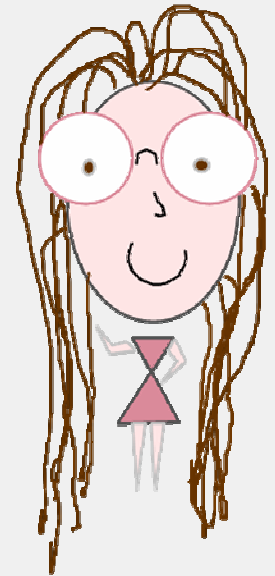


Using Moodle for Business

From Business Case to Mature Product: A step-by-step guide to Using Moodle in Your Business.



About This Presentation

This presentation was prepared for
The Midwest Moodle Moot
July 2011

For (lots) more, visit my blog:

[Penny For Your Thoughts: Simplifying e-Learning for Business](#)

at

PennyMondani.com

What I hear from people...

- *"I don't want my competitors to know I use Moodle."*
- *"I don't want people to be able to steal my content."*
- *"I don't want students to have to create their own accounts at my Moodle site."*
- *"I don't want students to have to pay for courses at the Moodle site."*
- *"I want everyone in my contact list to have a user account."*
- *"I don't want students to know they've left my company site and gone to a Moodle site."*
- *"I don't think my clients can navigate Moodle."*
- *"I think Moodle looks plain and old school."*
- *"I want my Moodle site to look like XYZ site (which is not a standard installation)."*
- *"I'm not very tech savvy."*
- *"I'm not sure I want to use Moodle; it can't be SEO'd."*
- *"I heard WordPress has an eLearning widget."*

What I DON'T hear very often...

- *"I have a curriculum written. "*
- *" I have taught this before, face to face, and want to put it online. "*
- *" I have a course layout or at least know what features I want."*
- *" I have done some research on my potential student population; I understand their needs and limitations. "*
- *" I have training objectives written. "*
- *" I have a marketing plan. "*
- *" I have a multi-year plan for growth. "*
- *" I have viewed demos of Moodle and other LMS."*

Common Mistakes

- Lack of objectivity
- Lack of planning
- Lack of a budget (both time and money)
- Thinking that *using* Moodle will be free
- Not understanding eLearning as a product
- Not understanding potential student needs
- Not taking the time to learn to use Moodle and other applications that go with it
- Thinking you can “do it all”

Successful

Major Steps of Every Product Launch

1. Business Case & Plan
2. Concept
3. Design/Test
4. Build
5. Sell
6. Maintain (Service, Upgrade)

An eLearning site is no different!

The major steps are the same with every product or service but the details vary, depending upon your:

- Business objectives
- Audience (what they want, need, will pay for)
- Resources (time, money, skill)

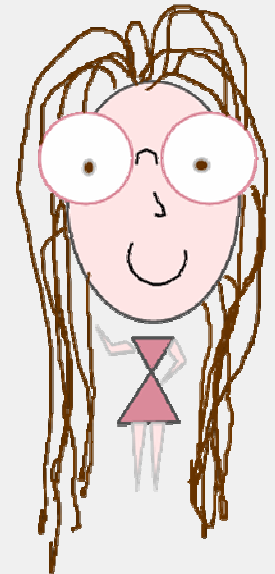
You must have some idea of what these are – and the time to understand them better – if you want this to be a successful part of your business!

Penny For Your Thoughts:

Simplifying e-Learning For Business

1. Defining the Project: Business Case & Plan

Is eLearning right for your
business, at this time?



Spend the Time To...

- Create a Business Plan for your *entire* business
 - Business Plan Pro is a good product
- Create a Marketing Plan for *eLearning alone*
 - Marketing Plan Pro is a good product

Business Case for eLearning Prerequisites:

- *Preliminary* market research says your clients expect it, want it, will use it...will pay for it!
- You can define your target market well enough to do more research.
- You've done some *initial* research on options (features, costs, pros & cons).
- You have a defined (and realistic) budget.

“Angel’s Wings” is NOT a Business Plan!

- Even if you have narrowed your search and have decided on Moodle, it can cost you from a few hundred dollars to many thousands.
- Know what you *must* have
- Know what you *can afford* (not just money, but in terms of time)
- Start there!

