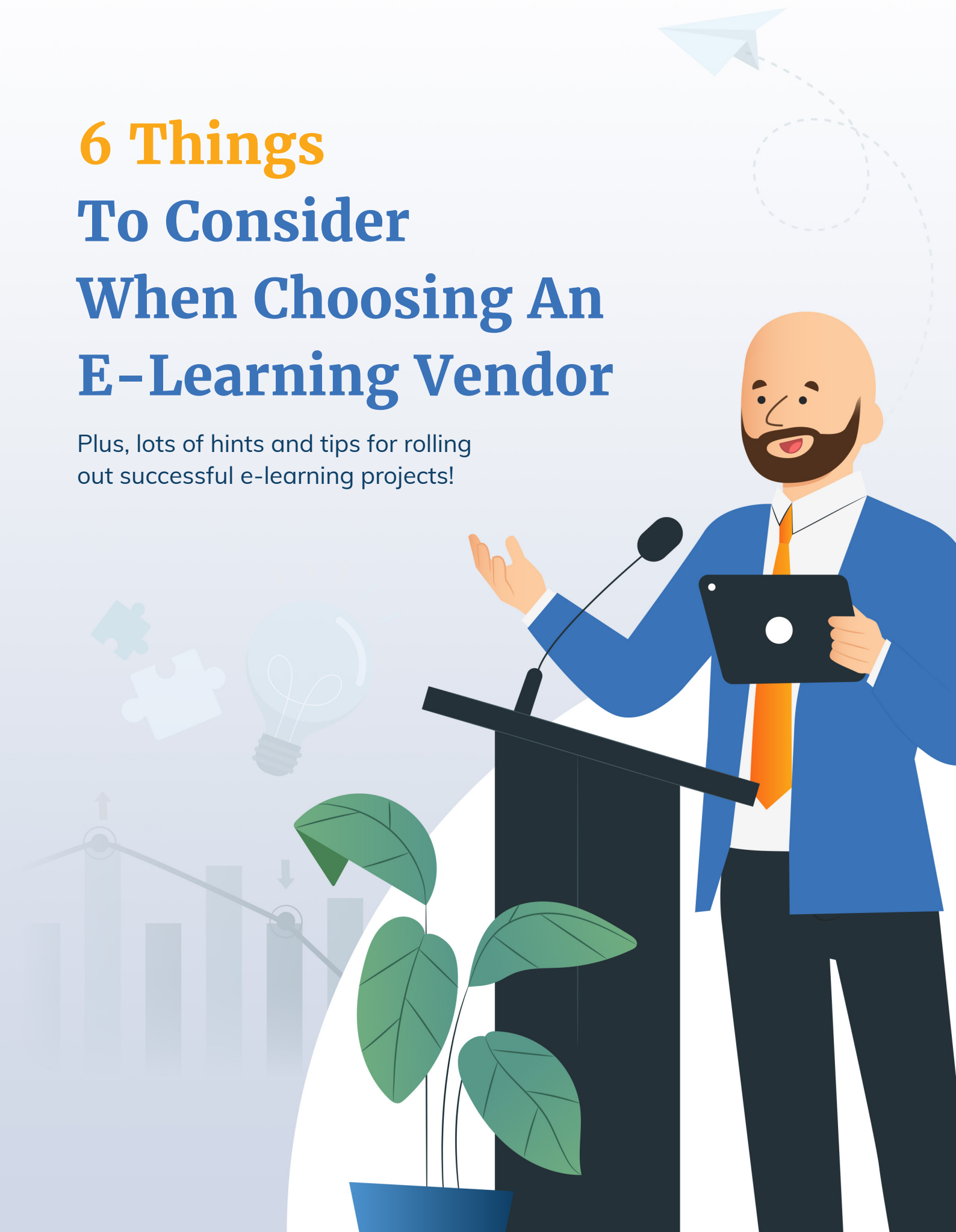


# 6 Things To Consider When Choosing An E-Learning Vendor

Plus, lots of hints and tips for rolling out successful e-learning projects!



**We are aware that choosing the right e-learning vendor can be a daunting task.**

What do you need?



