

Abra LearningAction® WHITE PAPER

Using Abra LearningAction Solutions to Extend the Value of Existing Systems Infrastructure

The prevailing wisdom in the New Economy is that organizations can increase productivity and gain economies of scale by moving existing business processes to the web, and compliance management is no exception to this rule. With a web-based compliance management system in place, compliance and policy administrators can manage these issues uniformly and efficiently, even throughout a large and geographically-dispersed organization.

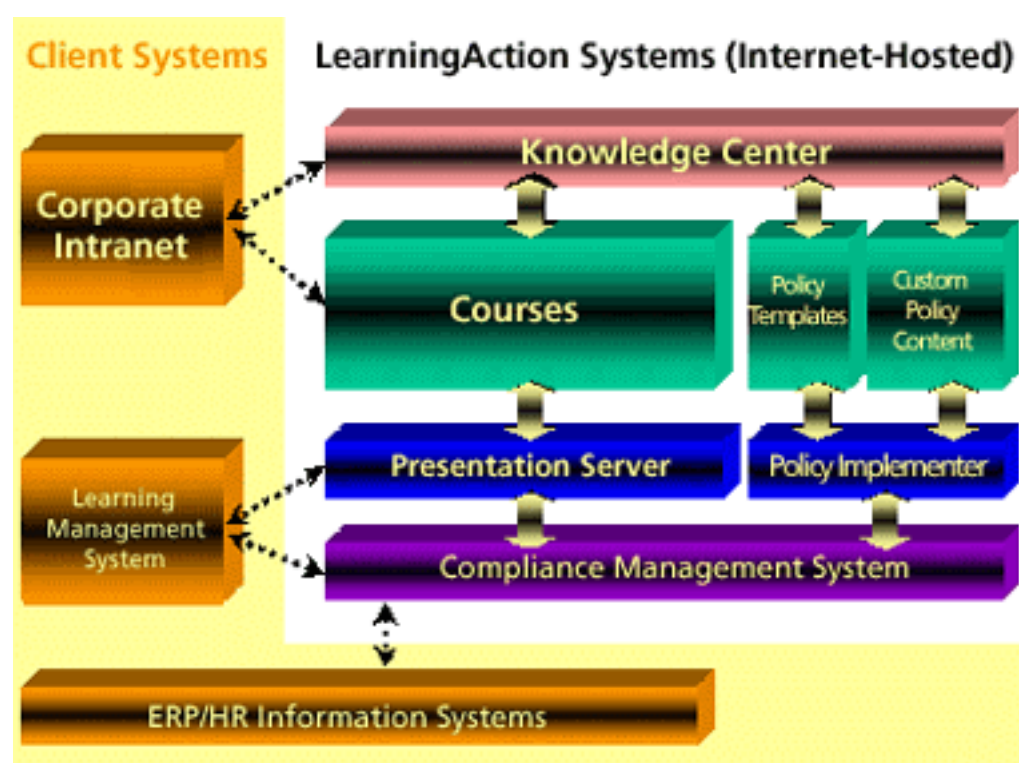
However, organizations that "webify" business processes often fail to take into account the effort or strategies necessary to integrate new, web-based systems and processes with each other and with existing client-server applications. The result can be a mish-mash of new applications and processes equally complex to those of the previous generation, and leading to familiar problems; redundant data stored in multiple places, and business processes awkwardly divided between systems and/or their owners.

Abra LearningAction is committed to a strategy of supporting open systems and industry standards, and to developing, implementing and supporting interfaces to industry-leading platforms and applications. Our systems architecture is designed to be modular, so that pieces of the Abra LearningAction architecture can be easily "bolted on" to a client's existing systems infrastructure as needed. As a result, Abra LearningAction's solutions act as a value-adding enhancement to existing ERP, HRMS, and LMS platforms and extend the value of investments our clients have already made.

The Value of the Abra LearningAction Solution

Abra LearningAction's solution is modular and can be implemented through a hosted, application service provider (ASP) model that enables clients to get up and running without quickly and easily. Abra LearningAction systems are capable of interfacing with existing client systems at a number of levels.

