OpenSesame

Understanding Your Total Learning Investment

A practical guide to uncovering fragmented spend, assessing ROLI, and getting more value from workplace learning

Introduction

Most organizations know what they spend on their primary learning solution. Few have a clear view of their total learning investment.

A department needs specialized training and adds a vendor. An employee cannot find the right course and submits an expense. A subscription renews even though usage has declined.

Each decision may solve a legitimate need. Together, they can create a learning ecosystem that is difficult to see, measure, and manage.

What does your total learning investment include?

Core learning

- Learning platforms
- Content subscriptions
- Compliance libraries
- Certification and continuing education programs

Supplemental and decentralized learning

- Department-specific vendors
- Individual course purchases
- Employee reimbursements
- One-time or off-contract training requests

Technology and operations

- Course creation tools
- Integrations and delivery technology
- Reporting and analytics systems
- Time spent sourcing, evaluating, managing, and renewing providers

Where learning value gets lost

Fragmentation often begins with legitimate needs. Over time, individual purchases, vendors, and tools can accumulate, making it harder to understand what the organization is spending and what it is receiving in return. Common signs include:

- Overlapping or underused content and subscriptions
- Recurring purchases and reimbursements that are difficult to track
- Coverage gaps that require additional spending
- Inconsistent access or difficulty finding available learning
- More contracts, renewals, reporting, and administrative work

Introducing ROLI

Return on learning investment, or ROLI, is the value an organization realizes from the money, time, technology, and people devoted to workforce learning.

Stronger ROLI means your learning investment:

- Supports priority skills, roles, and business needs
- Reaches the employees who need it
- Gets used
- Remains efficient to manage

> Without a coordinated effort, you can end up with duplication, overlap, and rogue spend.
>
> Talent Director, Bunzl North America

Assess ROLI through four lenses

ROLI becomes clearer when you view it through four connected dimensions.

Cost

What are we actually spending? Look beyond your primary contract for subscriptions, reimbursements, one-off purchases, technology, vendor management, and administration. Ask yourself:

- Where are we paying for similar content or capabilities more than once?
- Are we paying for access or capabilities we don't use?
- Which purchases could potentially be consolidated?

Coverage

Does our investment support the learning needs that matter most? Consider both required training and the skills your workforce needs next. Ask yourself:

- Which learning needs are well covered?
- Which roles, topics, or audiences remain underserved?
- What needs are causing employees or departments to purchase learning elsewhere?
- Are we covering both compliance and workforce development?

Usage and access

Can employees access, find, and use what we purchase? Learning delivers limited value when employees cannot find it, access it, or understand why it matters. Ask yourself:

- Who has access today, and who doesn't?
- What are employees actually using?
- Which resources may be underused or difficult to discover?

Complexity

How much work does the learning ecosystem create? More vendors mean more sourcing, contracts, integrations, renewals, invoices, and reporting. Ask yourself:

- How many learning providers and renewal dates are we managing?
- How much time goes into administration?
- Could fewer providers or purchasing channels make learning easier to manage and access?

Your ROLI at a glance

You do not need a complex return model to start. Gather the information you can access today, use reasonable estimates where needed, and note what remains unknown.

ROLI lens	What to capture	What to look for
Cost	Bring together spending across core platforms, specialized vendors, one-off purchases, reimbursements, and learning tools.	Overlap, unused spend, consolidation opportunities
Coverage	Identify which priority learning needs are well covered and where important gaps remain.	Gaps that trigger additional purchases
Usage and access	Compare who should have access, who currently has access, and who actively uses the learning available.	Underused investments or limited access
Complexity	Count the vendors, renewals, purchasing channels, and administrative time involved	Work that could be simplified or consolidated

Three simple signals to capture

Total annual learning spend
Core learning + supplemental purchases + learning technology

Learning access rate
Employees with access ÷ employees who should have access × 100

Active usage rate
Active learners ÷ employees with access × 100

These signals do not produce a complete ROLI score. They provide a starting point for understanding whether your learning investment is visible, reaching employees, and getting used.

Use the companion ROLI Snapshot worksheet to gather the information, note what remains unknown, and identify one opportunity to explore.

What could a stronger ROLI look like?

- Consolidating overlapping vendors
- Expanding access to more employees
- Closing content gaps without adding another provider
- Reducing one-off purchases and reimbursements
- Making existing learning easier to find
- Simplifying contracts, renewals, and administration
- Getting a clearer view of usage and value

See where your learning investment could work harder

OpenSesame can help you explore opportunities to consolidate learning content, broaden workforce access, improve usage, and simplify the work of managing multiple providers.

Book a demo to identify opportunities to strengthen your ROLI.