**Brilliant  
Designs**



**Great  
Communications**



**Superb Project  
Management**



**Effective  
Support**



**All of the above are crucial and you need an e-learning vendor that will make sure you are provided with all these elements.**

Whether you're new to e-learning or not, this handbook will help you choose the right vendor and ensure you get the best possible e-learning for you and your organisation.

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## 01

# Who has the vendor previously worked with?



Find out what organisations the vendor has completed projects with.

**| This is a big indicator of how credible the vendor is.**

The vendor might have permission from previous clients to show parts of their work, so it is worth asking to see examples of e-learning that has been developed. Also consider asking the vendor for any case studies so you can see how the whole process works. They should be able to show you how they took an organisation with no e-learning to rolling out fully functional, exceptional online courses.



## 02

# Should I use the cheapest vendor?

We know that there are huge variations in module costs in the Middle East, Europe and Asia, and it will be a big decision deciding which vendor to go with.

We have been told by some of our biggest clients that tried the cheapest options that they were forced to end contracts prematurely due to lack of project management and design quality. This meant they had to go to tender again and procure a new vendor, wasting a lot of time and money in the process.

**We understand that budgets are incredibly important.**

But choosing the cheapest option is risky and you probably won't get the high quality you and your organisation are after.



## 03

# How important is good communication?

Good communication is vital for project success.

You might want to ask potential vendors the following:

## Availability

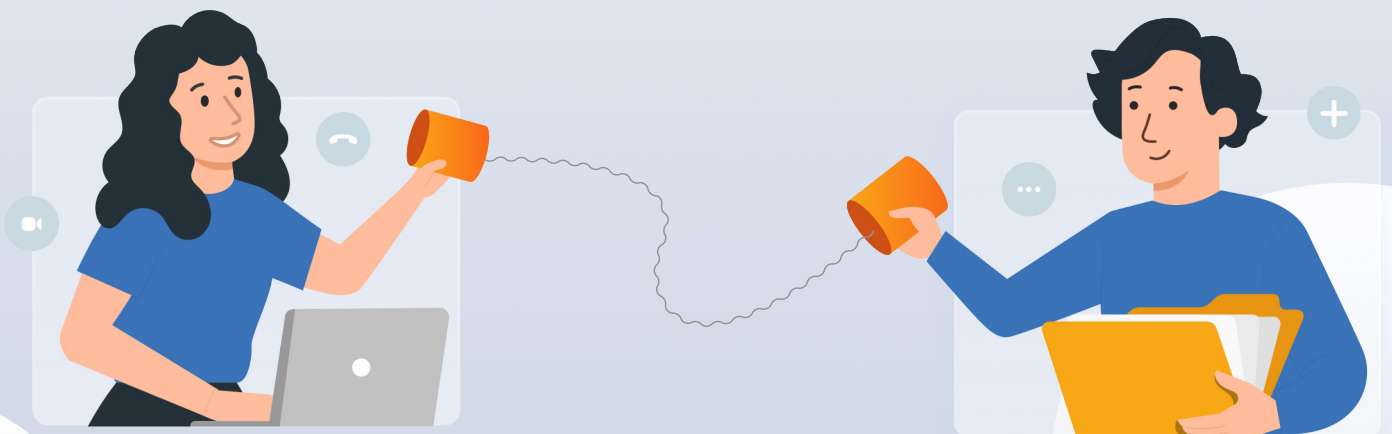
Check if the vendor is going to be available to contact quickly and effectively. WhatsApp, email or conference calling should be readily available for any questions or requests you might have. Responses need to be prompt and waiting 5 days for an answer is unacceptable.

## Management

Consider how the vendor manages communication. If you have one module, email is sufficient, but what if you are creating 20? You might also be developing a Learning Management System (LMS), producing 25 animations and adding a voice over script. Email would end up being very confusing and would most probably lead to mistakes being made. Other communication tools are crucial for making project management effective.

## Tools

Ask the vendor to show you the communication tools they use for larger projects and how they will use them to make the process as easy as possible for you.

