve with the changes happening around them.
- **Increased earning potential**, as new skills and abilities translate into promotions.

For associations and credentialing bodies, lifelong learning presents an opportunity to support this journey and play a crucial role in learners' career-long success through a combination of:



Level Up with Exam Prep: Set Learners Up for Success





Professional credentials such as certifications or licenses—and the rigorous exams required to attain them—are among the most significant milestones along a learner’s career journey. These are the big battles that unlock new levels of achievement, which is why learners need to be fully prepared.

Associations and credentialing bodies looking to effectively support lifelong learning can help by committing to the full spectrum of [exam preparation](#), which includes a combination of:

- **Structured learning** that guides learners through the essential lessons.
- **Practice exams** that look and feel like the real thing.
- **AI-driven coaching** that draws on learner data to provide personalized adaptive learning, remediation, and test readiness.
- **Remediation tools** that point learners back to a relevant lesson, providing additional information and context around a particular topic they may have struggled with.
- **Post-exam engagement** that draws on a learner’s experience to help them map out options for continuing education (CE), additional skill development, and career progression.

Among these key elements, [practice exams](#) are the cornerstone on which learner confidence is built. But static, old-fashioned mock tests won’t get the job done. Today’s learners are looking for dynamic practice that prepares them for the actual exam experience, as well as post-exam tools that help them see where they’re solid and where they need to improve.

Learning organizations can help by delivering realistic exam-day-style practice, complete with not only traditional features like timers, but with a familiar user interface that provides a true exam-day look and feel. This kind of practice exam goes well beyond the basics to help both test-takers and learning organizations by:

-  **Improving pass rates and learner satisfaction.**
-  **Increasing program enrollment and retention.**
-  **Setting your organization’s program apart in a competitive market.**
-  **Building trust in your credential.**



Champion Spotlight:

Learn how the [American Bankers Association](#) developed a comprehensive five-step framework to enhance candidates' preparation for exam day.

Offering full exam prep comes with clear benefits, but those benefits become even more compelling when you consider the risks of not offering it. You're not just missing out on opportunities, you're also:

Limiting the learner experience:

Without integrated exam prep, learners are forced to piece together their own study plans across disconnected sources. Providing a complete, cohesive experience helps them stay focused, feel supported, and ultimately succeed.

Leaving revenue on the table:

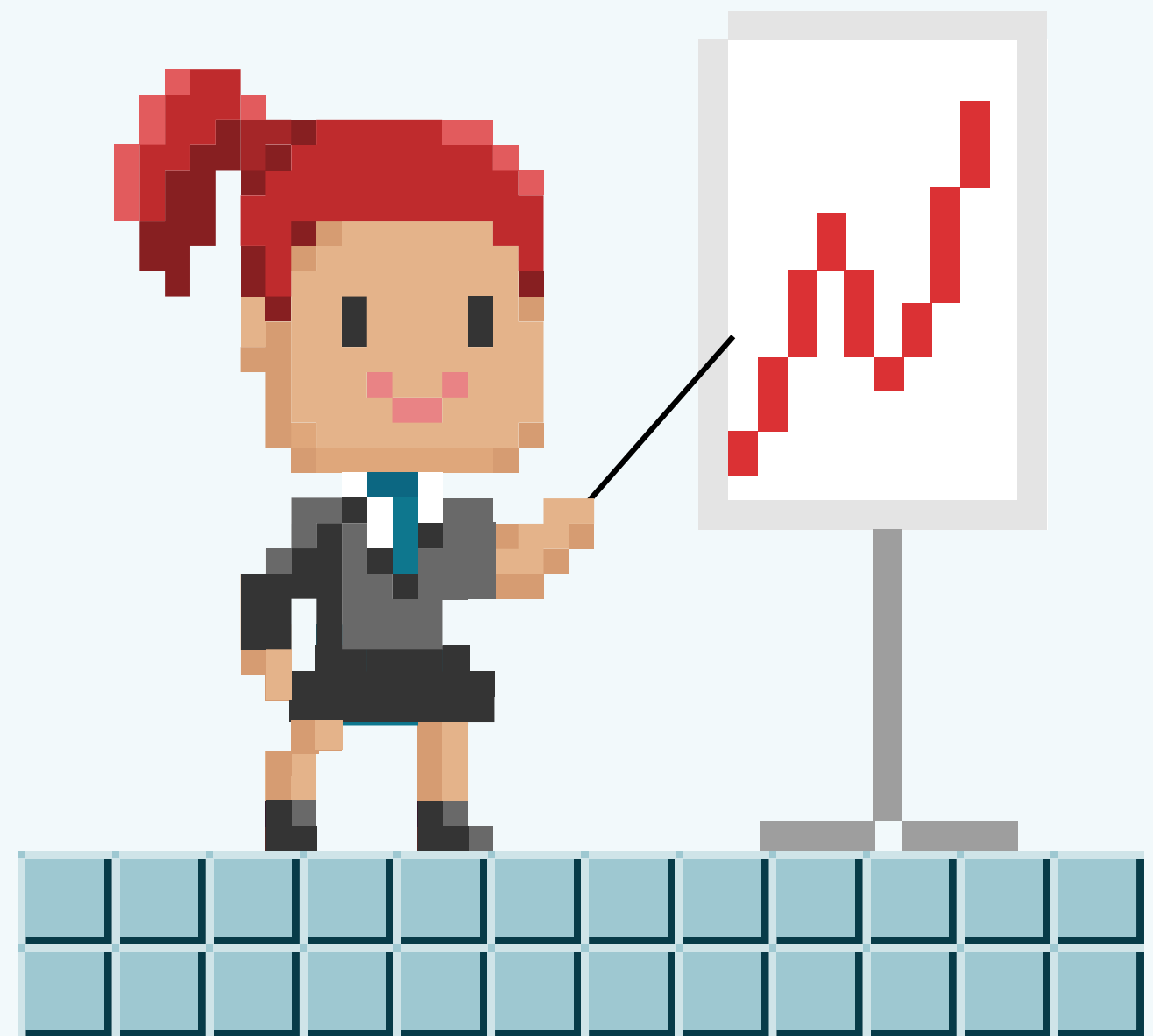
If you don't offer exam prep, a third party will—and they'll capture revenue that could support your mission. High-quality prep can unlock new, scalable income without adding major operational lift.

Ceding control over content:

What kind of content are those third-party providers offering? It may be outdated, riddled with errors, or just not relevant. And while learners may not directly correlate that bad content with your brand, it still represents a reputation risk.

Forgoing a chance to build a deeper connection with learners:

At the end of the day, learners want their exam prep experience to come directly from the association or credentialing body that is administering the exam. Exam prep gives you the chance to deepen the trust and credibility between your organization and its learners.





5 Best Practices for Revenue-Driving Exam Prep

Organizations that use advanced exam prep tools see up to 19% higher pass rates, which helps drive program credibility, learner satisfaction, and long-term ROI. Here are five ways to build the kind of winning exam prep experience that guides learners from nervous beginners to confident success stories:

1

Own the experience:

Whether you create or curate content, make sure it's exam-aligned and delivered through a platform you control, allowing you to own both the learner journey and the outcomes.

2

Provide custom practice:

Put learners in the driver's seat. Let them build personalized practice sessions by topic, difficulty, and performance to improve retention and reduce drop-off.

3

Meet learners anywhere:

Anytime-anywhere access helps boost engagement by meeting learners where they are, whether through mobile, offline mode, or short-form videos.

4

Gamify the grind:

Turn motivation into momentum with flashcards, badges, and leaderboards designed to drive daily wins that keep learners moving and completing.

5

Simulate the real thing:

Deliver [mock exams that mirror the real experience](#), helping learners build confidence, reduce anxiety, and walk in feeling prepared.

