

# Launching a Project with a Custom Content Developer: Using Training as a Tool for Success



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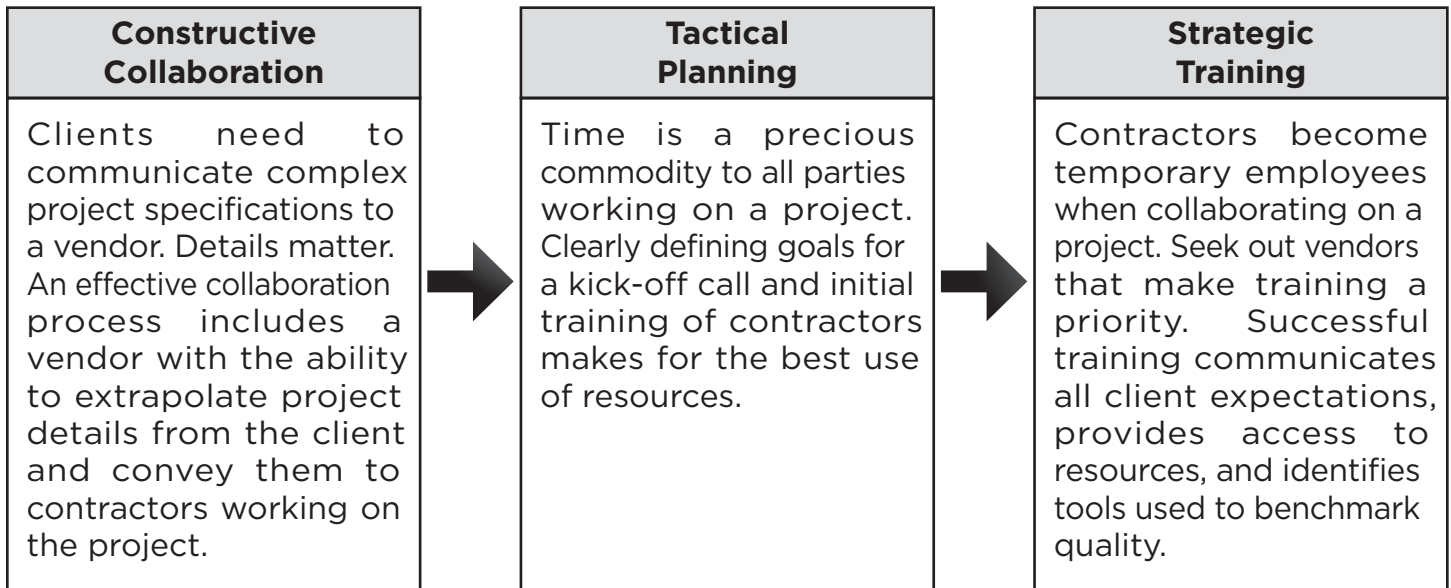
A Pass Educational Group, LLC

**Q:** *How do the most effective content developers produce high-quality educational materials on a tight time deadline?*

**A:** *They execute a strategic project launch.*

## The Project Launch Process

After carefully selecting a vendor and finalizing a contract, a client is ready to start a project. A date is scheduled for a project launch meeting with all stakeholders present. What are the important components of a project launch?



### **Constructive Collaboration**

Clients benefit from vendor experience. Thorough vendors ask questions that facilitate a successful kick-off call and additional training experiences. Each project is unique, and while some are straightforward, other projects may require large volumes of information to be transferred from client to vendor. A vendor-client partnership accurately conveys project specifications by answering questions, such as:

- Which development tools do contractors need to use?
- Where can contractors access samples of high-quality deliverables?
- Who is responsible for recording and sharing meeting notes?
- How will feedback be shared and how often?
- What are the criteria for a deliverable to be accepted, accepted with revisions, or rejected?
- What metadata needs to be provided and how?