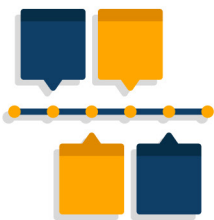
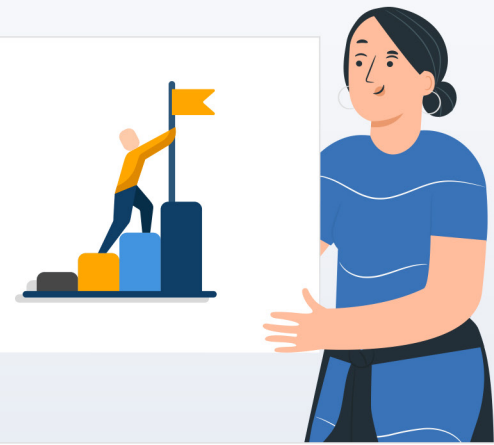


## 04

# How important is project management?

The answer is 'crucial'. Effective project management is essential if any e-learning project is to be successful. Make sure you consider the following:

Ask to see a project plan from the vendor. There should always be a path to success, so ask them to explain the project process.



Ask the vendor for a single module timeline, so you can see the overall development time, what theirs and your milestones are and when you can expect any deliverables.

**Don't forget to ask them if you are developing multiple modules, how many they can develop in parallel.** For example, if you are developing 10 modules and the vendor can only do 2 at a time, you know you will get an extended timeline.

## 05

# Design and Development

This is obviously the main part of any e-learning project, and we want to make you aware of the different phases of this process.

We continually refine our own processes to be as efficient as possible whilst making it as simple as we can for our clients. We use the following phases to successfully complete our projects.

- ▀ Kick-off Meeting
- ▀ Storyboarding (SB)
- ▀ Conceptualisation
- ▀ Development
- ▀ Creative Brief
- ▀ Voice Over Scripts and Professional Recording

**Ask your vendor if they use similar phases, what they are and how they are executed.**



**Let's now look at each of these distinct project phases.**

## **Kick-off Meeting**

Here the relationship begins. Partners are introduced, project flow, timelines and deliverables are discussed and brainstorming of the initial content takes place.

**This is where the seeds of a successful project are sown.**





## Conceptualisation

The conceptualisation phase is when the vendor's team spend a few days going through the content, learning about the client's organisation, familiarising themselves with the content subject and brainstorming how they can design the modules.

**Other considerations for a vendor during this phase should be:**

- 01** Correct interpretation of the brand guidelines (these should be provided by your organisation) to guarantee that all designs are 100% in line with your organisation's branding.
- 02** A review of the size of the content; is it too long to keep the user engaged? The vendor should use their instructional design experience to make recommendations as to whether you need to split the content into smaller modules, or maybe it needs a slight re-write. These services should be included.
- 03** Sharing ideas around the interactive elements and potential animation that could be used to bring the module to life.





## ▀ Creative Brief

The vendor should then arrange a creative brief so they can go through branding questions, concept ideas and overall design styles.

This is your opportunity to ensure that any designs and the flow of the module meet your requirements before the design phase begins.

## ▀ Storyboarding (SB)

We consider this the most crucial phase in the process of producing e-learning modules.

This is where lots of collaborative working is required, especially in the first few modules of a project as everyone is finding their feet.

**And learning about each other's requirements or limitations.**



**Storyboarding is so crucial; you need to make sure your vendor's process considers the following:**

- 01** This is where the branding and the user interface (UI) will be designed and approved by you.
- 02** The vendor should check that the content is written suitably for e-learning and offer their expertise if changes are needed. Poorly written content for e-learning can reduce the quality of the learning experience and potentially lose user engagement.
- 03** There should be at least one feedback round on the SB phase once it is fully designed. We advise you to be meticulous when reviewing the SB as some vendors might not allow any design changes once it is signed off.
- 04** The vendor should start the SB and share the initial few slides with you. You can then see if the overall design style, module flow and tone are what you are looking for. We would recommend managing the SB phase this way, as our experience has taught us that it can be a huge waste of time and effort if you discover the basics are wrong after SB completion. If you find the design style is incorrect at the beginning, it saves you having to restart the SB phase completely.



