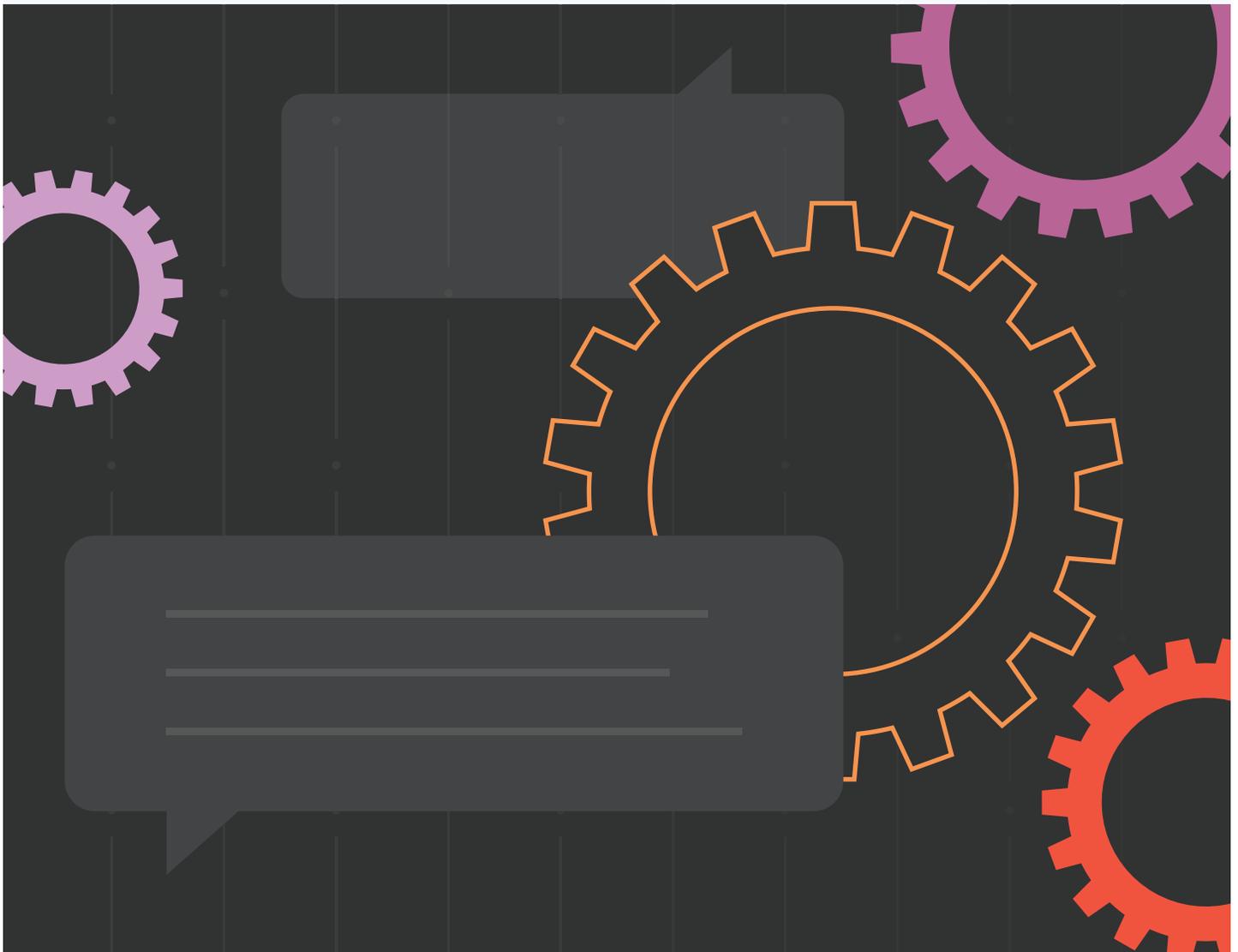




Straight Talk About the Approaching Crisis in U.S. Government Agencies and How to Overcome the Challenges

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Topics Covered in This Guide

- Transferring the knowledge and experience of current leadership to the next generation of leaders.
- Why the next generation of leaders are demanding online learning.
- How to organize a well-planned online learning strategy that's closely aligned with objectives and missions.
- How to ensure your online training strategy is effective and closes learning gaps.