Example Business Case

"There is an increased interest in remote learning, replacing traditional classroom training. This is being driven by tighter budgets, less time available for employees to spend in training, and technology advances.

Although resources are constrained, the need for rapid & effective knowledge transfer is increasing. There is a world-wide market, in emerging third-world countries, where traditional classroom training is virtually impossible."

Example Multi-Generation Product Plan

The MGPP for eLearning might include, for each generation:

- Vision
- Platform & Technology
- Processes & Materials
- Marketing
- Topics/Curriculum
- Products & Features
- Pricing
- Budget
- Timeline
- Payments
- Enrollments

e-Learning Multi Generation Product Plan			
	Generation 1 Summer this year	Generation 2 January next year	Generation 3 July next year
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To provide a source for online learning and skills assessment for our current and potential clients. ■ To provide a revenue stream that has a high ROI (low cost, low effort) ■ To create potential need for other services such as consulting & coaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To provide a source for online learning and skills assessment for our alliances and partners. ■ To be known as The Source for e-learning and testing in our field ■ To provide a greater revenue stream that has a high ROI (low cost, low effort). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To provide a source for online learning and skills assessment for organization outside of our field of expertise ■ To be known as the World Class Benchmark for e-learning and testing ■ To provide an even greater revenue stream that has a high ROI: low cost, low effort.
Platform/Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Open Source, ready to use application ■ Web-based ■ Smallest capacity OK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Open Source, ready to use application ■ Web-based ■ Additional capacity likely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Open Source, ready to use application ■ Web-based ■ Additional capacity likely
Processes & Materials needed to implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LMS expertise ■ E-Commerce interface ■ Tests - Validity and Reliability need to verify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Face-to-face interaction for certification - would need guidelines and processes ■ Translation of materials to Spanish, Portuguese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Subject Matter Experts in other fields (legal, laboratory, technical, energy) ■ Translation of materials to additional languages
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Website ■ Trade shows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add: affiliate marketing ■ Add: Online publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add:
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Basic topics currently in our training portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add: advanced topics currently in our training portfolio ■ Add: Topics related to our current portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add: Topics not related to our current portfolio
Products & Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Single courses with basic features ■ Bundled courses for certification of more than one single courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Site Membership (extra services & courses for one price) - 3 levels ■ Add more technological features to courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to add current technology to course content ■ Offer more bundled services
Pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ \$30 per online hour ■ 10% discount for bundles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 20% discount plus 3 hours personal interaction ■ Price according to market and competitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ \$15,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 6 months to launch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■
Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PayPal - online only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add: over the phone cr ■ Add: purchase orders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■
Enrollments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Online only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Online, manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Online, manual ■ Database integration

PDF and full post on MGPP available at: <http://pennymondani.com/2010/12/mgpp-for-elearning-development/>

"Six Blocker": At a Glance Plan

Business Case & Opportunity Statements: Based on Market Research & Data

<p>Business Case</p> <p>There is an increased interest in remote learning, replacing traditional classroom training. This is being driven by tighter budgets, less time available for employees to spend in training, and technology advances.</p> <p>Although resources are constrained, the need for rapid & effective knowledge transfer is increasing. There is a world-wide market, in emerging third-world countries, where traditional classroom training is virtually impossible.</p>	<p>Opportunity Statement:</p> <p><u>Concept:</u> Knowledge transfer via the Internet (commonly referred to as "e-Learning"). This could be a stand-alone service, or packaged with traditional training and consulting services. This project is to make a quantum improvement to how we market our existing knowledge base.</p> <p><u>Potential Market:</u> Limited to those with access to the internet, the need for knowledge, and the funds to pay for it. Customers could include individuals advancing knowledge, corporate clients wanting training material, students and others seeking focused information on topics.</p>
<p>Goal Statement</p> <p>Launch initial offering by September 2005 to take advantage of end of summer vacations in North America and Europe, and to coincide with beginning of the academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 students by end of year, growing to a minimum of 500 students in the first year. • xx% Market Share in first year, with a revenue of \$XX. 	<p>Scope</p> <p><u>Product Scope:</u> Inclusive of all material, certification, and concepts <i>currently in our knowledge base</i>.</p> <p><u>Project Scope:</u> Launch of Generation I service offering</p> <p><u>Out of Scope:</u> Academic matriculation (all generations)</p>
<p>Project Team</p> <p>Penny Mondani – Team Leader, Technical/Content Liaison, Instructional Design, Content Provider</p> <p>Pandy Elixer – Marketing, Content Provider</p> <p>Buzzy Beehive – Review and Testing</p> <p>Dr. John – Team Coach, Customer Research Specialist</p> <p>Web Guy – Web interfaces, Technical Support</p> <p>IT Guy – IT Support</p> <p>Gilly – Graphics Design, Marketing Campaign</p> <p>Jenny – Instructional Design, e-learning (consultations)</p>	<p>Project Plan (Generation I)</p> <p>Business Case: June 8 – June 12, 2005</p> <p>Concept: June 13 – July 12, 2005</p> <p>Design/Test: Complete by July 22</p> <p>Build: Complete by August 31, 2005</p> <p>Sell: June 13 – September 1, 2005</p> <p>LAUNCH live: September 1, 2005</p> <p>Maintain: Complete by October 8, 2005</p>

