cloudshare

CEdMA ENTERPRISE



The State of Customer Education in 2025

Maximizing Revenue & Organizational Value

Where does Customer Education stand in 2025?



During a period of rapid progress and ever-changing demands, this report reveals the answers to a series of crucial questions:

- Are CEd professionals delivering on the revenue generation front?
- Are Customer Education departments now seen as profit centers?
- Are educators emerging as strategic organizational value drivers?
- What challenges still stand in the way of continued success?
- How can CEd leaders leverage technology to achieve their goals?

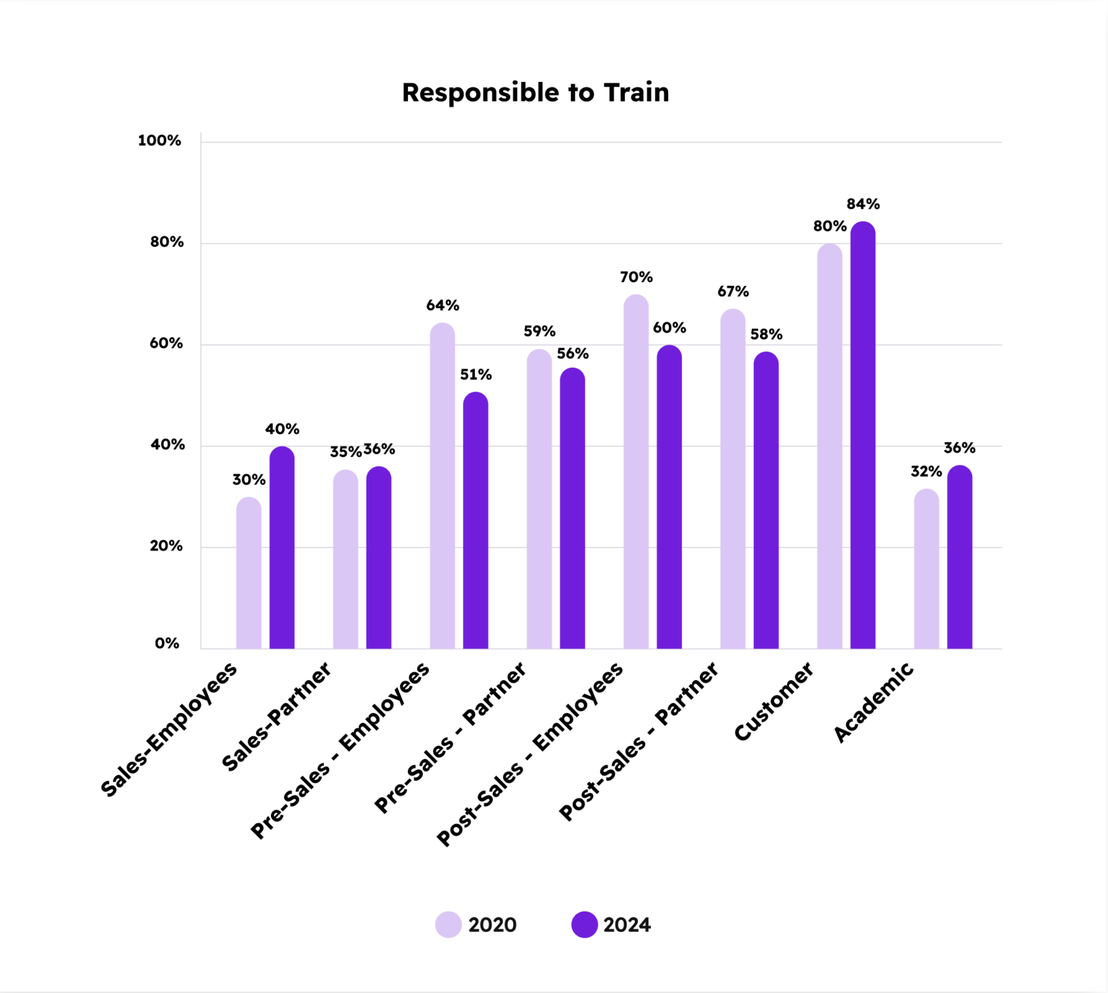
Combining insights from CloudShare's new survey of 200 Customer Education experts with CEdMA Enterprise's in-depth research into the priorities, practices, and processes of 40 top technology providers including both software and hardware vendors, this report provides an unprecedented overview of how far CEd has come and what lies ahead in the coming years.

Money talks:
the state of training monetization

The question of whether training should be free has become increasingly nuanced in today's education landscape. CEdMA Enterprise research reveals a complex picture of how organizations approach training delivery and monetization across different audience segments.

While customer education remains at the forefront, organizations continue to serve a diverse spectrum of learners, from internal employees to channel partners, spanning both technical and non-technical domains.

Interestingly, this fundamental delivery pattern has remained remarkably stable over the past four years - the real transformation has occurred in how organizations monetize their training offerings.