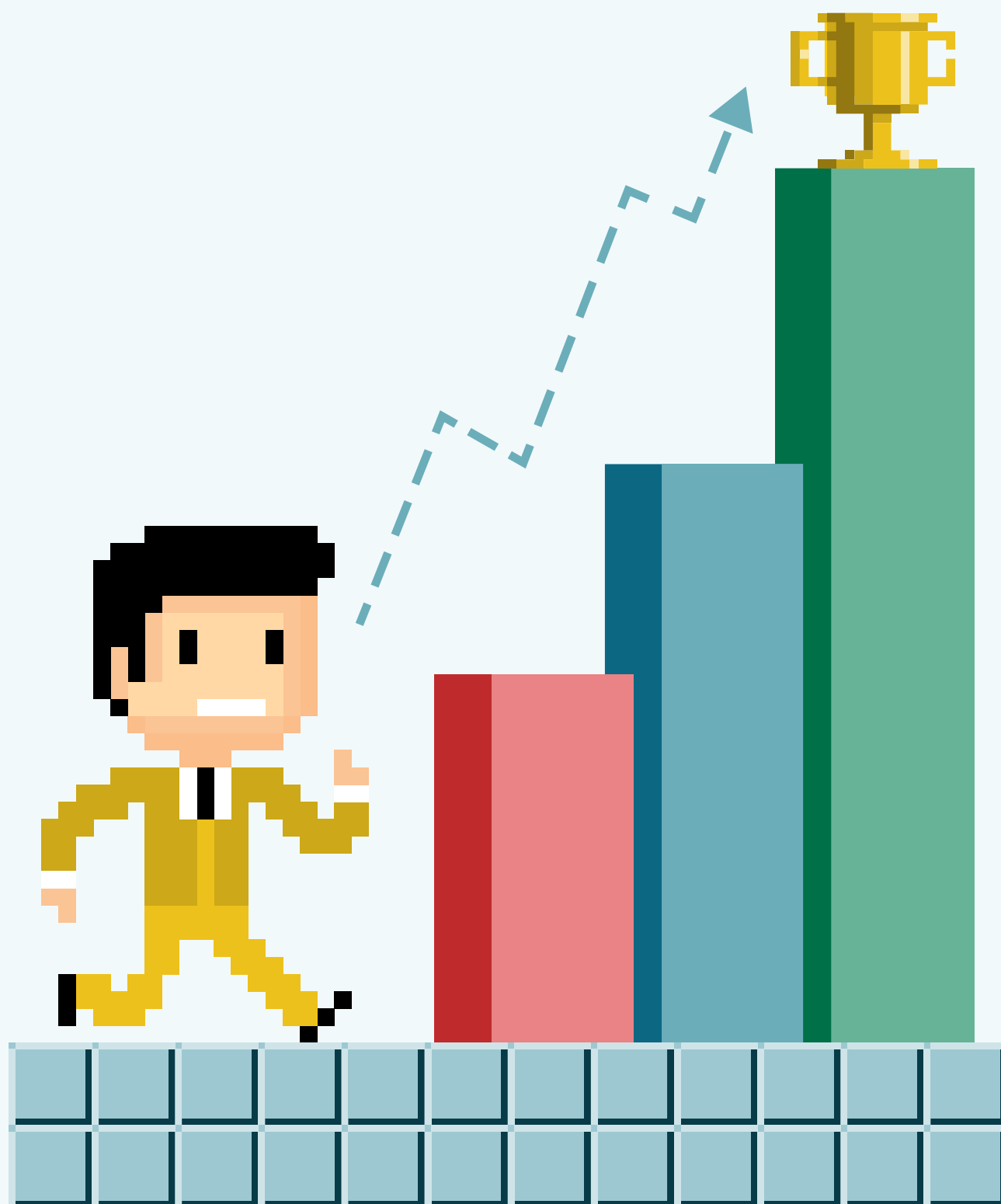


PRO TIP

BenchPrep's [ExamSim](#) is a great example of the kind of innovative simulator that today's learners are looking for. ExamSim delivers sophisticated, real-life exam preparation via:

- Configurable interfaces that resemble the look and feel of real-world exam platforms.
- Advanced practice modalities and question formats.
- Detailed performance insights to enable learners to identify and address their weak areas.

In other words, it's a holistic preparation experience—one that empowers learners to approach their exams with confidence and competence.



