

RED6 / PRACTICAL LMS INSIGHT

Who owns your LMS?

A practical ownership audit, operating rhythm and 30-day reset for learning platforms that have become everybody's responsibility and nobody's work.

LMS OWNERSHIP - WORKING GUIDE

START HERE

This is a working guide, not a longer web page.

The website describes how ownership gets lost. This download helps you diagnose it, compare the three honest ownership models, establish a workable rhythm and leave a platform that does not depend on one person's memory.

Responsibility is a name on an organisation chart. Ownership is protected capacity, authority to make routine decisions and accountability for evidence and improvement.

WHAT YOU WILL LEAVE WITH

☐	A ten-symptom diagnostic you can run with HR, IT and learning colleagues
☐	A scored ownership test covering time, mandate, knowledge, rhythm and resilience
☐	A comparison of internal ownership, recruitment and managed administration
☐	A 30-day reset plan plus an operating calendar and handover checklist

Use it once to diagnose the problem. Keep the worksheets for the next review, renewal or vendor conversation.

01 / WORKING SECTION

Diagnose whether the platform is actually owned

A login, a supplier contact and a line in somebody's job description do not prove ownership. Look for operating evidence.

Ten symptoms of an unowned LMS

☐	Nothing material has been reconfigured since go-live, even though the organisation has changed.
☐	Paid modules or features are switched off and nobody can explain the decision.
☐	Standard compliance reporting takes days because it is rebuilt each time.
☐	Leavers, joiners or role changes reach the LMS late or inconsistently.
☐	Courses have duplicated, naming is inconsistent and search results are hard to trust.
☐	A personal spreadsheet has become the unofficial source of truth.
☐	An integration can fail for days or weeks before somebody notices.
☐	Upgrades happen without a test plan, or are deferred because nobody owns the risk.
☐	Support tickets repeatedly ask for things the platform could handle through configuration.
☐	The platform has a poor internal reputation but no agreed measure of what is wrong.

Interpret the pattern

0-2 - Mostly owned Protect the operating rhythm and make sure knowledge survives absence and staff change.	3-5 - Ownership is partial There is probably a capable person without enough time, mandate or cross-team agreement.
--	---

6-8 - Operationally unowned Stabilise people data, evidence and integrations before starting enhancement work.	9-10 - Service recovery Treat this as a controlled recovery: name an interim owner, contain risk, then redesign ownership.
---	---

02 / WORKING SECTION

Understand how ownership disappeared

It is rarely one bad decision. Ownership usually drains away through a predictable hand-off that nobody notices at the time.

The project ended Implementation had a budget, project manager and launch date. None of them covered the following Monday.	The person left One capable individual understood the configuration. Their replacement inherited access, not context.
It was never assigned Learning assumed IT, IT assumed learning, HR assumed the vendor and the vendor assumed the customer.	It was absorbed The LMS became five per cent of a role on paper and zero per cent during every busy month.

The cost chain

- 01** Attention becomes reactive
Only faults and deadlines get time; maintenance and improvement disappear.
- 02** Workarounds become normal
Spreadsheets and manual checks hide the operating gap without removing it.
- 03** Data becomes less trusted
Reports are questioned, so more manual checking is added and decisions slow down.
- 04** The software gets blamed
A replacement is proposed without changing the ownership model that caused the decline.

Replacing an unowned system gets you a newer unowned system - usually with migration risk added.

03 / WORKING SECTION

Score the five conditions of real ownership

Score each condition 1, 3 or 5. Do this with at least two teams; disagreement is useful evidence, not a problem with the exercise.

Condition	1 - Missing	3 - Partial	5 - Established	Score
Capacity	Work happens only around other priorities.	Some recurring time, often displaced.	Protected capacity matches demand and risk.	—
Authority	Every change needs informal permission.	Routine decisions are possible but boundaries are unclear.	Decision rights and escalation limits are explicit.	—
Knowledge	Configuration lives in memory.	Partial notes or supplier documents exist.	Current runbooks explain rules, data and recovery.	—
Rhythm	Work is driven by incidents and deadlines.	Some checks happen inconsistently.	Weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual cycles are owned.	—
Resilience	One person or supplier is indispensable.	Some cover exists without full access or context.	Absence, handover and supplier exit have been tested.	—

READ THE SCORE

21-25 established - 15-20 fragile - 9-14 partial - 5-8 unowned

The total is less important than the lowest condition. Strong knowledge does not compensate for zero capacity; protected time does not help if the owner cannot make routine decisions.