© Copyright CEdMA Enterprise

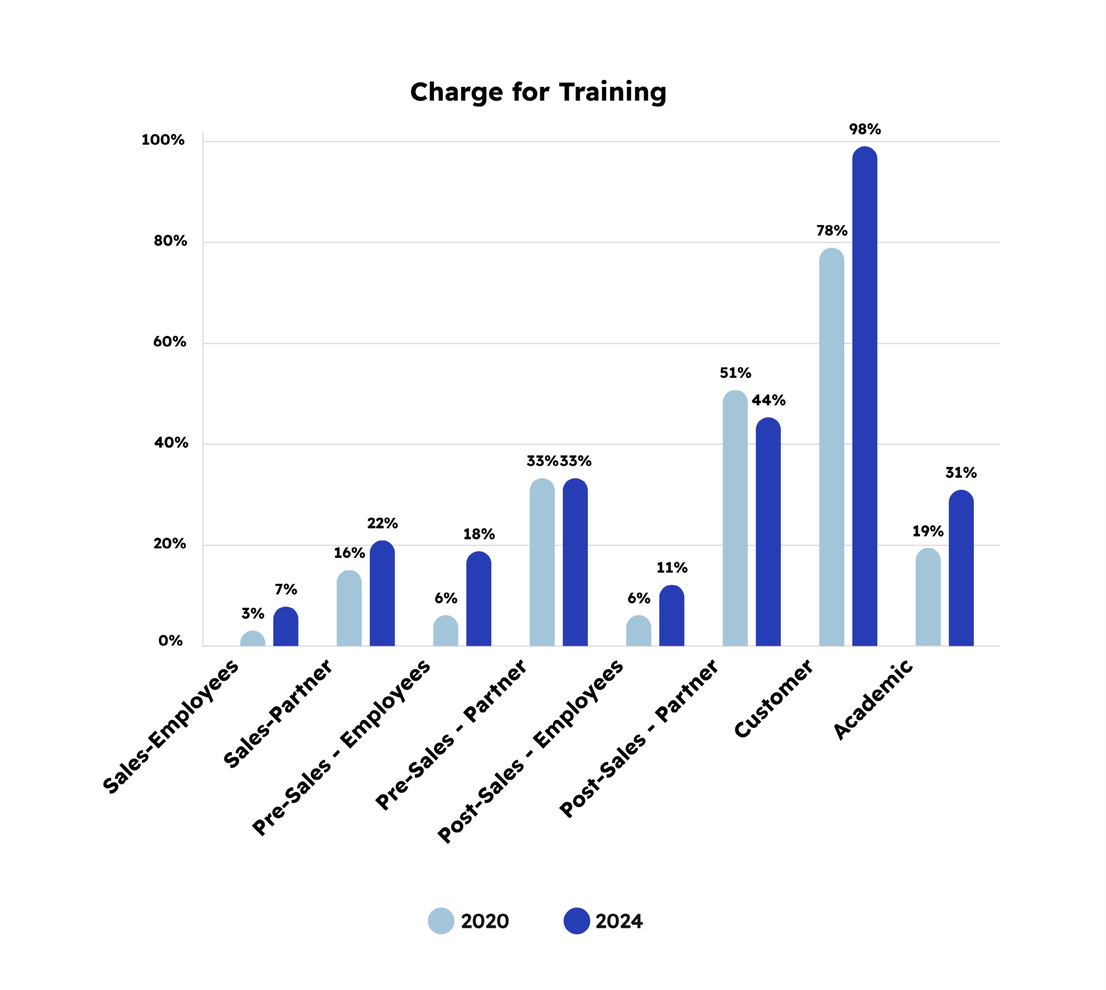
The most striking shift has been in customer training charging. Today, an overwhelming 98% of technology providers charge for customer training in some form, a dramatic increase from 78% four years ago. However, many organizations employ flexible pricing models including discounts and hybrid approaches, with some content or initiatives offered free of charge.

Non-technical partner training typically remains unmonetized to drive more channel product sales and some organizations have developed creative approaches to partner training costs, such as refunding fees upon successful certification completion.

A clear pattern has emerged in how organizations structure their paid versus free offerings. While there's a growing trend toward offering free self-paced content, premium services such as instructor-led training, virtual labs, and certification programs typically remain fee-based.

This evolution in training monetization suggests a maturing market where organizations are becoming more sophisticated in how they balance accessibility with sustainability in the services they deliver.

At the end of the day, however, business success depends on keeping the customer satisfied.

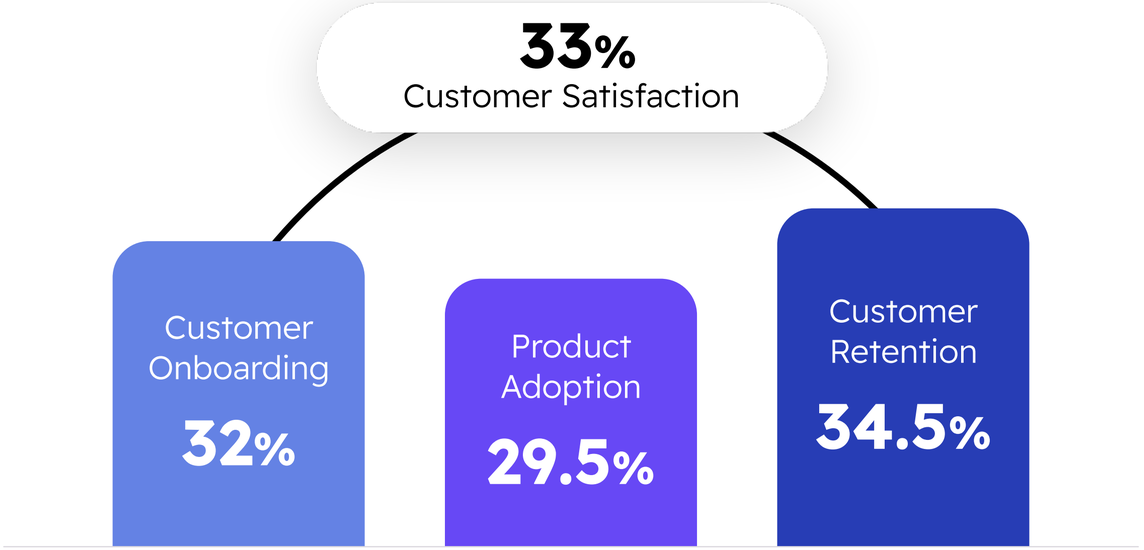


© Copyright CEdMA Enterprise

The customer is king (and queen)

Today, customer education has moved far beyond simple product training to become a strategic driver of business success.
CEd leaders are leveraging sophisticated learning approaches, technology and methodologies, not just to teach features or new versions of a product, but to create seamless experiences that transform new users into confident, successful customers for life.
That's reflected in CloudShare's data on customer-oriented priorities.

These numbers paint a picture of a discipline that has evolved steadily alongside its close cousin Customer Succes. In fact, more than 50% of CEd teams are part of Customer Success, a field defined, refined and popularized by companies such as Salesforce and Gainsight.



Customer Education relies on a deep understanding of the stages of the customer journey, from those all-important first impressions created during onboarding, to the realization of value during product adoption, and the end goal of retention.

Training is much more than just an enabler. It's a business empowerment discipline that enables customer satisfaction, the glue that holds the customer journey together.