Changing Leadership

In the next three to five years, according to data from the White House, almost 30% of current senior executive federal service workers will be eligible for retirement.

The pandemic and the very nature of how we work have changed the environment in many federal agencies. Large numbers of these senior-level employees will take advantage of this opportunity to retire. These employees have given years of outstanding service to the people of the United States. Replacing this senior-level experience presents a massive challenge for U.S. government agencies. Plus, and most importantly, they must equip freshly minted leaders with the skills they need to be successful in their new roles. These replacements will need to live up to the standards set by their predecessors and even exceed those standards so federal agencies continue to function and thrive.

The Real Challenge

The challenge is training. While training in the classroom will continue to remain for many agencies, bringing full courses or parts of courses online alleviates many of the constraints agencies face.

Federal agencies work to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and reducing the amount of in-person class time supports this mission. Traditional classroom learning, particularly for agencies that have a dispersed workforce, means time away from home, time away from a desk, high costs of travel, and the added costs of having people on-site, including meals.

Organizations that have adopted an online component to their on-site training have reported that their employees are learning the material better and having more effective and efficient in-person time. They have also reported that moving all or part of the coursework online has resulted in more frequent course offerings and getting people to work more quickly.

For these and other reasons, many federal agencies have adopted Anthology's **Blackboard® Learn**, a learning management system (LMS), to support the training of their teams and the next generation of leaders.

Organizing an Online Learning Strategy

Before course creation, the development of a learning team, the adoption of an LMS, and mapping which courses are needed, are critical steps in building a foundation for learning.

Many federal agencies will also develop systems on how to transfer know-how and practical knowledge from current leadership and subject matter experts to a location in the LMS. This allows centralization for the learning team as they start to work on course creation. With an LMS like Blackboard Learn, a learning team can deliver a continuous virtual learning solution that is agile and flexible and easily adapts to today's training challenges.

Going beyond simply delivering content and pre-packaged courses to learners, Blackboard Learn leverages collaboration and interactivity to engage learners and support missions with:

- Flexible Grading
- Embedded Analytics
- Rich Course, Content, & Activity Design
- Group Collaboration & Management
- Progress Tracking
- Seamless Integrations
- An Enhanced Mobile Experience

The goal is to facilitate continuous and social learning, which, in turn, heightens learner engagement and learning success.

Research shows that when learning engagement is high, learning outcomes are significantly improved. However, it's a mistake to believe that a successful learning program instantly happens because of a system or platform. Thoughtful planning and organization must take place.

The Eight Steps to Success

Here are several steps to ensure that online training in the federal government is successful.

STEP ONE: Have a Solid Business Plan

This starts with understanding why there needs to be an online program. Ask these important questions to get to this plan.

- What is the current situation in the department?
- How will future needs be fully met?
- What are the costs associated with training?
- What are the tangible and intangible benefits?
- What are the travel, maintenance, and start-up expenses?
- Where are the efficiencies?

A training partner like Anthology can help with questions relating to the business plan. That's because Anthology experts have worked with numerous federal agencies on successful training programs that have created cost-savings and more efficient and effective learning.

STEP TWO: A Leadership Commitment

The leadership of a federal agency needs to recognize the clear benefits of robust online learning. They must understand the business model. It's also important to understand how online learning overcomes the challenges of training and learning in today's environment.

Leadership that has made the decision to adopt online learning for their federal agency have done so for programs that include administrative training, human resources, clinical training and certification, program and process management, technical training, and contracting professional programs. Delivery of courses ranges from bite-sized learning "nuggets" to hybrid/ blended courses to fully online and facilitated training programs. Having flexibility in course type, and delivery helps ensure that teams and departments can meet the needs of their employees.

STEP THREE: Designate a Point Person

The point person does not have to be a software specialist. However, this associate must take ownership of the learning program. Having an "owner" of the program will enable a consistent, well-paced approach, and will ensure the successful adoption of the training.