Goals should be SMART

- Team needs a Leader
- Do a RACI chart
- Do more, Meet less

- Scope based on MGPP
- Out of Scope as important as In Scope

- Plan should:
- Be reasonable
 - Support goals
 - Support scope

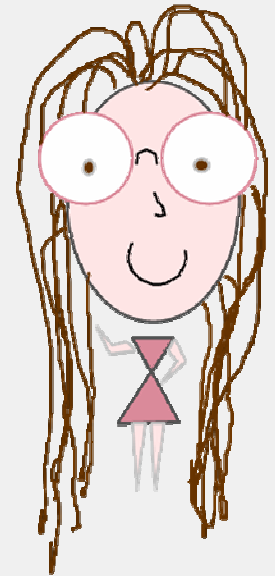
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2. Concept

A new product or service that:

- Your customers want *and* are willing to pay for
- You have the skill and resources to deliver



Market & Product Research – In Detail

- Online reviews are abundant and useful.
- Get Twitter alerts and see what people are saying. (“elearning is boring”)
- What are your competitors offering?
- Do a “literature” search for studies.
- Read blogs on eLearning, instructional design, training...
- What are other businesses doing? What are schools doing?
- View demos: At least 3 applications, 2 examples of each
- Survey your existing clients.
 - Be careful: They may not be your desired clients!

For sources, refer to the In Closing section at the end of this presentation

What eLearning is...and isn't

- Online ≠ eLearning. eLearning is *more than*:
 - Office documents linked and downloaded
 - Pages and pages of pictures or text
 - Slide presentations or videos and nothing else
- eLearning is...a *combination of all* of these:
 - Web pages with external links & images
 - Some videos, some slide shows
 - Forums, chats, web meetings
 - Glossaries, wikis, assignments, quizzes

Example Concept (Gen 1)

“Based on our potential market (what they said, what we’ve observed) *and* our budget (time, money, skills), our Gen 1 Concept will consist of:

- Moodle w/ *existing* third party plugins
- Standard theme with drop down menu
- Standard enrollments (PayPal, Key, Manual)
- User-based and manual account creations
- *Existing* videos available on YT or other sites
- Stock images and simple PowerPoint graphics
- Web meetings *outside* of Moodle
- **No** shopping cart functionality, no membership pricing, no custom video production, no Moodle core code modifications, no custom programs”

Modify the MGPP if necessary

What Skills Will You Need (Concept Gen 1)?

- IT (site host, installation, maintenance)
 - Moodle (core + add-ons)
 - WordPress, Drupal...
- Marketing
 - Image: Logo, colors, taglines...Moodle theme
 - Marketing plan & implementation
- Instructional Design (Learning, Testing)
- Course Builds (HTML+)
- Multi-media: video, graphics, flash

The Difficult Questions

- Is this still a good idea?
- Do I/we honestly have the time, money, skill to do this?
- Should I/we put it on hold, speed it up, or change direction?

Now is the time to ask (and answer) these questions!