Level Up with Continuing Education: Keep Your Learners in the Game

Continuing education (CE) is a core part of lifelong learning—and a massive growth market, projected to reach [\\$93 billion by 2028](#). But with that growth comes new challenges for associations and credentialing bodies, including:

- Rising competition for learner attention
- Increasing expectations around content quality
- Greater price sensitivity among learners

Organizations that can overcome these challenges have the opportunity to become the go-to source for. It starts with building and delivering [a compelling CE offering](#), one that fosters learner development and reinforces the value of the organization by highlighting its value for both upskilling and re-skilling.

The key is to level up by moving beyond the notion of CE as [a routine checkbox exercise](#). When viewed through the lens of lifelong learning, CE can stand as a strategic opportunity to engage and empower your learners, rather than simply a compliance task to complete.



Player Handbook

10 Tactics for Smarter CE

An engaging and high-impact CE program doesn't happen by accident. It takes hard work and thoughtful consideration to deliver career-changing value, build learner loyalty, and power growth. Here are ten ways to take CE to the next level:

1

Repurpose content strategically by breaking long-form content down into microlearning, webinars, or interactive modules.

2

Add gamification to boost engagement, with quizzes, badges, leaderboards, or progress bars designed to motivate learners and increase course completion.

3

Offer tiered recognition in the form of digital badges, certificates, and exclusive content to create milestones that motivate.

4

Partner with experts, such as content or tech partners, to reduce lift, expand offerings, and accelerate speed to market.

5

Choose the right LMS – specifically, one built for delivering a modern CE program that can help you scale faster, engage smarter, and track what matters.

6

Personalize learning journeys by tailoring paths based on learner goals, pace, and skill gaps.

7

Offer varied instructional models that blend live, self-paced, and hybrid formats to meet learners where they are.

8

Make it accessible by delivering the mobile-first learning experience that Gen Z expects – make sure no learner is left behind.

9

Keep content current by retiring outdated material and updating with relevant, real-world topics.

10

Turn CE into a growth engine by creating experiences that deepen loyalty, increase renewals, and drive long-term impact.



PRO TIP

A great CE program is built on data, meaning decisions are based on engagement analytics and learner feedback, not guesswork. To get there, learning organizations need a tech stack that brings all learning activities together in one system, making it easier to track learner progress, identify trends, and optimize their offerings.

Level Up with Microcredentialing: Engage Learners with Stackable Wins

Not every challenge a professional encounters along their career journey will require a new certification. As industries change and technologies evolve, sometimes another tool in the toolbox is enough to unlock new levels of success or to keep pace.

[Seventy percent of U.S. firms](#) report talent or skills shortages, and are increasingly expecting their employees to upskill more quickly and efficiently to close those gaps. Enter [microcredentials](#), which give learners the opportunity to quickly and cost-efficiently upskill in order to demonstrate additional competencies and therefore present themselves as more marketable, a particularly attractive option in a tightening employment environment.

Microcredentials offer lifelong learning opportunities for:

- **Career explorers and early workforce entrants**, who can use microcredentials to nurture their path into a profession, as well as to differentiate themselves.
- **Experienced professionals**, who can use microcredentials to both upskill *and* satisfy their CE requirements, effectively killing two birds (angry or otherwise) with one stone.

Why are microcredentials such an attractive option for these groups? Because they stand as a more digestible and affordable pathway to further career opportunities.

The Benefits of Microcredentials



Learners are not required to commit to an expensive multi-year journey.



Modular training and more compact programs allow for a **better lifestyle fit**.



Stackable credentials allow learners to build their resumes over time.

Given their appeal to learners, microcredentials also represent an outstanding opportunity for associations and credentialing bodies. By [leveling up their microcredential offerings](#), learning organizations can enjoy enhanced visibility, increased engagement, and additional streams of revenue. To wit:



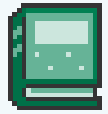
Learners tend to remain subscribed to email lists, which means they see more offers for new classes and microcredentials.



As they enroll in and complete new microcredential offerings, learners may add associated digital badges to their LinkedIn profiles, providing exposure for the association or credentialing body to their network.



Satisfied learners may be more likely to recommend membership to their colleagues, as well as to mention in professional conversations how they obtained their new skills.