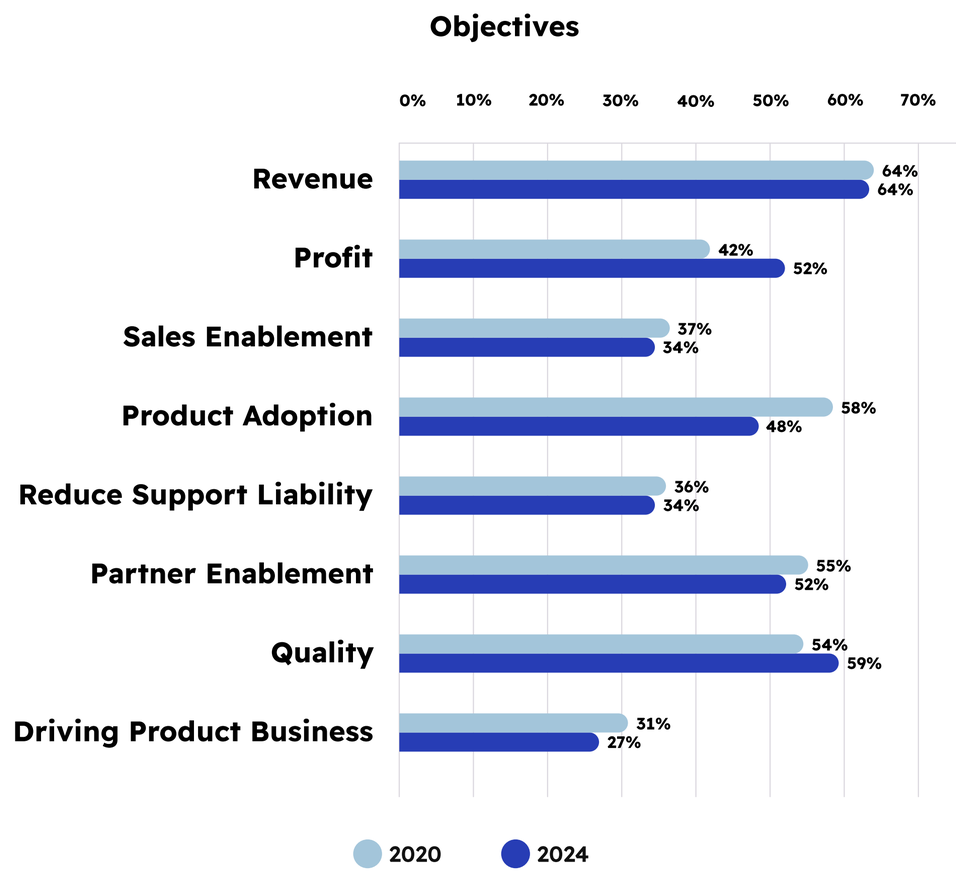
But with great power comes great responsibility.

Juggling multiple objectives

Education teams face a fascinating paradox. Their objectives reflect a complex web of expectations and responsibilities that often extend far beyond simple financial metrics.

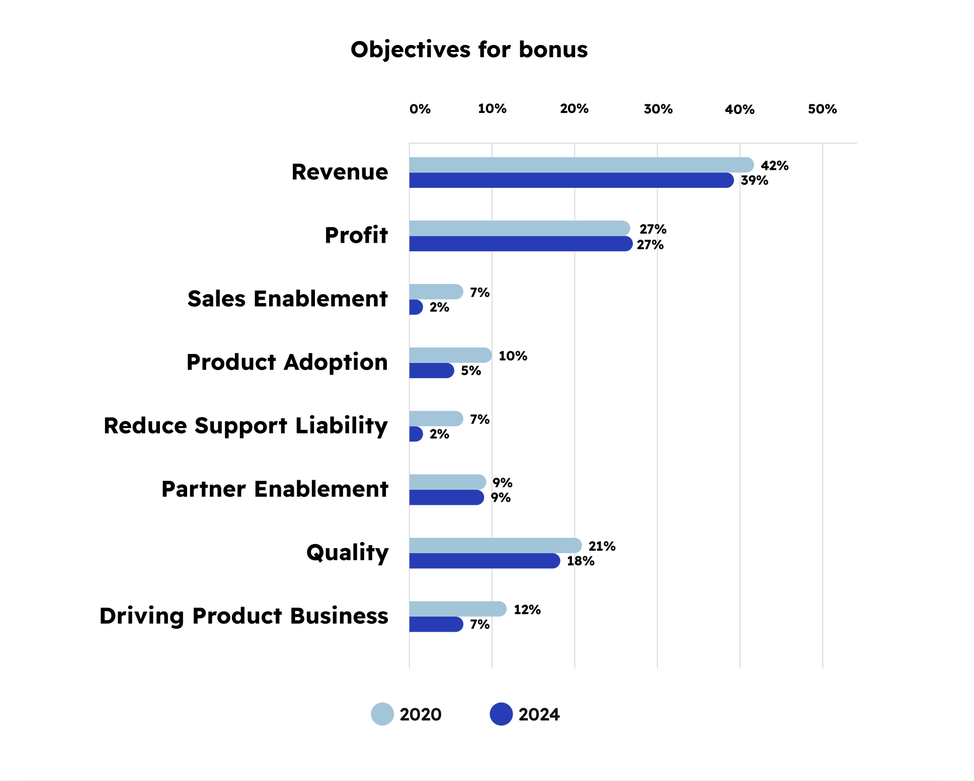
The daily reality for education teams involves balancing multiple, sometimes competing mandates. Product adoption stands as a key objective, with organizations looking to education teams to accelerate customer success.

Simultaneously, these teams are tasked with reducing support tickets through effective training, while also ensuring comprehensive partner enablement. This diverse set of responsibilities creates a rich but challenging operational landscape.



© Copyright CEdMA Enterprise

However, when it comes to compensation and performance measurement, the majority of education professionals find their bonuses and incentives primarily tied to revenue and profit generation, with other metrics critical to organizational success seen as secondary considerations.



This helps to explain the growing trend toward hybrid organizational models, where certain areas operate as revenue generators while others function as strategic investment zones.

When Customer Education teams' bonuses are tied to revenue and profit, it moves the needle on business results. CEd works hand in hand with sales and customer success because everyone is now focused on the same goals.

Incentivation also encourages strategic thought about what CEd teaches and how they teach it. What's more, revenue-based bonuses attract top education talent.

