

Standardizing Training

A practical guide to standardizing training operations without losing flexibility.



Introduction

Who's completed training? Where are the gaps? How do we know this program is working?

The answers are often buried in a maze of regional spreadsheets, manual workarounds, and systems that weren't built to work together. Leadership is left with more questions than clarity.

What's needed is a consistent foundation across the entire training function. A shared structure that brings together data, workflows, and tech to create one view of performance, one way of working, and one strategy to scale.

In this guide, you'll learn:

- What standardization across data, processes, and tech really looks like.
- Where small inconsistencies cause big problems for strategic visibility.
- How leading L&D teams create consistency without sacrificing local flexibility.
- What to look for in a platform that can support standardization at scale.



About Administrate

Administrate is a learning technology company based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Administrate is also the name of our training management system, which is the only TMS dedicated to live training.

Our training management system helps enterprise training teams manage live training. We've helped customers like Maersk Training, Roche Diagnostics, and Siemens Healthineers train thousands of learners every year.

Standardization Is The Foundation Of Strategic L&D



L&D has a visibility problem. It's not that data is missing, it's that it's misaligned. Different regions track training in different ways. Key fields get lost in translation. Teams follow their own workflows. And the systems behind them don't talk to each other.

What seems like small inconsistency creates outsized consequences.

A single metric can't be trusted across locations and reports arrive late or need explanation. Strategy stalls while the team backtracks to validate numbers.

This slows everything down and, more importantly, it erodes confidence. When leadership asks for insight and gets caveats instead, the value of L&D may be quietly called into question.

Standardization solves this at the root. With consistent data, shared processes, and integrated systems, L&D becomes a strategic function with a clear line of sight across the organization. Reporting becomes faster. Risk is easier to manage. And decision-making gets sharper because it's based on facts everyone can agree on.



Wilmington PLC

As a multi-brand organization with decentralized training operations, Wilmington struggled to align data and workflows across teams. Even something as simple as creating an internal case study became difficult because different departments had different versions of the same story, based on inconsistent reporting inputs.

By standardizing how training activity was tracked and reported, the team was able to deliver a clear, unified narrative to leadership that reflected the true impact of their work.

[Learn More About How Wilmington Achieved This Transformation](#)

What Standardization Really Looks Like (And What Breaks Without It)

Standardization isn't a one-time cleanup effort or a software upgrade. It's a structural shift to align how your L&D function operates across the business. When it works, you unlock visibility, control, and speed. When it doesn't, even the simplest requests become slow, manual, and error-prone.

At its core, standardization spans three key areas:

Data

Your data is only as good as its consistency. Field names, formats, and structures need to align across teams and systems.

If one team logs completions as "yes/no" and another uses a date format, reporting becomes a patchwork. Standardized data ensures metrics mean the same thing everywhere, so reports hold up under scrutiny.

Processes

From enrollment to ILT coordination to survey collection, training delivery relies on repeatable processes. But in many organizations, these workflows evolve differently in each region or team.

When the basics aren't aligned (how sessions are scheduled, how feedback is captured, how completions are verified) you can't scale efficiently or report with confidence.

Technology

Even the best workflows fall apart when the tools behind them don't connect.

Standardization includes aligning platforms, integrations, and system behavior so that data flows automatically, not through manual handoffs or spreadsheet exports. Integrated tech reduces friction and lets your team focus on delivery, not patching together workarounds.

How Poor Standardization Breaks L&D

Inconsistencies often start small. A field labeled differently in one spreadsheet. A regional process that drifts from the original standard. A platform that doesn't sync cleanly with others. But over time, these small gaps multiply and start to affect everything from reporting accuracy to program delivery.

Here's how it shows up:

Misaligned fields in spreadsheets break enterprise reporting. One region tracks "completion date," another uses "date completed," and a third leaves it blank. The data can't be rolled up, reports stall, and leadership gets conflicting answers.

Instructor scheduling becomes chaotic without coordinated processes. When every team uses its own methods to assign instructors (shared calendars, spreadsheets, inbox threads) it's only a matter of time before someone ends up in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

Surveys and feedback lose value when every region does it differently. Some use a 5-point scale. Others ask different questions. A few forget to send them at all. Without consistent structure, learner experience data can't be used to improve or compare programs.