Player Handbook

8 Power-Ups for Your Microcredential Strategy

Wondering if your microcredential offering will meet the needs of today's professionals? Here are eight things to keep in mind to build a program that delivers:

1

Provide a digital badge certifying the training. Talk about a social media win-win. It's great advertising for both the learner and the organization.

2

Allow participants to mix and match courses. Flexibility and speed are two of the hallmarks of microcredentials, so lean into them by offering this kind of à la carte setup.

3

Create separate learning pathways for your users. By highlighting specific avenues for your target audiences, you'll help learners see where a particular microcredential could take them in the future.

4

Allow learners to put microcredentials toward larger certificates. A microcredentialing program designed with larger certifications in mind might encourage learners to put their microcourses toward a grander goal.

5

Expand your focus beyond beginners. Newbies will likely check out your microcredential offerings, but don't forget the seasoned professionals in your audience, who are likely looking to hone their skills with advanced or cutting-edge topics.

6

Market to your learners but also to their industry. Many employers aren't aware of microcredentials. Give your learners an assist by showing companies how valuable they can be.

7

Don't make it *too* short. Micro shouldn't mean minimal. Give your learners the value they deserve, and if they need a certain number of CE credits for their industry, try to align your offering with those requirements.

8

Focus on assessments. Even for a microcredential, learners still need things like knowledge checks, gamification, and practice questions. Think of it as a scaled-down certification program.



PRO TIP






Data-driven insights, such as engagement metrics and at-risk warnings, can help you [better understand your learners](#) as they take their microcredential journey.

Level Up with Technology: The Importance of a Best-in-Class LMS

Glitches, bad graphics, inconsistent playability—these are all great ways to drive away gamers.

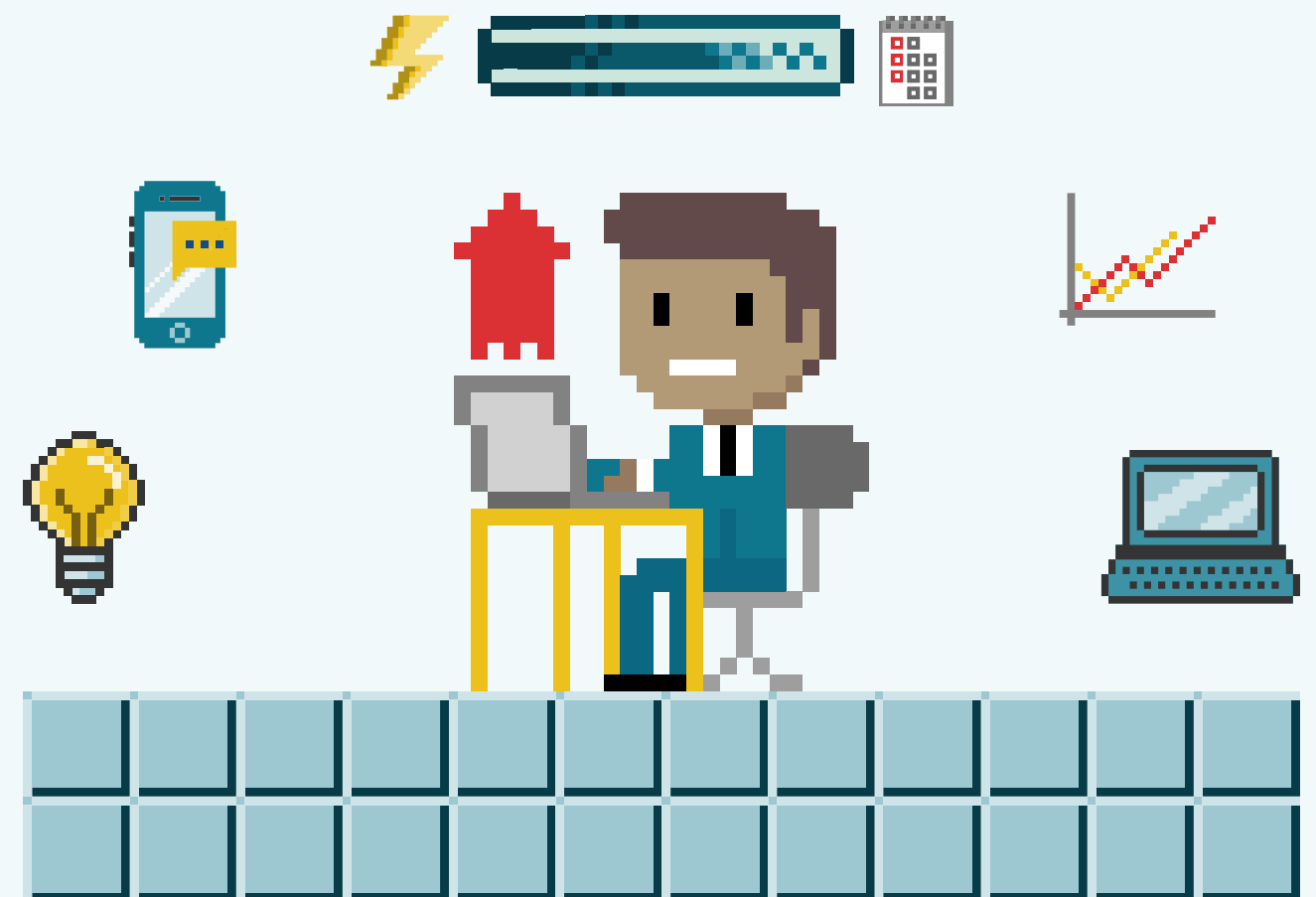
Likewise, **a learning program today is measured as much by its delivery as its content.** You can have the most compelling exam prep, CE, and microcredential materials available. But if your learning management system (LMS) doesn't match the digital ease and convenience that learners have grown accustomed to in other areas of their lives, they probably won't stick around (or come back). And just like that, your lifelong learning goals will be very short-lived.