STEP FOUR: Organize a Team

When organizing a team to support a successful and efficient online learning initiative, it's important to consider who should be on that team. Ideally, this team includes:

- Trainers
- Instructional Designers
- Technical Staff
- Program Leads
- Current Leadership

Surveying employees helps to identify gaps in training and knowledge to help support course design.

The learning team is responsible for establishing the style of course necessary for the subject and the instructor and will support the creation of the curriculum.

As the team starts to work together, here are some additional questions to ask.

- How do you plan to enhance the training experience?
- What are your goals?
- What will you expect of trainers in an online-delivery environment?

Again, it's crucial to keep the team focused on the big picture so they know what success looks like.

STEP FIVE: Understand the Program Needs

This starts with understanding the technical aspects of a program. The best way to achieve this understanding is to ask questions including:

- What is your information technology (IT) budget?
- Can the IT budget grow as the online program expands?
- Do you have the technical resources to manage a digital platform?
- What is your existing technical support infrastructure, and can you handle the additional demands of employee tech support?

If there are "questions about the answers" then it's especially important to partner with a vendor who has extensive experience in this field.

STEP SIX: Understand the Audience

It's important to have a strong understanding of the needs of the agency, the mission, and the best ways to reach internal and external audiences. Learning can become much more effective and engaging for the audience once you fully understand their needs.

STEP SEVEN: Get the Program Right — Through a Pilot Program

The best way to get the program correct is to start with a pilot program. This program will prove readiness and viability. Testing with a smaller group of employees helps to identify problems with the technology or the curriculum that can be addressed prior to a larger launch.

Once the pilot program has been completed and tested, evaluate its success and look for areas that can be improved. This step is critical as it impacts future program growth.

STEP EIGHT: Launch with High-Quality Material

Every part of the program, right from the start, can be successful when it's built around high-quality course material. Team members will instantly know if the course content was designed by subject matter experts.

Staff adoption is a critical component of success so when the training is compelling and well-organized, employees will adapt to online learning faster.

Partnering with Trusted Experience

Anthology has over 25 years of experience creating online educational environments. Our team of experts helps you deliver digital training programs that enhance learning and meet the challenges that government agencies face in today's ever-changing world.

These products currently include:

Blackboard Learn, our premier LMS, provides instructors with the autonomy to author and deliver modern, inclusive, and consistent training experiences that learners desire — anytime, anywhere.

Greater access for all means greater success for all. **Anthology® Ally** is fully integrated into the LMS and ensures that course content and information are accessible to all learners. With the click of a button, access is simple, seamless, and straightforward, including translations into 100+ languages, conversion from written to audio format, and more.

Want to manage the full lifecycle of learning information and assess learning outcomes in meaningful ways? Our comprehensive learner registration and management solution handles course registrations, reporting, e-commerce, and user & data management, and is fully integrated with the LMS.

Our team of consultants supplements your staff on day-to-day and administrative operations. We are experienced partners who can help you focus your vision, craft your strategy, and deliver on your programs — from design and planning, development and transformation, to scalability and sustainability. We help you craft big-picture solutions related to training and development regardless of technology, platform, learning modality, or approach.

To discover more about how Anthology solutions can help your agency, visit www.anthology.com/government.

About the Author

Celena Westlund is senior marketing manager for business and government at Anthology. Westlund joined Anthology in 2021, bringing nearly 11 years of government and marketing experience, including over 7 years at the U.S. Institute of Peace and 3.5 years at a MarTech company. In her role at Anthology, she works to create awareness and demand for our EdTech solutions in federal, state, and local governments, and within corporate entities. Westlund graduated from Washington State University with an M.A. in strategic communication and previously earned an M.A. from American University in international peace and conflict resolution, with a focus on conflict in the Southern Balkans.

About Anthology

Anthology offers the largest EdTech ecosystem on a global scale, supporting over 150 million users in 80 countries. The company's mission is to provide dynamic, data-informed experiences to the global education community so that learners and educators can achieve their goals.

Through Anthology Intelligent Experiences™ and over 60 SaaS products and services, Anthology advances learning in partnership with education, business and government institutions. Tapping into this unmatched portfolio of solutions, only Anthology can leverage data from across the EdTech ecosystem to create Intelligent Experiences that lead to better outcomes.

Learn more about our mission at www.anthology.com

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