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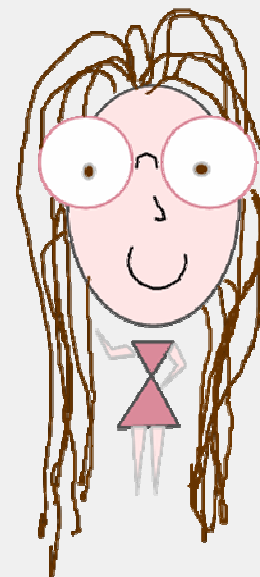
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3. Design/Test

Add Detail to the Concept

Build Prototype Courses

Get Feedback



OK...You've Chosen Moodle. Now What?

- “I plan to use Moodle” can mean a lot of things:
 - Use it to host Articulate Presenter, Adobe Captivate, or other SCORM packages
 - Use it as a syllabus (what pages to read in a text book) plus tests and maybe a forum or two
 - Build most of your content in it (HTML pages)
 - Any combination of the above

The Parts

- The actual content (words, examples, exercises, formulae, charts, drawings) – you’re the expert
- Instructional design
- Moodle usability (getting the content and designed functionality into Moodle)
- Moodle IT support
- These are all the “people” you thought of back in the Business Case phase. Now, you need to select them and work with them.

Putting “Pen to Paper”

Sticking with the MGPP, write for each course:

- Purpose-Objectives-Goals
- Level of Difficulty, Prerequisites, and Intended Audience
- Summary/Overview of content
- Outline (syllabus). For each lesson in the syllabus, ask yourself:
 - What if I had to explain this over the phone or from behind a soundproof window?
 - How is this best explained? Graphically, verbally, with a video, with a game, by quiet reading, as a team exercise...?
 - How will I test competency in this subject? Assignments, quizzes, projects...?

Do It! Build the “Prototype”.

- Find existing Moodle features and/or plugins that will do what you want to do. Don't find plugins that you think are cool and look for ways to use them!
- If you can't figure out how to build something, post a question in the forums or get help. Don't abandon the idea, but keep moving. Do your best and do it in a timely manner.
- Try alternatives to do the same things. You'll be able to compare your options before building the rest.
 - Themes – allow users to switch the feel of each course
 - Types of collaboration/interaction (forum vs. chat)
 - Different ways to present the same content (book vs. flash)

Focus & Resist. Get Honest Feedback.

- Stay focused. Resist Scope Creep. Stick to the MGPP or the rest of your plan will be compromised.
 - Moodle might have a plug-in to do it, but do you need it?
 - Someone else does it, but do you need to?
- Engage people who are objective and knowledgeable to review your prototype course. Hire experts as needed.
 - Be careful not to ask family members who don't understand your business or eLearning.
 - Be careful not to ask those whose interests conflict with yours.
 - Provide a survey to get objective evaluations.
 - If you plan to have "self-service", allow your testers to do things on their own. Ask them about that experience.

More Difficult Questions

- *Given:*
 - The time it took to create the prototype course
 - How it turned out
 - The feedback received
- *Ask once again:*
 - Is this still a good idea?
 - Do I/we honestly have the time, money, skill to do this?
 - Should I/we put it on hold, speed it up, or change direction?

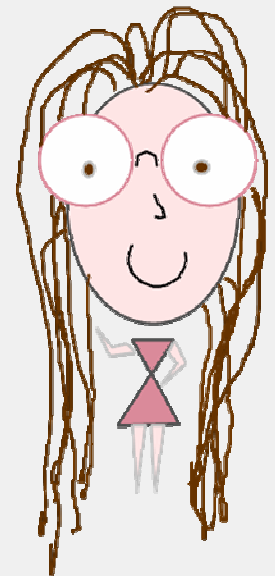
Take a deep breath and be objective!