Key signals you have a standardization problem:

- You've delayed reports because data was incomplete or inconsistent.
- Your team edits exports manually before every exec update.
- You rely on a single person to "make the data work" across tools.
- Each region has its own enrollment or attendance tracking method.
- The same training metric means different things in different reports.
- Surveys aren't comparable across programs or geographies.
- Launching a new platform or program takes longer than it should.
- You spend more time reconciling data than using it to make decisions.

How ESRI standardized training for 70,000 learners

With over 70,000 learners trained annually, ESRI's training operations had grown into a complex, global network. But under the surface, inconsistent data and manual processes were slowing everything down:

Instructor scheduling was handled differently by each team, often through spreadsheets and inbox threads

Fields like "location" and "delivery type" were used inconsistently, depending on who was managing the session

Key training data was stored across systems (ERP, LMS, CRM) with no standard structure

Event planning, communications, and compliance tracking relied heavily on manual input

These small differences created major downstream issues: reports needed constant reconciliation, scheduling errors were common, and forecasting demand was nearly impossible.

ESRI tackled the problem by introducing shared data structures and common workflows across teams. They aligned on field definitions and formats, created consistent processes for scheduling and communications, and connected key systems so data flowed automatically.

The result was a centralized view of training operations that supported demand planning, reduced rework, and gave leadership confidence in what the numbers were saying.

What Standardization Enables Across The Training Organization

Standardization enables training leaders to report faster and their team to schedule more smoothly. But it also builds the confidence to operate at scale and ensures you have the systems in place to support it.

Here's what that unlocks across the business:

Faster, more trusted insight delivery

Reporting doesn't need a reconciliation phase. Your team can provide clear, accurate data to leadership at any moment.

Smoother onboarding of new systems, people, and programs

When processes and tech are aligned, rollout and adoption don't depend on regional workarounds.

Lower risk in compliance-heavy environments

From certifications to audits, standardized processes give teams the ability to track and prove every requirement was met without scrambling.

Consistent delivery and consistent outcomes

When programs run the same way across the business, it's easier to measure, optimize, and improve.



"Each brand had its own Frankenstein stack with unreliable systems held together with string.

We were using 'short-term' solutions that had been limping along for five years, and instructors and learners were constantly working off mismatched materials."

Anna Shaw, Technology Product Director, Wilmington PLC

What standardization enables at every level

For **your training team**, standardization means you can:

- Utilize consistent, enterprise-ready reporting.
- Deploy faster rollouts and tech adoption.
- Greater confidence in training coverage and impact.
- Easier change management across regions.
- Less firefighting, more strategic planning.

For **cross-functional teams**, standardized training means:

- IT spends less time fixing data pipelines.
- Finance sees training investment tied to performance.
- HR gets a clear view of onboarding and upskilling.
- Compliance gets proof of delivery without manual audits.
- Business units trust L&D as an insight partner.

Standardization without compromising on localization

For global training leaders, consistency is non-negotiable. But enforcing it blindly across regions is unrealistic and can trigger compliance issues.

Rather than flattening every local difference, the goal is to define which elements of training must be standardized, like data structure, key workflows, core systems, and where there's room to flex.

A strong model supports both:

- Shared data standards and delivery processes that protect reporting integrity
- Local adaptations for formats, regulatory requirements, and delivery preferences

This approach turns standardization into a strategic enabler rather than a source of friction. Training and learning leaders can operate with control and confidence while empowering local teams to deliver in the ways that work best for them.



What To Look For In A Standardization-Ready Platform

Most L&D tech stacks are assembled over time and weren't built for scale. You might have an LMS for content delivery, spreadsheets for scheduling, and a dozen workarounds to hold it all together. The result? Disconnected data, inconsistent processes, and a team spending more time managing tools than improving programs.

That's what makes reporting slow, audits painful, and change hard to roll out. Not because people are doing it "wrong," but because the tools weren't designed to work together.

Standardization fixes this by bringing structure to how data is handled, how processes are followed, and how tools fit together.