The ownership gap to resolve first

Lowest-scoring condition	
Evidence behind the score	
Risk if nothing changes	
Smallest credible improvement	

04 / WORKING SECTION

Install an operating rhythm

Ownership becomes real when the recurring work has a cadence, an output and somewhere visible for exceptions to go.

A minimum viable LMS calendar

Cadence	Work	Evidence left behind
Daily / alerts	Failed integrations, access failures, time-critical learning exceptions and security notifications.	Resolved alert or named incident with owner and next update.
Weekly	Joiner/leaver reconciliation, enrolment exceptions, support themes and upcoming releases.	Exceptions cleared; repeat causes added to backlog.
Monthly	Compliance reporting, data quality, licence usage, content changes and improvement priorities.	Issued reports, reconciled totals and ordered backlog.
Quarterly	Permissions, roles, integrations, release testing, supplier service and unused capability.	Review record, test evidence and approved actions.
Annually	Renewal, fit, data retention, ownership model, recovery and value delivered.	Renewal position and an honest keep, improve or replace decision.
Continuous ly	Decision notes, configuration changes and runbook maintenance.	A new owner can understand what changed and why.

KEEP THE CALENDAR SMALL

Every recurring check needs a decision attached

A monthly meeting that only observes red numbers is not ownership. Define what the owner can correct, what must be escalated and what evidence closes the item.

Your next operating cycle

Weekly check and owner	
Monthly output and recipients	
Quarterly control review	
Annual decision point	
Where exceptions are recorded	

05 / WORKING SECTION

Choose the ownership model honestly

There are three workable models. The right answer depends on demand, risk, cover and whether there is enough specialist work to sustain a role.

Model	Best fit	Strength	Watch-out
Internal owner	Stable platform, manageable demand and a capable person who can receive protected time.	Closest to users and organisational context; lowest direct cost.	Time is often promised rather than protected; absence and specialist issues need cover.
Dedicated hire	Consistent workload, business-critical service, multiple audiences or a substantial improvement roadmap.	Deep context and continuous presence; capacity can grow beyond routine administration.	Recruitment cost, key-person risk and the temptation to fill the role with unrelated work.
Managed administration	Real specialist demand that does not justify a full-time post, or a need for dependable cover and recovery.	Breadth of expertise, documented service and less dependence on one employee.	Scope and decision rights must be clear; outsourcing tasks without ownership changes little.
Hybrid	Internal product ownership with external technical administration or specialist projects.	Combines context with depth and provides a route for knowledge transfer.	The seam between parties needs one request route, shared priorities and explicit escalation.

Questions that settle the choice

☐	Is there enough recurring and improvement work to justify a dedicated role after automation improves?
☐	Can an internal person genuinely protect the required time for the next twelve months?
☐	Who covers leave, turnover and issues beyond routine administration?
☐	Does the owner have authority across learning, HR, IT, data and the supplier relationship?
☐	What documentation and access must remain with the organisation under every model?

06 / WORKING SECTION

Reset ownership in thirty days

Do not begin with a transformation backlog. Begin by making the service safe, visible and transferable.

- 01** Days 1-5 - Name the interim owner
Give one person the authority to coordinate work, access suppliers and make routine decisions while the long-term model is chosen.
- 02** Days 1-10 - Contain risk
Check administrators, leavers, mandatory learning evidence, failed integrations, backups or exports and imminent renewals.
- 03** Days 6-15 - Map demand
Gather recurring tasks, open faults, reporting commitments, projects and stakeholder expectations in one backlog.
- 04** Days 11-20 - Establish the rhythm
Assign the weekly and monthly checks, define outputs and agree where requests and exceptions enter the service.
- 05** Days 16-25 - Document the critical path
Record access, data flows, assignment rules, compliance definitions, supplier contacts and recovery steps.
- 06** Days 26-30 - Decide and communicate
Choose the ownership model, publish responsibilities and agree the first ninety days of protect, repair and improve work.

The handover pack that prevents a repeat

☐	Current administrator list, access method and emergency access owner
☐	System map showing HR, identity, CRM, content, reporting and credential connections
☐	Audience, assignment, reminder, completion and certification rules
☐	Compliance report definitions, schedules, recipients and known limitations
☐	Supplier contacts, contract dates, licensed modules and support routes
☐	Release, testing, incident, recovery and change-record procedures
☐	Current backlog split into protect, repair and improve
☐	Named deputy and the date the handover was last tested

The ownership test is simple: can the service remain safe for four weeks if the usual person is unavailable tomorrow?

MAKE IT SPECIFIC TO YOUR PLATFORM

Find the three changes that would make the biggest difference.

Use the free LMS health check at red6digitallearning.co.uk/health-check, or book a direct conversation with Marc about administration, implementation or integration support.