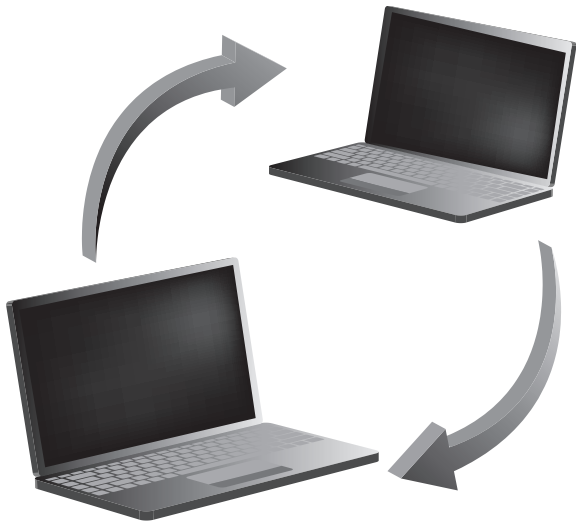
- How will materials be delivered (email, FTP, online file-sharing)?
- What are acceptable sources for media?

A vendor that asks thought-provoking questions draws out important information and clarifies expectations for contractors.

### **Tactical Planning**

Extensive projects require many layers of teams working both together and independently. Planning ways to provide information and training to each level ensures that vital information is shared with the right parties. The initial kick-off call should accomplish several goals, including:

1. **Assembling stakeholders**  
In a virtual world, there are many ways to hold a meeting in addition to face-to-face. Often, team members are spread out across geographic areas and time zones. Creating a cohesive team requires planning for sharing information and holding meetings.



## 2. Establishing group protocols

The idea of a large group teleconference can be overwhelming. In fact, sending out a scripted email with directions might seem like a simpler option! But the opportunity for a meeting with all stakeholders present, and the time to clarify and ask questions, is well worth the time and effort at the start of a project. A prepared vendor will be able to run the call and assist the client, if necessary, with establishing communication protocols so that online meetings run smoothly.

## 3. Seeking out resources

Outside contractors may not be aware of the tools available for a particular project. In the planning phase, expect a vendor to ask for resources and pertinent details, such as login access. Having a conversation that fully explores the question “Which resources best meet the needs of this project?” is critical. Fully equipped contractors do their best work with access to high-quality resources.

## Strategic Training

There are many important items to consider before strategic training takes place including advance planning and selecting a training format.

### Advance Planning

- *Who is responsible for creating content?* If the client has a team of writers and/or subject matter experts that will be working with the vendor, it is important to communicate with them in advance.

- *Does the client have preferred research sources?*  
The vendor must communicate all preferred sources to writers and researchers before work begins to ensure accuracy.
- *What types of content are allowable: original, public domain, or rights-cleared?*  
This question must be answered before the project begins, and if the answer is not clearly communicated to each level working on the project, major revisions and rewrites could occur at the end stages of the project.
- *Who will provide training?*  
Make a specific plan that includes each person responsible for providing each aspect of training.
- *Are there existing legacy sources, development templates, and editorial/style guides to use?*  
Having a clear guide for the final product and communicating it during training ensures that the deliverable meets not only content standards, but also adheres to all format guidelines as well.
- *Are there exemplars available for the vendor to reference?*  
Include an example of a deliverable that meets expectations during the training process. Ensure that resources covered in training are accessible throughout the duration of the project.



### Selecting a Training Format

A small project may require one brief training call and pertinent information delivered via email. Other projects might require a multitude of people using a secure login to access project materials. If a face-to-face meeting

is not possible, Web collaboration, such as a conference call and shared folders online with customized access for participants, helps bridge the physical gap between everyone on the team. Use a vendor that specializes in intentional communication so that the training format matches the client's need.

Assembling a team of writers, editors, subject matter experts, instructional designers, and artists for training is an important part of launching a project. Once the client and vendor have answered advance planning questions and agreed on the collaborative training format, the information must be communicated to everyone involved in the project. Ensuring that all parties have access to resources and examples, as well as directions and login instructions, keeps the project workflow moving along.

Working with a content developer is an effective way to create customized educational materials, often under tight time constraints. In the rush to meet an urgent deadline, be sure to work with a developer that provides a thorough project launch. Just like the old adage, "a stitch in time saves nine," spending quality time launching a project prevents wasting resources and time in the end.



*Save time and launch a project effectively by looking for constructive collaboration, tactical planning, and strategic training in a vendor.*

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