

# How to make the most of training audits


Audit – a simple, five-letter word that carries complexity and high importance in the training industry.

What is your reaction when you hear ‘audit’? Do you shiver a bit, associating the word with negative or fearful thoughts? If so, you’re not the only one.

## The word gets a bad reputation...

Audits are not meant to define consequences but are instead intended to measure the mechanisms in place and evaluate how well they work.

Learning audits are a systematic review of a training program (or any program, for that matter) that can provide analytics and conclusive information about the strengths and weaknesses of the current program. They can be done on a large scale, looking broadly at a program, or they can be done on a small scale, looking at specific initiatives like new hire training. On any scale, learning audits can evaluate the approaches, teams, systems, and curricula of training programs to identify where improvements can be made.



Learning audits...  
provide an  
organization with  
information about  
the strengths and  
weaknesses...

## Most of us have had a negative experience with curricula influenced by:

- Lack of resources
- Lack of time
- Decision-making (or paying!) stakeholders, often asking for assets that do not include the best learning methods
- Production of assets or content by novice internal or external hires, not experts
- Resistance to new ideas or changes
- Owning too many legacy assets
- Missing needs analyses or assessments
- Over-adherence to a specific method

Regularly taking time to reflect and develop a system for the most effective and efficient learning method has proven to be an excellent use of both time *and* money, ultimately resulting in an impressive ROI.


Seems like a great idea, right? But audits aren’t always finished. Most often, this is due to a **lack of time**.

When there is sufficient time for an audit, however, the next important step is to select the **right person/people** to audit the program.

Whenever someone works on a project – even if they own it or are very close to its development – there will always be many opportunities for mistakes and blind spots along the way. After all, even the very best writers use editors. Choosing the auditor should be a conscious decision.

The auditor should be very familiar with the latest methods in successful training. You may be surprised by what the latest research says and how it teaches audit partners how to identify specific approaches that can help improve your materials.

## So, now you have found the time and an appropriate auditor. Great! But what happens next?



Depending on what is being audited, the auditor may want to look at existing documents, evaluate courses, judge onboarding guides, talk with key stakeholders, or attend virtual or live training sessions. These factors would ultimately be examined and evaluated against a set of standards.

Once the audit is complete, an audit report is prepared. A good audit report should result in a **roadmap** that includes refined recommendations, specific actions, estimated timelines, and suggested stakeholders or departments for future proposals. To be successful, these recommendations should always be tied back to the organizational goals and strategies.

The recommendations should provide enough detail to help facilitate discussions with stakeholders who are invested in the findings of the audit (related to resources, personal, etc.). From there, you can begin implementing some, or all, of the recommendations provided, taking steps towards a more effective and efficient training program.