© Copyright CEdMA Enterprise

Joining the dots: connecting KPIs

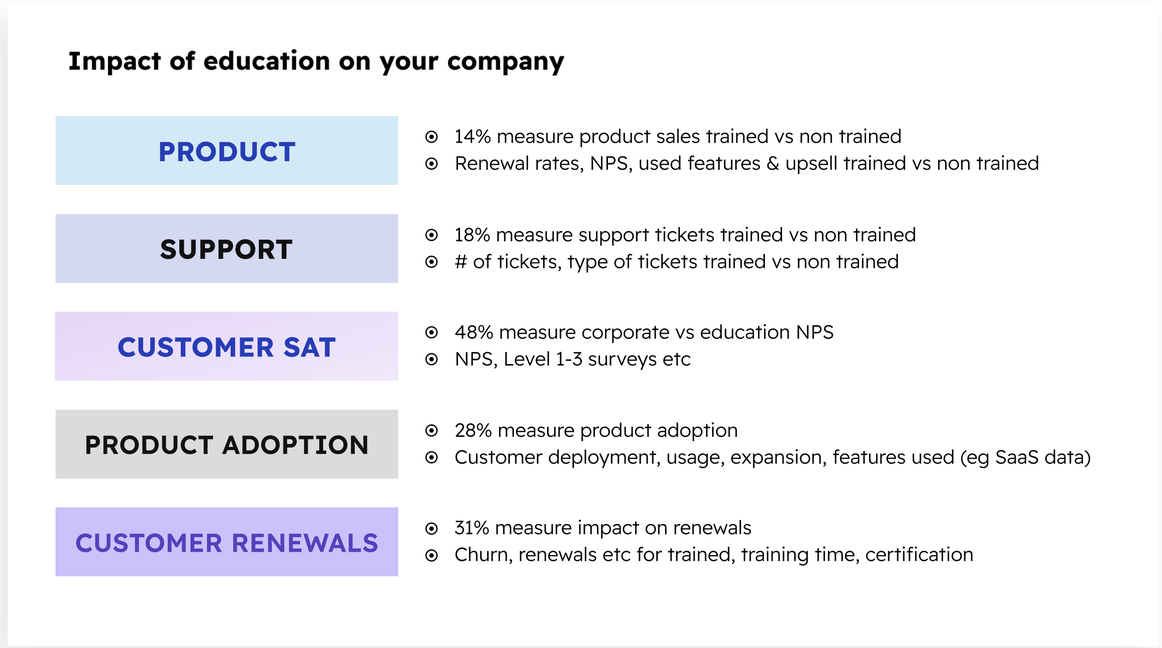
A critical challenge lies in measuring the comprehensive impact of training beyond simple revenue metrics.

The relationship between training and product sales is crucial but only 14% of organizations compare product revenue patterns between trained and untrained customers.

The impact of training on customer retention tells an even more compelling story: among renewing customers, 47% have received training, while only 21% of churning customers participated in training programs. However, only 31% of organizations actively measure this relationship.

As for support tickets, just 18% of companies measure the difference in volume between trained and untrained customers, and fewer still track the differential in terms of types of tickets: basic vs. complex issues.

And while almost half of organizations measure customer satisfaction, a mere 28% track product adoption.



© Copyright CEdMA Enterprise

This huge gap between available metrics and actual measurement practices indicates a significant opportunity for organizations to better quantify the effect of their customer training.

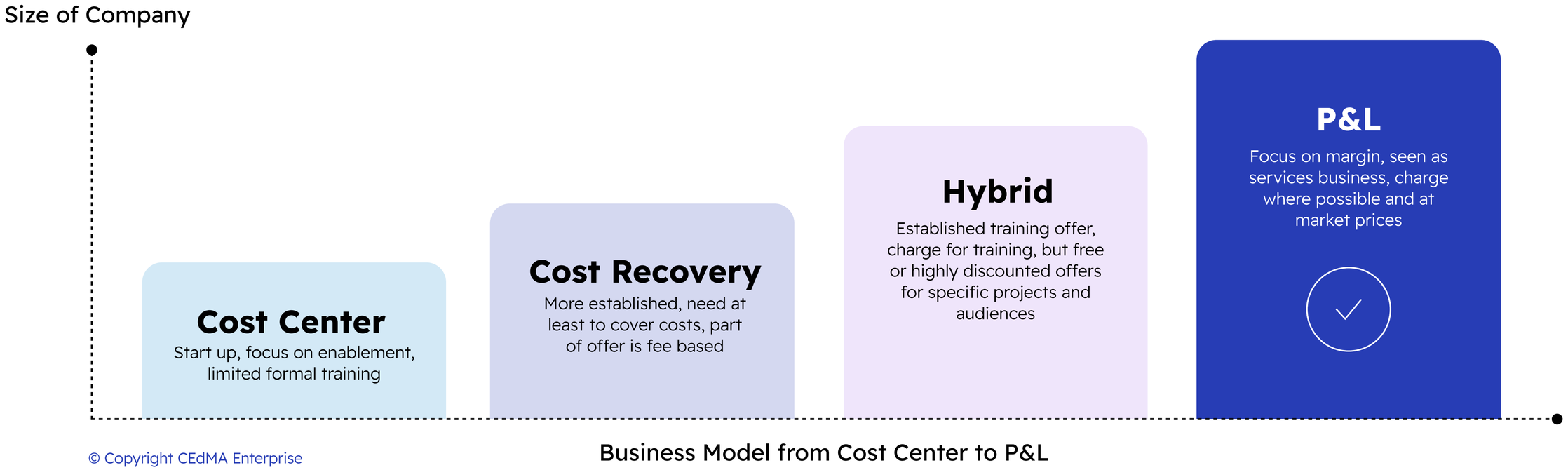
The CEd maturity model

Education teams typically evolve through several distinct maturity stages. They often begin as informal cost centers with minimal staff focused on basic training delivery without revenue expectations.

As they grow, organizations enter an intermediate cost recovery stage of selective monetization, charging for certain programs while maintaining free offerings.

In the final maturity stage, organizations either become pure P&L centers or adopt hybrid models that balance revenue generation with strategic investments. The latter approach, increasingly common, enables organizations to maintain profitable programs while supporting strategic initiatives like market development and partner enablement.

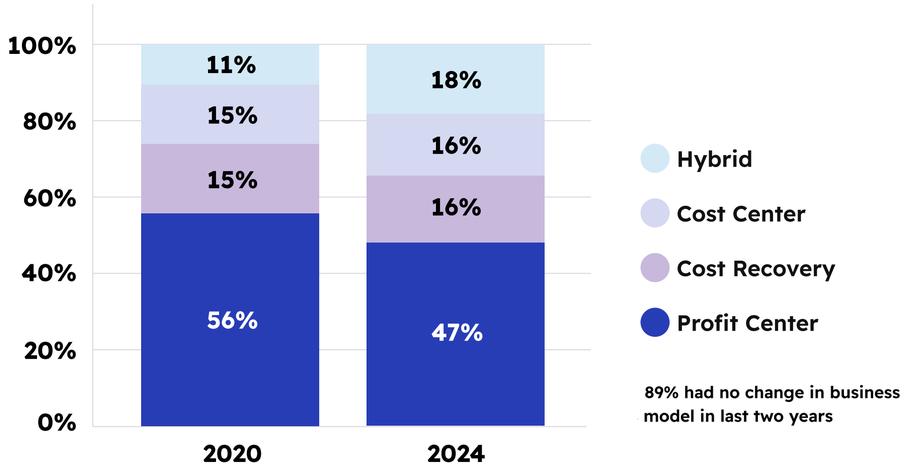
This maturity progression suggests that hybrid models represent not a departure from P&L structures, but rather an advanced stage of organizational development.



© Copyright CEdMA Enterprise

Pure profit isn’t the whole story

The education business landscape is evolving beyond traditional profit and loss (P&L) structures. Hybrid approaches now comprise 18% of organizations, combining revenue-generating customer training with cost-center operations for strategic initiatives like partner enablement and market development.