Here's what that looks like in practice:

- One place to manage key training data. You shouldn't need to open five tabs and a spreadsheet to answer basic questions.
- Tools that connect, not compete. Your LMS, HRIS, and other systems need to share data without manual exports.
- Workflows that can be standardized and reused. Enrollments, scheduling, communications, reporting... If it's repeatable, it should be consistent.
- Reporting that works for both execs and delivery teams. High-level insights and operational details should come from the same source.
- Built-in flexibility for regional differences. Teams should be able to localize what matters (formats, regulations, preferences) without breaking the structure.

Is your technology built to support standardization?

Can your current technology:

1. Keep core training data in one place and format?
2. Connect directly to your LMS, HRIS, and other key tools?
3. Enforce consistent workflows across teams and regions?
4. Support both exec-level reporting and day-to-day tracking?
5. Let regional teams adapt formats or processes without breaking reporting or causing friction?
6. Reduce manual work instead of adding to it?
7. Let you define and control shared data fields across teams?
8. Handle exceptions without requiring custom workarounds?
9. Provide clear audit trails for how training is delivered
10. Make it easy to roll out a new process globally?

How Standardization Aligns Training To Business Outcomes

For learning and training leaders to influence the business, they need to operate their function like one.

That means being able to scale programs without reinventing how they're delivered. It means having data that leadership can rely on without manual cleanup. It means knowing that processes work the same way across regions, so change isn't a risk every time it's introduced.

Standardization makes that possible. When data, workflows, and systems are aligned, training stops being a patchwork operation and starts becoming a strategic function that supports decision-making, reduces risk, and grows with the business.

Turn training data into business intelligence

When workflows, naming conventions, and data structures are consistent across the organization, stakeholders get real-time visibility into training costs, capacity utilization, and program effectiveness without waiting for manual reports. They can compare performance across regions, identify inefficiencies, and allocate resources based on actual demand rather than assumptions. That visibility transforms training from a black box of sunk cost into a crystal ball that reveals opportunities and weaknesses across the business.

Enables growth without proportional headcount increases

When scheduling, communications, and reporting follow repeatable workflows, teams handle significantly higher volume without expanding staff. A team managing 10,000 learners can scale to 50,000 using the same operational model because the system handles the complexity, not the people. This becomes critical during growth periods or market expansions where training demand spikes but budgets remain flat. Standardization ensures operations absorb that growth while maintaining quality and compliance.

Reduces risk and accelerates integration during change

Mergers, acquisitions, and regulatory shifts expose the weaknesses in unstandardized training operations. When each region runs training differently, integration becomes a multi-year project. Standardized operations compress that timeline. New entities adopt proven workflows immediately rather than inventing hybrid processes.

Compliance requirements get met consistently because audit trails, version control, and certification tracking work the same way everywhere.

For organizations in regulated industries or managing global footprints, standardization is risk mitigation. It ensures that when change happens, training operations remain stable, compliant, and capable of supporting the business without becoming a bottleneck.

Standardization eliminates the cost of operational chaos

Unstandardized training operations burn budget in ways that may not be easily tracked. Coordinators spend hours reconciling conflicting schedules. Instructors get double-booked because different systems don't talk to each other. When everyone follows the same workflows, problems get caught automatically rather than escalating into crises. Resources get allocated efficiently because the system knows what's available and what's needed. The savings aren't just operational—they're strategic capacity that training leaders can redirect toward program development, partnership building, and business alignment.

Standardization makes training operations auditable by default

When processes are consistent, audit trails exist automatically. Every action gets logged, every communication gets tracked, and every certification gets documented in the same way across all operations. During audits, training leaders produce complete records instantly rather than spending weeks gathering evidence from disconnected systems. That readiness extends beyond regulatory compliance—it builds credibility with executive leadership.



A Training Management System can Help

Administrate is the TMS built for enterprise teams that need to standardize training processes and data across regions. Here's how we make it easy to standardize training:

- Connect to any system or tool to capture training data from anywhere.
- Structure data so it rolls into reports and analytics correctly.
- Automated planning, scheduling and communication ensures consistent learner experiences.
- Learner experiences, team workflows, courses, and delivery can be localized while keeping reporting and core processes consistent.

Use Administrate to standardize training operations & data.

Administrate standardizes the data, workflows, and integrations behind your programs so you can lead with clarity, scale without friction, and report with confidence.

Want to see Administrate in action?

**Book time to see
Administrate**

Get a demo

📞 1 (800) 265-7163

✉️ info@getadministrate.com

🌐 getadministrate.com