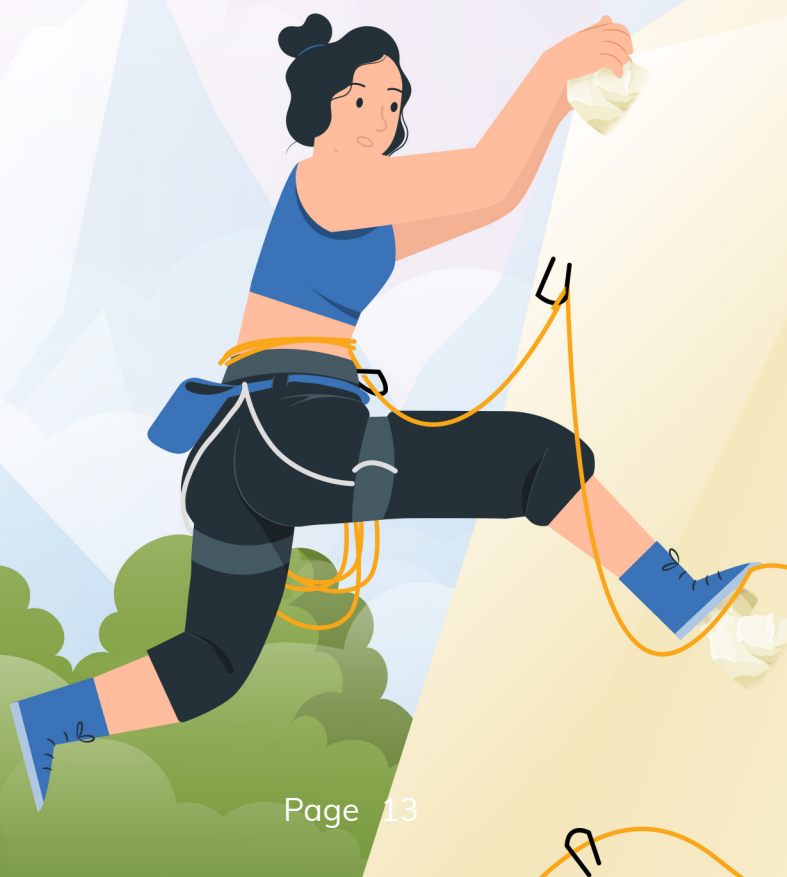
## Development

During this phase you should expect the vendor to develop the storyboard into a fully interactive module that you will be able to test on your own computer.

From our experience, you should get two feedback cycles on the developed module. The vendor should send you an alpha version, beta version and after second round of feedback, the final gold version.

### Things to ask your vendor when considering feedback cycles:

- 01** Ask your vendor if they use a similar cycle and to demonstrate how this works.
- 02** Ask the vendor how you leave feedback on the module. We use online tools that are designed to reduce the time it takes for our clients to input their feedback.

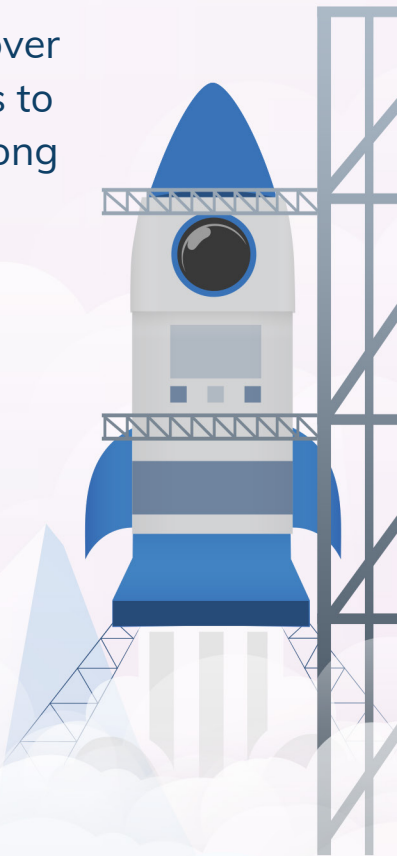




## 🚩 Voice Over Scripts and Professional Recording

Voice overs are often used in e-learning to make the lessons more engaging and as an inclusion measure. **Here are a few things to think about:**

- 01** Ask your vendor to supply voice over samples. For example, if you were going to select a female, British artist, then you would expect at least 5 audio samples to choose from.
- 02** Keep in mind that you will need to sign off on a voice over script and expect it to take at least 5 – 8 working days to record and sync to the module. Ask your vendor how long it would take and what the process would be.
- 03** If you are too busy to write the voice over script, it may be something your vendor offers. Make sure you ask about this if it is required.