This dual approach enables organizations to maintain revenue streams while supporting strategic investments that require different financial frameworks. The trend shows a decline in pure P&L models as hybrid structures gain popularity, reflecting organizations' recognition that some training initiatives and partnerships warrant investment without direct financial return.

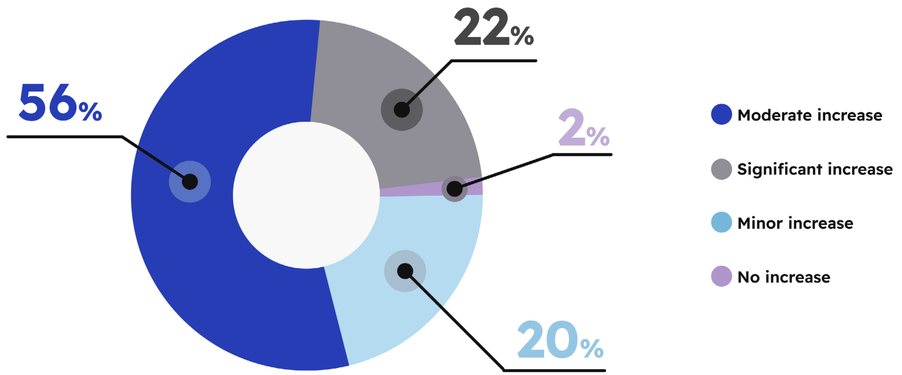
This shift doesn't indicate abandonment of revenue generation, but rather a more sophisticated approach to balancing financial and strategic objectives in education services.

Nevertheless, P&L models remain the predominant paradigm. Making money matters.

© Copyright CEdMA Enterprise

Ramping up revenue

98% of customer education programs generate revenue. While that sounds encouraging, the fact is that only around one-fifth of organizations have seen significant revenue increases since their programs began. 56% of teams report moderate increases and 20% generate only minor revenue growth.



One reason is that many training organizations provide free offerings to support the release of new features, to provide sales support, for example. This may decrease revenue, even with higher training attach rates.

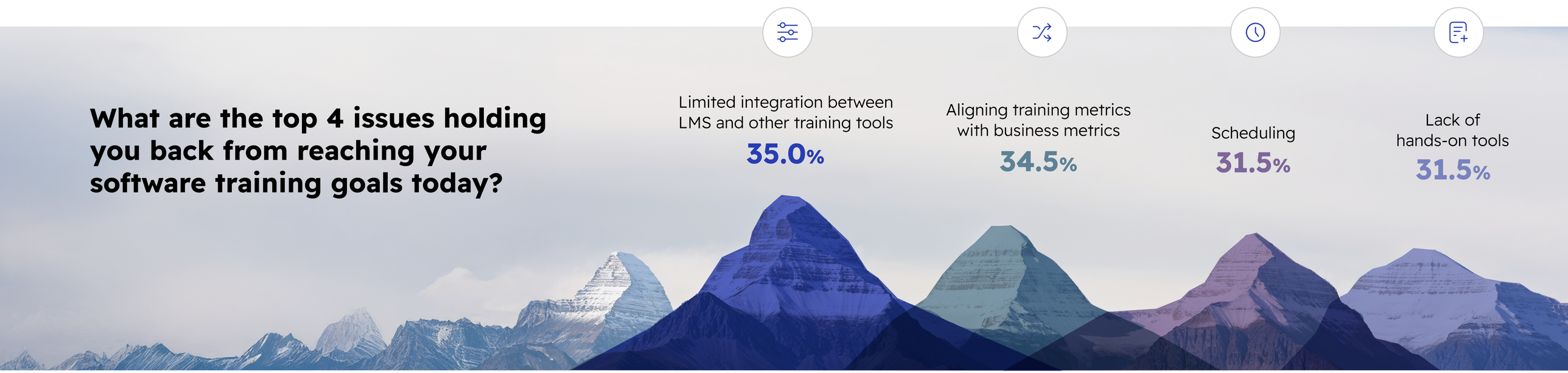
However, too much focus on profitability can limit the training leader's scope, excluding the larger business picture.

Training leaders who are not solely focused on maximizing P&L but also aligned with wider company business objectives may show only moderate revenue increases.

But if they are strategically aligned with the business, they also measure the impact of training on onboarding, adoption, NPS, and renewals.

But there are still mountains to climb

What are the top 4 issues holding you back from reaching your software training goals today?



Limited integration between LMS and other training tools
35.0%

Aligning training metrics with business metrics
34.5%

Scheduling
31.5%

Lack of hands-on tools
31.5%

CloudShare's survey data reveals key challenges in modern training delivery. The primary obstacle is limited integration between Learning Management Systems (LMS) and other training tools, affecting 35% of organizations and creating inefficiencies in data flow.

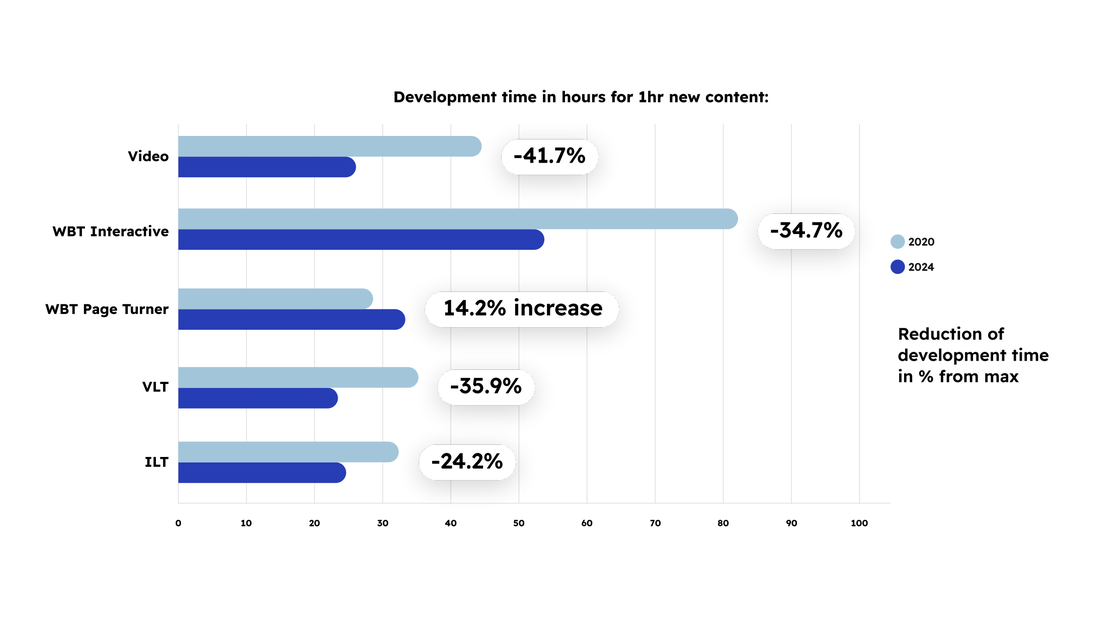
Following at 34.5% is the challenge of aligning training metrics with business metrics, highlighting difficulties in demonstrating ROI and connecting learning outcomes to organizational success.

