watershed

xAPI Case Study: Quicken Loans

Think getting started with xAPI is too difficult? See how Quicken Loans jumped in with xAPI to start building their learning ecosystem.

Quicken Loans

Industry:
Financial Services

Employees:
17,000

Overview

Quicken Loans is the largest retail lender in the United States. With 17,000 team members, the home mortgage lender closed more than $400 billion of mortgage volume across the nation between 2013 and 2017. With an organization of this size, the quality of the learning experience is important—but Quicken's instructional technology team was uncertain if integrating Experience API (xAPI) into their learning ecosystem would provide immediate positive impact.

The Challenge: Defining goals for training technology

Rob Way, team leader of the instructional technology team, learned about xAPI at conferences and xAPI camps, but always walked away without specific actionable items that could be quickly integrated into Quicken's learning ecosystem. He decided it was best to wait until he found an xAPI use case or feature that would apply to the learning programs his team was already managing.

However, after further investigation into xAPI, the instructional technology team's mindset shifted. They realized that xAPI isn't difficult to integrate when an organization's goals are identifiable. In other words, having defined goals for training technology can help resolve any confusion related to xAPI and narrow down objectives for integration.

The Approach: Preparing for change

There are several methods people use to learn and improve professionally—including articles, blogs, podcasts, videos, or webinars. Many formal learning activities are easy to track, such as:

- computer-based learning (CBT),
- quizzes, or
- instructor-led training (ILT).

However, capturing information about informal learning activities can be difficult, including:

- peer-to-peer conversations, and
- third-party online videos.

With xAPI, organizations can get insights into what and where employees and team members are learning , what types of learning content are needed, and how to best deliver that content.

According to Dane Pentreath, Quicken Loan's senior instructional technologist, learning and training are changing due to technology's continuous evolution. Learners are constantly distracted by the amount of available information, causing them to be overwhelmed and impatient. The instructional technology team understands people need to be able to access information at any time and on any device.

Additionally, the ongoing release of new or updated technology comes with a learning curve that is changing the "shelf life" of employees' skill sets. And this has led to conversations within the instructional technology team about how groups that support learning can adapt to the changing landscape while still providing useful learning content. While these emerging technologies provide the flexibility to use multiple systems to deliver training and learning content, the analytics from these different systems need to be available in a central location and provide reporting in the same language (see Image 1).

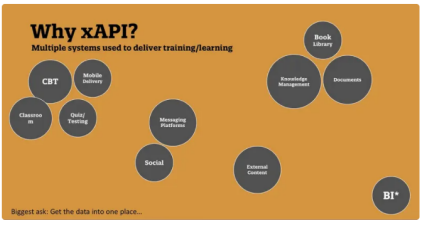

Image 1: Before integrating xAPI, Quicken's learning ecosystem consisted of disparate systems that could not communicate with each other.

The Solution: Improving the learning experience

The organization had goals for the types of reports and data analytics they wanted to access. They decided to make the transition incrementally, so the xAPI specification was integrated into the ecosystem one step at a time, instead of using it to immediately overhaul the learning experience.

Rob and his team decided to use xAPI to tie a thread between systems that were written in different languages. When these multiple systems—such as ones that deliver traditional learning, resources, or external content—aren't able to communicate with each other, they act as silos and restrict data sharing. xAPI, however, enables these systems to "speak the same language," allowing analytics from each system to be collected in one location (i.e., a Learning Record Store, or LRS).

As a result, xAPI has helped Quicken create a more user-friendly process for pulling all their learning data into a single place to report on analytics. Furthermore, the instructional technology team was set up for the next step or evolution of transforming the learning experience.

For Quicken, the main benefit of xAPI is about enhancing efficiencies. Accessing each system separately to export reports is no longer necessary. Now, that data is automatically delivered to an LRS. Once xAPI is integrated, disparate systems are able to coexist, allowing flexibility in terms of how many delivery options are available. In addition, xAPI has helped encourage training organizations, such as Rob and Dane's team at Quicken, to have conversations about how to improve the learning experience (see Image 2).

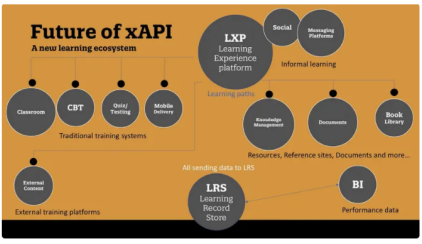

Image 2: Data from each system in Quicken's ecosystem is reported to the LRS in the same language.

The Future: Creating a new learning ecosystem

Getting data from disparate systems into an LRS is just the first step in creating a new learning ecosystem. xAPI doesn't generate more data because it doesn't create data—but the xAPI statements are the core of Quicken's new learning ecosystem. Not only does xAPI bring data into an LRS, but it also helps create analytics that can be tied to performance data and determine the effectiveness of learning content. In turn, these analytics also help leaders make better-informed business decisions

Quicken is starting to explore the idea of building their own Learning Experience Platform (LXP), primarily as a content curation tool. The instructional technology team also has a future goal to capture search terms. Gaining insight into what learners are searching for will cause training to be more proactive than reactive, generating real-time reports of performance support.