## 06

# After Launch Support

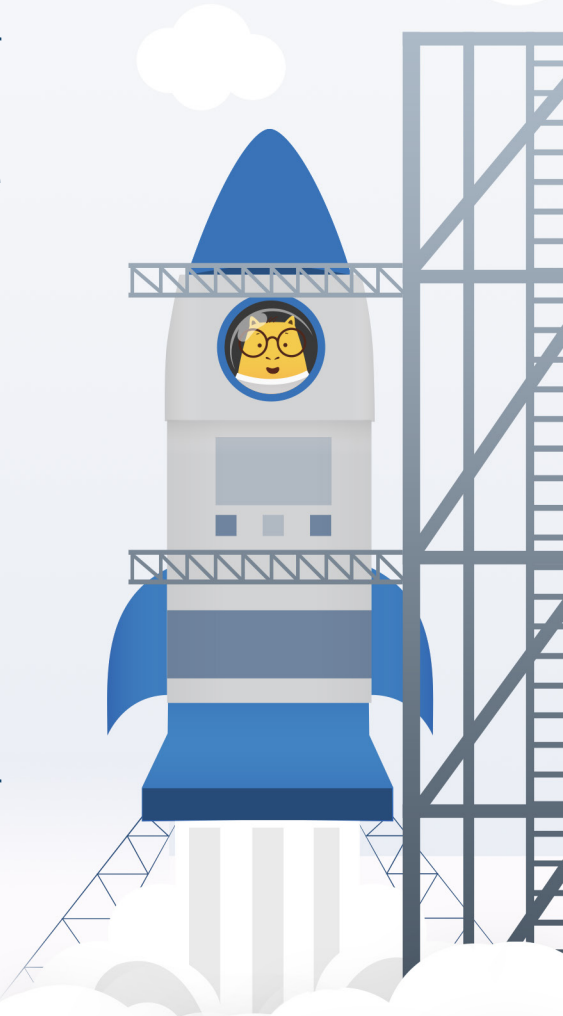
Once you have finalised the modules and launched, what happens next? Are you on your own, or have you got support?

**Project management doesn't end here, so make sure you consider the following:**

## 🚩 Source Files

Before signing a contract, ensure that the vendor will supply you with the SCORM files and final source files. For example, if they are using Articulate Storyline to develop modules, then you need to ensure that they send you the Storyline Source files. That way, you have access to the source content for your modules and if needed, make amendments yourself or find a new vendor to make changes.

Without the source files, you will not be able to make changes to your modules moving forward. We have had many clients who needed modules updating but didn't have the source files and had to do a full module re-design, so don't forget to ask this one!



## 🚩 Bug Fixing

Check with the vendors that they will support you after launch to fix any bugs that stop the module operating correctly.

## 🚩 Content Changes

Does the vendor allow for any content changes? Can they offer a support package that allows you to add new slides, designs and text? If they can't, or you don't want a support package, find out what the hourly, half day or day rate is for changes.

You might even consider asking something like this– 'Can you give me the price if I needed to add 5 new fully designed slides, which will include 500 words voice over?' Then at least you have a good idea what the cost would be when you are considering changes.







## Relationships

We work with a lot of large corporates, and we pride ourselves on being available anytime to help with any issues. You should ask the vendor about longer term relationships, contact times and being your adviser when needed.

We pride ourselves on replying to client queries and requests almost immediately. Response times are the key to successful e-learning, so make sure your vendor responds to any of your questions promptly and thoroughly from the very start of the project.

At Capytech, we have developed our processes to ensure we are as efficient and as effective as we can possibly be.

## Over the last 8 years

**We have consistently guided our clients through successful design and development phases, always ensuring:**

- ▀ There is no confusion
- ▀ We reduce the amount of work our clients need to do by using our streamlined processes
- ▀ We provide a professional and friendly working relationship where communication is key



## And that's how successful e-learning is developed!

This handbook has been created to share the lessons and ideas we have developed over our years delivering world class e-learning. Whether you are new to e-learning, or a seasoned professional, this guide should give you the confidence to improve your current practice, or confidently step into the world of online learning.

# We are always available to discuss all things e-learning.

Contact us today at [contact@capytech.com](mailto:contact@capytech.com)

We would love to be considered as a  
partner for your next e-learning journey!