Two challenges tie for third at 31.5%: scheduling training, which reflects the complexity of balancing learning with operational demands in remote/hybrid environments, and a lack of hands-on tools, indicating ongoing struggles to provide practical learning experiences.

These challenges suggest an industry working to overcome technological fragmentation and achieve strategic alignment while delivering effective training, especially as the needs and preferences of learners evolve.

Cutting content development time

Training content development times have decreased significantly across most modalities between 2020 and 2024, with Agile processes and AI emerging as game-changers.



Interactive web-based training (WBT), while still the most time-intensive format at 54 hours per hour of content, has seen a 34% reduction from 2020.

However, standard page-turner WBT bucks the downward trend, showing a 14% increase to 33 hours.

Video content development has achieved the most dramatic improvement, dropping 42% to 26 hours per hour of content. Live training formats have also gained efficiency, with virtual live training (VLT) decreasing 36% to 23 hours and instructor-led training (ILT) reducing by 24% to 24 hours.

These reductions reflect improved content creation processes and smarter infrastructures that allow education teams to leverage and link together the best technologies.

© Copyright CEdMA Enterprise

Your tech stack doesn't stand still

Education Tool Category	% of CEdMA Members
Virtual Classroom	93%
LMS	81%
Content Development Tools	74%
Training Evaluations	74%
Video Automation	72%
Digital Badging	70%
Virtual Labs	67%
Analytics & Learner Record Store	63%
Resourcing/Instructor Planning	58%
Translation Tools	56%
CRM	51%
Social Platforms	51%
Examination Delivery	49%
Examination Security/Proctoring	49%
eCommerce	47%
Virtual Engagement	33%
eBooks/Digital Rights Management	28%
Training Management System	21%
Learner Experience Platform	14%
Learning Content Management System	7%
Performance Support/In App	7%
Gamification	5%
VR/AR	0%

© Copyright CEdMA Enterprise

Virtual classrooms dominate education services technology, with 93% of organizations using platforms like Teams, WebEx, and Zoom. Learning Management Systems (LMS) rank second at 81.4% adoption, followed by content development and training evaluation tools, both at 74.42%.

Video automation solutions are close behind at 72%, while digital badging platforms reach nearly 70% adoption. Virtual labs serve 67.44% of organizations, and analytics/learner record stores are used by 62.79%.

However, some technologies show minimal adoption: VR/AR tools report zero usage, while gamification engines and learning content management systems (LCMS) remain below 7%. Resource planning, content translation, and CRM systems show moderate adoption at around 50%.

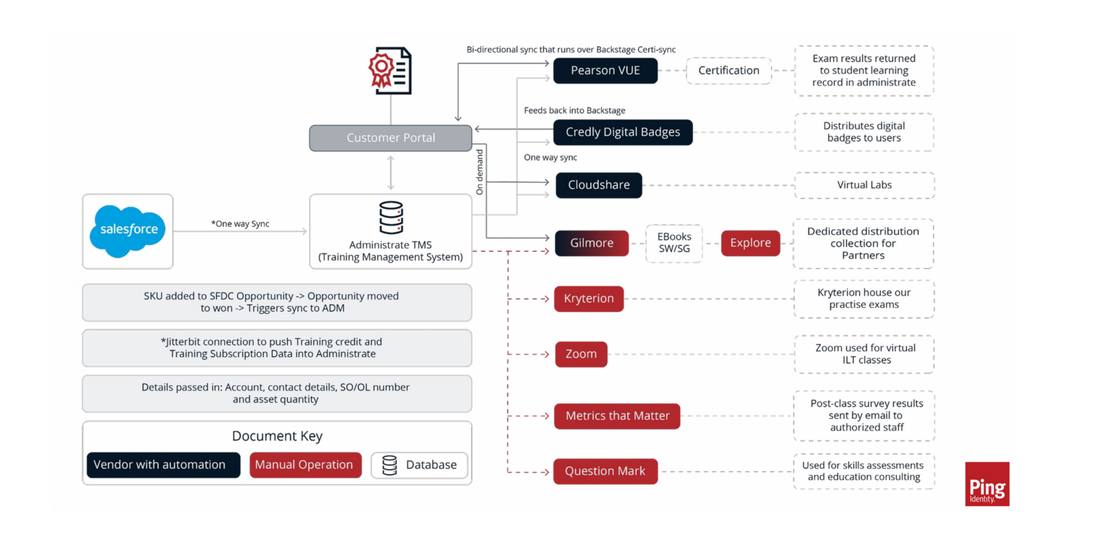
This pattern suggests organizations embrace core digital learning technologies while remaining cautious about emerging solutions.

Keeping composed

A composable tech stack - like the state-of-the-art stack created by Leonie Schwede, Director of Training at PingIdentity, which she presented at the CEdMA Europe Conference 2024 in London - features independent, modular technology components that can be combined flexibly to create custom solutions, similar to building blocks.

Companies can take advantage of the latest, often AI-driven technological advances, frequently replacing several tools with just one, adding missing functionality, or deprecating functionality that's no longer needed as the business grows or restructures.
The business isn't constrained by one vendor providing an end-to-end solution. When it comes to business agility, that's priceless.

Within this architecture, virtual IT labs have become essential, providing isolated, cloud-based environments that mirror production settings and serve multiple business functions.



Virtual labs support development and testing by offering safe environments for experimentation, enhance sales processes through hands-on demonstrations and POCs, facilitate training and enablement across organizations, and boost customer success, product adoption, retention, and upsell rates.