Learners today want a connected, intuitive experience that's multimodal, personalized, and engaging—delivered across multiple channels. Key features include:

-  **Personalized, adaptive learning pathways that meet individual goals and pace**
-  **AI-powered support and recommendations to keep learners progressing**
-  **Interactive content formats like video, simulations, and hands-on practice**
-  **Opportunities for social learning through peer discussion and collaboration**
-  **Gamification elements such as progress tracking, achievements, and badges**

Delivering this kind of functionality may sound daunting, and it certainly can be for organizations that aren't prepared.

That's why an [all-in-one LMS](#)—one that supports a variety of use cases like exam prep, continuing education, and microcredentialing—is a smart choice for associations and credentialing bodies. It streamlines both the learner and admin experience, connects data across the learning journey, and makes it easier to deliver personalized, seamless support from first credential to ongoing growth.





Player Handbook

7 Essential Features to Level Up Your LMS

A modern LMS should do more than deliver content. It should enable smarter learning, simplify administration, and support the full lifelong learning journey. Here are seven essential features your LMS should offer:

1

Content management capabilities that allow you to create new content quickly and easily, helping to ensure that your educational offerings remain current and relevant at all times.

2

Learning technology that encompasses things like omnichannel delivery, personalized learning pathways, gamification options, competency-based frameworks, and real-time feedback.

3

Administrative tools that make it easy to quickly launch new educational offerings, analyze learner data to track engagement and progression, and keep your data secure.

4

Flexible configuration options

Give organizations control over how content is structured, displayed, and accessed, supporting a wide range of learning formats and use cases.

5

Advanced analytics and reporting

Deliver [real-time insights](#) into learner behavior, content performance, and program outcomes to guide continuous improvement.

6

Seamless integration capabilities

Connect with your broader tech stack—from CRMs to e-commerce platforms—to ensure efficient data flow and a unified user experience.






7

Scalable architecture

Grow with your organization—supporting new programs, expanding user bases, and evolving technology without needing a full platform overhaul.

Level Up with the Lifelong Learning Strategy Framework

The [Lifelong Learning Strategy Framework](#) (LLSF) is a tool that associations and credentialing bodies can use to determine where they should invest to grow their programs. The LLSF offers a structured, actionable approach to designing, delivering, and optimizing learning programs in order to better:

-  **Identify growth opportunities.**
-  **Optimize resource allocation.**
-  **Achieve measurable outcomes.**
-  **Enhance learner engagement.**
-  **Accelerate digital transformation.**

Looking to get started with the LLSF?