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4. Build

Making your vision a reality



Synthesizing the Feedback

- Take an objective approach, such as a Solution Selection Matrix
- Keep *your* business plan in mind
 - Don't take one person's comments too heavily or too personally
- Every "criticism" is an opportunity
- Build on good stuff

Example Solution Selection Matrix

- For eLearning you might want to rate:
 - Ease of build (do we have the resources now)
 - Ease of edit/updates (will we have the resources in the future)
 - Ability to maintain (time to monitor, grade, respond, IT support)
 - Server load and size (will we have the budget to upgrade servers)
 - Ability to work on mobile, slow devices (assuming this will improve rapidly)
 - How well it delivers the lesson (student's view)
 - How it keeps the student's interest
 - Ease of use (student's view)

Comparison and Ranking of Moodle Features					
Criteria	Importance	Simplest Method (Self-paced & Core Blocks Only)	Third party plugins, Self paced only	Third party plugins, Synchronous Activities	Third party plugins, Synchronous Activities, Flash and Games
Ease of build (we have the resources now)	2	S	S	S	-
Ease of edit/updates (we may not have resources in the future)	3	S	S	S	-
Ability to maintain (time to monitor, grade, respond, IT support)	3	S	-	-	-
Server load and size (we have budget to upgrade servers)	3-5	S	S	-	-
Ability to work on mobile, slow devices (assuming this will improve rapidly)	3	S	S	S	-
How well it delivers the lesson (student's view)	5	S	S	+	+
How it keeps the student's interest	4-5	S	S	S	+
Ease of use (student's view)	4	S	S	+	+
Sum of +		0	0	2	3
Sum of -		0	1	3	5
Sum of S		8	7	3	0
Weighted sum of +		0	0	9	13.5
Weighted sum of -		0	3	6.5	14.5

Hunkering Down. Dotting the i's.

- Ok, now the fun, sexy part is over.
- It's time to spend hours and hours and hours...
- Even if you hire someone to build the content, you need to be involved in:
 - Following up on missing pieces
 - Reviewing the courses regularly
 - Making design decisions

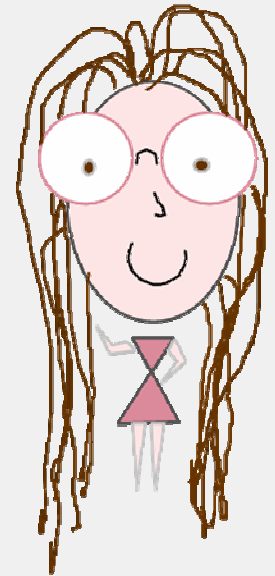
...while you're marketing, selling, and running the rest of your business!

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5. Sell

Marketing and more...



Have a Marketing Plan, Too

- Build on your market research
- Start selling before you're finished building
- Build up anticipation with "Coming Soon", news & blog posts, mailings; like Apple does! It's not a "secret", though.
- If you're not good at this, hire someone!
- Requires a lot of time, in addition to the Moodle build.

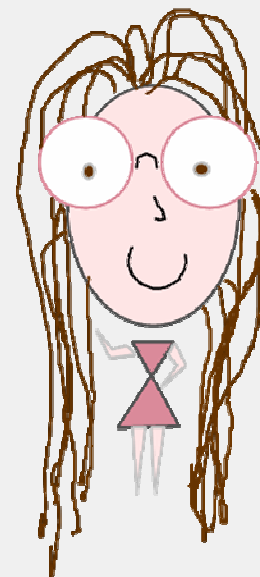
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6. Maintain: It never ends!

All too often forgotten:

- Interacting with students
- Keeping the content fresh
- Keeping current with technology



This Should Be Part of the Plan

- Don't wait until you're ready to launch!
- Save time and money in your budget and plan to *learn at least enough* Moodle to:
 - Monitor forums
 - Run chats
 - Edit (fix or update) existing content
 - Post grades
 - Add users
 - Help users

Fashion Changes and So Does eLearning

- BeeLearn.com was “amazing” in 2006.
- Now it is “ok”, even with many updates.
- What changed?
 - From Moodle 1.6 to 1.9: more functionality, plugins
 - Fancier Moodle themes now
 - YouTube videos on every subject (to embed) now
 - Flash expectations/capabilities increased
 - Social interaction expectations/options raised
 - Internet and mobile capabilities are greater
 - Availability of affordable stock images
 - Of course, Moodle 2.0!

Unless You Have an Elephant's Memory...

- Document everything!
- When it comes time to upgrade your content, will you remember:
 - How to upload a GIFT file for quiz questions?
 - How you linked X to Y?
 - Where you put that graphics file?
 - How you embedded the videos?
 - Where the Site Policy URL goes?
- If you don't do something every day, you'll waste valuable time trying to remember how.
- If you want someone else to take over that task in the future, it will be easier if you already wrote it down.