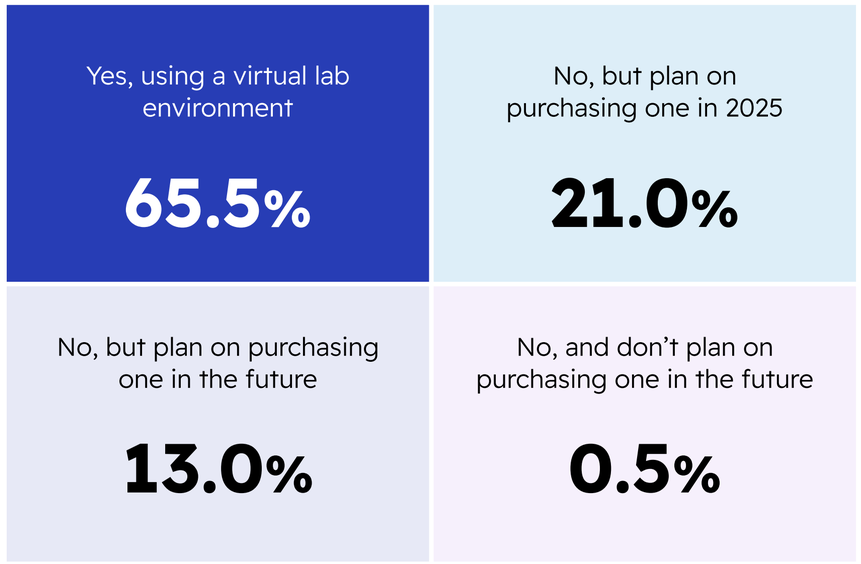
Their inherent flexibility makes virtual IT labs particularly valuable in composable architectures, as they can be easily integrated with other tools while maintaining independence, allowing organizations to evolve their technology infrastructure while preserving key capabilities across the software lifecycle.

The victory of virtual labs

Virtual lab adoption has reached critical mass in the training industry, with CloudShare data showing class volume increasing 34% and user numbers growing 44% over two years.

Hands-on virtual labs are the ideal complement to traditional virtual classrooms, enhancing learner engagement, content comprehension, and knowledge retention. Above all, they enable instructors to provide direct assistance to learners.

Are you using virtual labs to conduct hands-on training?



Modern virtual lab technology, for both VILT and self-paced learning, has streamlined historically challenging implementation processes, offering simplified scheduling, improved environment management, and reduced resource requirements.

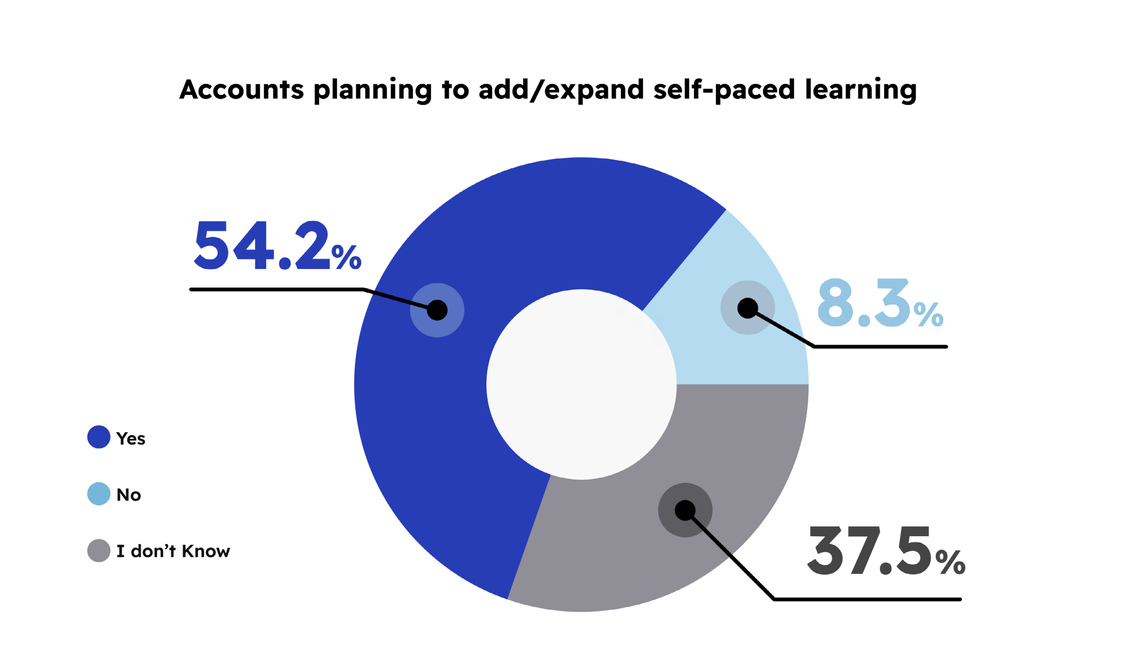
These technological advancements allow organizations to redirect resources from environment management to higher-value activities like content creation and catalog optimization.

These operational improvements have significantly contributed to accelerating adoption rates across the training industry, marking virtual labs as an increasingly essential component of modern training delivery.

The growing demand for on-demand

Virtual labs are the ideal way for education leaders to adapt to evolving delivery preferences, such as the shift toward self-paced learning - just as streaming services have largely replaced linear TV for vast modern audiences.

CloudShare's survey data of CEd leaders shows 54.2% plan to introduce or expand self-paced options, indicating growing momentum behind flexible learning approaches.



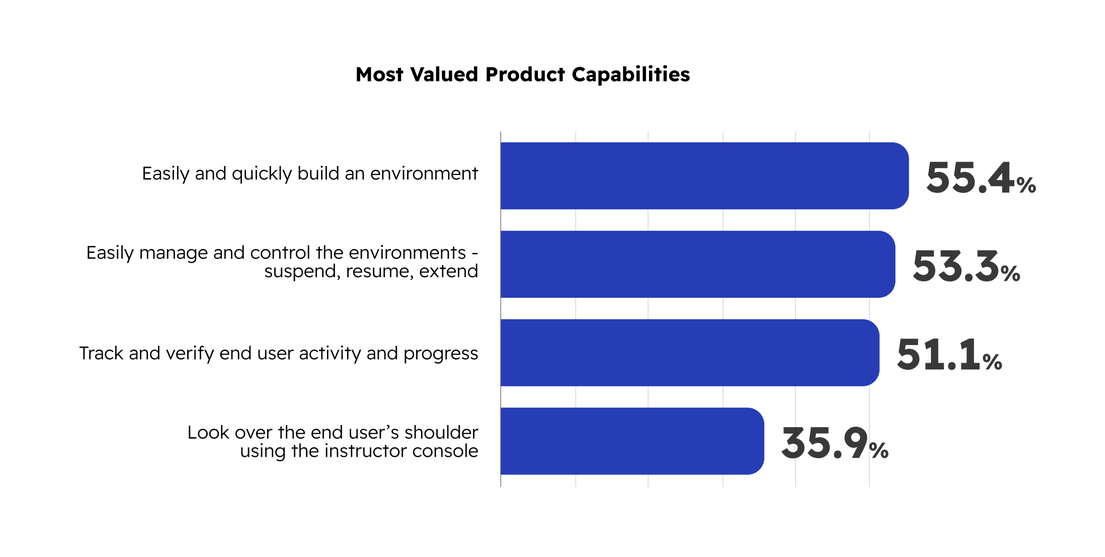
However, a significant 37.5% remain undecided, suggesting concerns about implementation challenges, effectiveness, or ROI integration with existing frameworks.