[Here's a worksheet](#) that will walk you through the five steps to help decide where to invest resources:

1

Establish your fact base by aligning your goals with your current learning landscape

- Define business objectives
- Set learning goals
- Identify gaps and opportunities

2

Take inventory to determine potential strategies

- Gather ideas
- Document solutions
- Consider your ecosystem

3

Evaluate solutions, prioritizing strategies based on

- Impact
- Feasibility
- Time to completion

4

Build a detailed action plan that includes:

- A defined scope
- Resources needed
- Timelines
- Proposed KPIs

5

Implement the plan

- Launch pilot projects
- Look to scale
- Focus on adaptability and continuous improvement
- Engage stakeholders



Champion Spotlight:

What does the lifelong learning strategy framework look like in practice? The [Project Management Institute](#) provides a great example of a learning organization that developed and launched their successful digital exam prep program through the lens of BenchPrep's Lifelong Learning Strategy Framework.

HIT START

Position Your Organization as a Leader in Professional Learning

That young computer engineering grad didn't know exactly what skills they'd need as their career progressed—but they knew they'd need to keep leveling up.

And they're not alone. Today's professionals are navigating constant change. To stay relevant, they're seeking learning experiences that are flexible, accessible, and built to grow with them over time.

Associations and credentialing bodies are uniquely positioned to deliver that kind of support, but only if their own strategy reflects a commitment to lifelong learning. By offering connected, learner-centered programs across exam prep, continuing education, and microcredentials, learning organizations can help professionals stay sharp, adapt with confidence, and reach their next level—again and again.

The opportunity is clear. The question is: **Will your organization be the one to guide them forward?**



About BenchPrep

BenchPrep is an award-winning learning management system (LMS) with a mission to transform traditional learning. Specializing in certification training, exam preparation, microcredentialing, and continuing education, we offer an interactive and personalized learning experience. We enable associations and credentialing bodies to grow their education programs and better support their learners throughout the lifelong learning journey.

BenchPrep is more than just a technology provider; we collaborate closely with organizations, helping to design and implement interactive online courses, and providing comprehensive project support alongside a versatile self-service admin portal for streamlined course management.

Many of the world's leading learning organizations trust BenchPrep to power their learning programs, and more than 12 million learners have used BenchPrep to attain academic and professional success.



Experience the transformation BenchPrep can bring to your learning programs.
Visit benchprep.com today.

Additional Resources

We hope you find this guide useful and encourage you to explore more great BenchPrep content.

The Ultimate Guide to Microcredentials: A Strategic Path to Macro Impact



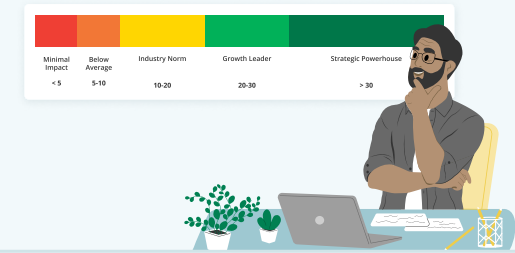
[The Ultimate Guide to Microcredentials: A Strategic Path to Macro Impact](#)

4 LMS Superpowers Every Association Needs



[4 LMS Superpowers Every Association Needs](#)

Unlocking Growth: Calculate Your Learning Power Index



[Unlocking Growth: Calculate Your Learning Power Index](#)

3 Stages of Creating a Continuous Learning Journey for Your Learners' Long-Term Success

The professional learning journey is a continuous, lifelong cycle. Does your learning program effectively guide learners through this journey and support ongoing professional development?



[3 Stages of Creating a Continuous Learning Journey for Your Candidates' Long-Term Success](#)

GUIDE From Bits & Bytes to Insights: A 5-Step Guide to Refining LMS Data into Actionable Business Intelligence



[From Bit & Bytes to Insights: a 5-Step Guide to Refining LMS Data into Actionable Intelligence](#)

CLO Secrets Revealed

5 Learning Leaders Share Secrets to Transform Your Certification Program



[CLO Secrets Revealed: 5 Learning Leaders Share Secrets to Transform Your Certification Program](#)