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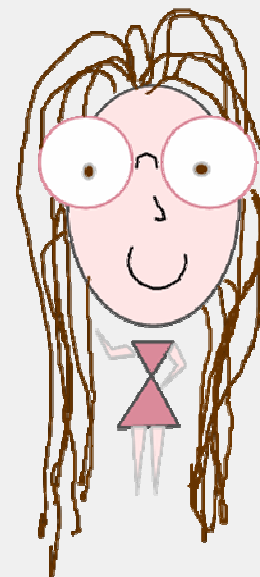
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In Closing

Lessons Learned

Ethics Concerns

Additional Resources



Lessons Learned: What I Did Wrong

- I didn't investigate enough applications or play around with free demos enough. I didn't research enough.
 - Spent too much time on applications way out of my budget (enterprise)
 - Wasted time and money on an application that didn't work; let it go too long to get a refund.
 - Tried to host Moodle on a discount plan
- I tried to force eLearning onto my existing team – they did not have my vision and it was a threat to their jobs
 - Wasted time trying to make them do it my (new) way.
 - Stayed inside my current circle for feedback on a totally new idea with a totally different market.
 - Allowed too many changes, too many ideas, from too many people. Tried to please everyone.
- I launched a new product in the worst economy ever!

Lessons Learned: What I Did Right

- I never gave up!
- I engaged a Moodle Partner for hosting & usability support (best decision ever!)
- I stuck to my MGPP!
- I learned as much as I could about Moodle, eLearning and its role in blended learning, graphics, flash, Internet programs (php, CSS, themes, HTML), open source software...(still learning)
- I launched a new product before it was mainstream
- I transitioned from *using Moodle to teach* my expertise to *making Moodle my expertise*.

Ethics Concerns

- Be careful of your own material
 - Respect copyrights; a citation is not enough
 - Cite and link to others
- Be careful of the material placed on your site by teachers and other affiliates
 - Ensure they follow copyright laws and etiquette
 - Ensure they have real content, not running pyramid or other schemes
- Be diligent in monitoring student activity
 - Ensure it is “clean” and follows rules (not just copyrights)
 - Spammers are forever reinventing ways to waste your time and use your site to advertise

Resources for Everyone

- MoodleUsers group at LinkedIn
 - Truly helpful exchanges, not self-serving
 - Corresponding Moodle for Business “course” at Moodle.org
- Moodle.org forums & news (plus Twitter tags)
 - Find the discussion thread, read the posts, post your own, answer others’ questions
- Moodle Partners offer usability training. *Take it!*
- Lynda.com and YouTube (quick help/training videos)
- MoodleNews.com
- Me 😊 (contact info on last slide)

Surveys and Other Research Methods

- Writing Good Questions, Analyzing the Data:
 - Bee-Learn.com blog posts on questions and surveys
 - BeeLearn.com course: Voice of the Customer (VOC 101). It's FREE!
 - QuestionPro.com is a service, but has lots of great tips on *writing* surveys.
- Implementing the Surveys:
 - Moodle Survey feature too academic; new Feedback option (2.1) hopeful. Current Feedback activity works well.
 - Don't bother with "free" plans that don't allow you to download raw data by respondent.

Instructional Design: Tips from Experts

- PennyMondani.com
- TheELearningCoach.com
- ASTD.org
- Moodle.org

Resources for the Bigger Budgets

- Course Merchant - a fee-based Moodle plugin provides:
 - Shopping cart functionality (pay for multiple courses)
 - Membership functionality, including coupons and discounts
- Totara - a custom distribution of Moodle that enhances features commonly needed by businesses, such as:
 - Competencies linked to roles, learning resources, courses
 - Roles for viewing and managing
 - Better reporting
 - Better theme branding
- Wimba, Elluminate, BigBlueButton - Web Conferencing
 - Some plans allow you to record and archive your sessions
 - Various features to allow “whiteboard” and other functionality
 - May be integrated in Moodle (as a block) to work with Calendar

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View Moodle Demo Courses at BeeLearn.com

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