This split creates an interesting market dynamic, potentially leading to differentiation as some organizations aggressively pursue self-paced offerings while others maintain traditional methods.

The trend signals a transformation in professional education delivery, though still in early stages, with room for evolution as leaders gather data, refine their strategies, and consider the solutions that will best serve their needs.

Evaluating your virtual lab options

Research conducted among CloudShare customers reveals key priorities in virtual IT lab functionality.



Environment creation is fundamental, with 55.4% of users ranking it as their top priority, while 53.3% value efficient environment management capabilities like suspending and resuming sessions or inviting additional users as the most important CloudShare capability.

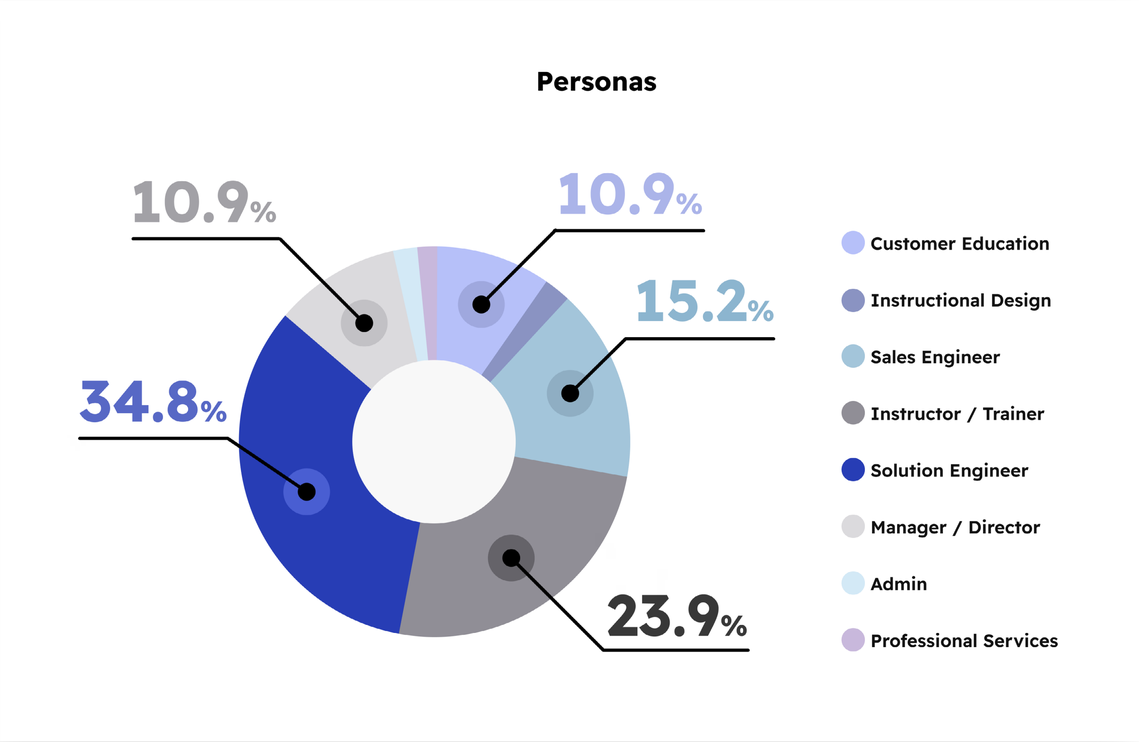
Tracking and verifying end user activity and progress isn't just about class or course completion. It's about complete visibility into how well they're completing each exercise. That's one of the key aspects of CloudShare's new Guided Journey feature. It uses computer vision to automatically check users' work. For VILT, that means no more manual assessment - no more frustrating delays. And for self-paced, it means a smoother, more streamlined experience.

The instructor/experience management console also emerges as crucial, with over one-third of users emphasizing its importance for monitoring student activities and controlling training sessions.

"Over-the-shoulder" means the ability to see exactly what users are doing in real time. This is where CloudShare's exceptionally low latency gives it the edge over other solutions.

Labs aren’t only for learning

CloudShare user data analysis reveals diverse adoption of virtual IT labs across organizational functions.



Solution Engineers form the largest user segment at 34.8%, showcasing the platform's strong technical focus.

Instructors and Trainers constitute 23.9% of users, underlining the platform's educational role, while Sales Engineers represent 15.2%, indicating significant pre-sales usage.

Customer Education teams and Managers/Directors each comprise 10.9% of users, suggesting balanced operational and strategic implementation.

Smaller but important user segments include Instructional Designers (2.2%), Administrative staff (1.1%), and Professional Services teams (1.1%).

This broad distribution across roles demonstrates that virtual IT labs have evolved beyond traditional training applications to become comprehensive tools supporting multiple business functions through a single platform.

Conclusion

CloudShare and CEdMA Enterprise both set out to address a specific but highly significant issue in Customer Education: the lack of reliable data on CEd leaders' evolving priorities, business models, metrics, long-term challenges, tactical obstacles, and technological solutions.

We hope this collaboration has brought you fresh and actionable insights into the state of Customer Education and how training professionals can continue to drive innovation, customer outcomes, and business success now and in the future.

Our key takeaway from carrying out this project? CEd is now at the heart of every customer relationship and will soon be at the core of every strategic decision.

cloudshare

About CloudShare

CloudShare is a leading software experience platform that helps software companies increase customer acquisition and retention by creating highly engaging hands-on virtual training, POCs, demos, and testing environments in minutes.

Our virtual environments are easily replicated in the cloud and purpose-built to generate user engagement that ultimately impacts key business metrics such as customer retention, repeat purchase rates, lower support costs, higher win rates, faster sales cycles, and more.

To learn more about how we can help you improve customer acquisition and retention in your organization, contact us here.

About CEdMA Enterprise

CEdMA Enterprise (Computer Education Management Association - Enterprise) is the premier organization for training executives, managers, and professionals on a management path within hardware and software enterprises. Through CEdMA you will gain access to the vast experience and resources provided by members who share a passion for providing high-quality training on technology and certification products while running an efficient business unit. CEdMA Enterprise includes over 800 individuals representing over 50 global technology companies.

CEdMA ENTERPRISE