At a fundamental level, interfaces between Abra LearningAction's Compliance Management System (CMS) and industry-leading ERP and HRMS platforms like Oracle HR, SAP, and PeopleSoft offer clients a number of advantages. First, clients can take advantage of highly-specialized features within Abra LearningAction's CMS that enable them to quickly ascertain the status of an organization-wide compliance program and to communicate policies and/or training needs to employees throughout the organization. And they can do this without having to create or manage redundant stores of information, since employee data is automatically synchronized between the two systems. Moreover, since the interface can be made to communicate in both directions, clients can store key compliance-related status information in their ERP/HR system for convenience while using Abra LearningAction's CMS to manage the process of achieving compliance.



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Separately, clients who have made an investment in an enterprise Learning Management System such as Docent, Saba, or KnowledgePlanet.com can easily access Abra LearningAction's training courses through an AICC-compliant interface that facilitates communication between the client's LMS and Abra LearningAction's Presentation Server. As a result, clients can use the learning environment they have created and provided to employees as a launching point for Abra LearningAction courses and all student usage data and tracking can be stored in the client's chosen LMS.

Finally, Abra LearningAction's modular, web-native architecture makes it easy to integrate with a client's corporate intranet in a variety of ways to ensure that employees can access all relevant training and policy information in a seamless manner.

Abra LearningAction's integration strategy is a key reason why Abra LearningAction clients are successful in managing organizational compliance programs. Without integrating their compliance management system tightly with existing infrastructure systems, organizations find success either elusive or impossible for one or more of the following reasons:

1. By its nature, compliance-related topics need to be managed broadly throughout the organization with a minimum of time and effort. As a result, leveraging information in existing systems is important in creating the efficiencies that compel organizations to implement compliance management systems in the first place.
2. Compliance programs cannot succeed unless organizational information is kept up-to-date and management reports correctly reflect the current state of the organization.
3. Information should only need to be entered once; storing redundant information in multiple systems causes errors and confusion as the systems invariably become desynchronized.

Putting the Horse Before the Cart

Abra LearningAction's success in enabling clients to manage organizational compliance programs points out a critical success factor in web-based business process re-engineering - the need to mold new systems to the business processes and needs of the client, rather than the other way around.

The emergence of the web as a standardized platform for systems development enables organizations to re-engineer their businesses one process at a time, increasing the likelihood of success and decreasing the disruption associated with major systems or process conversions. Whereas organizations that implemented major client-server ERP systems in the 1990's often accepted the need to model their business practices around the limitations of the systems they adopted, organizations that are using the web as a re-engineering platform today are finding they must do the opposite to be successful. The opportunity that the web affords to re-engineer incrementally implies that newly-introduced systems must conform and integrate well with a systems infrastructure that is already substantially in place.

Abra LearningAction's feature set and integration strategy are designed specifically to address this trend and take advantage of opportunities for web-based business process re-engineering. The data structure behind the Abra LearningAction CMS can be flexibly defined to uniquely identify employees however an organization's business processes dictate, and/or how its existing systems do. The data structure can also be revised on a case-by-case basis to maintain any additional information about employees that the client finds useful.

In addition, the CMS is capable of leveraging student data from the client's ERP/HR system to make decisions about which courses or policy information each employee should be exposed to. Courses or policies can be assigned or restricted based on job title or classification, for example, as well as by position in the organizational hierarchy.

Abra LearningAction's modular solution architecture and ability to function as an ASP provides clients with flexibility while minimizing the amount of work required to get up and running. It also enables clients to adapt quicker and more easily to changes in their needs and processes on an ongoing basis. Abra LearningAction's strategy of supporting industry standards and integrating with clients' existing systems plays a crucial role in fulfilling clients' expectations and enabling them to realize the benefits of web-based compliance management.

Please note that our training does not constitute legal advice. For legal advice, you should contact a lawyer.

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