



The Scrappy Trainer's Toolkit 2025

Smart L&D
Solutions for
Tight Budgets



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Hello There!

Welcome to The Scrappy Trainer's Toolkit!

Despite the title, this is NOT a handbook for wrestling coaches. We just want to make that clear upfront. Although we *ARE* all about rolling with the punches when it comes to Learning & Development. Zing!

So, what is this thing and why did we write it?

2025 is already shaping up to be a tricky year for L&D teams. With an unpredictable economy, shrinking budgets, tighter timelines, and resources that feel stretched thin, you may be experiencing stress, exhaustion, or worst of all, rumbly tummy.

It's not exactly a fun ride, but it *can* be an opportunity to get creative. These constraints might feel like the universe's way of testing your limits, but they can also push you to think outside the box. And sometimes the box is made of budget-friendly, low-tech options that still get the job done.

This toolkit is here to help you think strategically, stay resourceful, and find new ways to do more with what's right in front of you.

The world of L&D is constantly shifting, and the best way to stay ahead is to remain agile. Think less "static" and more like your favorite superhero, "Non-Copyright- Infringing Arachnid Man"—quick, adaptable, and always ready to *swing* into action when things get tough.

HAPPY READING!
TEAM IDLANCE



Checklist: Take Stock of Your Existing Resources

Before jumping into your next big training project, take a moment to assess what you already have. When resources are tight, it's easy to think you need to start fresh, but chances are, **your current toolbox just needs a little tweaking to make an impact.** By taking inventory, you can maximize your efforts, stay within budget, and avoid the stress of reinventing the wheel. Who needs wheels, anyway?! Not us.

CONTENT

- Old eLearning courses (SCORM, xAPI, or outdated modules)
- PDFs, manuals, process maps, standard operating procedures, or policy documents
- Recorded webinars, SME presentations, or virtual training sessions
- Job aids, cheat sheets, or quick reference guides
- Case studies, role-play scenarios, or discussion prompts
- Compliance or regulatory training modules
- Existing assessments or knowledge checks
- Internal newsletters or knowledge-sharing documents
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs) from help desks or support teams
- Learning paths or competency frameworks from past programs
- Recorded audio or podcast-style learning content
- Microlearning modules (text message-based, video, in-app, etc.)
- Templates for training, reporting, or performance reviews
- Archived training surveys or feedback forms
- Gamified training elements or quizzes
- Internal social media or collaboration platform posts (e.g., Slack channels, Teams groups)
- Onboarding materials or employee handbooks
- Previous project reports, evaluations, or success metrics
- Internal LMS data or learner activity reports
- Virtual reality or augmented reality content



- **What content is outdated but still valuable with minor updates?**
- **Are there overlapping resources that could be consolidated?**
- **What's underutilized but could be repurposed into new formats?**

TECHNOLOGY

- Learning Management System (LMS) or Learning Experience Platform (LXP)
- Authoring tools
- Video hosting platforms
- Virtual training platforms
- AI or automation tools for content generation
- Survey or feedback tools
- Microlearning platforms
- Content management systems
- Collaborative tools
- Mobile learning platforms or apps
- Video editing software
- Gamification tools
- SCORM/xAPI-compliant platforms for tracking learner progress
- Learning content repositories and file sharing platforms
- Virtual Reality or Augmented Reality platforms for immersive learning
- Social learning platforms
- Digital whiteboards for remote collaboration
- Cloud storage solutions for sharing training materials
- Video conferencing tools with interactive features



- **Are there underutilized tools that could enhance learning?**
- **Can any of these tools automate repetitive tasks?**
- **Are there tools that need better adoption within the team?**

PEOPLE

- Internal Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Power users (employees who have mastered a tool or process)
- Peer mentors or experienced employees willing to coach others
- Trainers and facilitators (internal or external)
- Leadership champions who support learning initiatives
- IT and HR teams (for technical or compliance-related training)
- Employee resource groups (ERG) for diverse perspectives
- Cross-functional team members who can share insights across departments
- Alumni or former employees who may still have useful knowledge to contribute

▶▶▶▶ PEOPLE (cont)

- Subject matter experts from external partnerships
- Mentorship program participants (both mentors and mentees)
- Customers or clients (for feedback and real-world use cases)
- Vendor support (external partners or services, such as IDLance, for specialized help)



- **Are there SMEs who could record short knowledge-sharing videos?**
- **Who could help validate content to ensure it's still relevant?**
- **How can peer learning be leveraged to reduce dependence on formal training?**

▶▶▶▶ DELIVERY

- Instructor-led training (in-person or virtual)
- eLearning modules (formal courses, microlearning, or adaptive learning)
- Video-based learning (recorded tutorials, explainer videos)
- Blended learning approaches (mix of digital and live training)
- On-the-job training or shadowing programs
- Social learning (discussion forums, peer coaching)
- Self-paced learning resources (playlists, knowledge bases)
- Gamified learning (learning through games, simulations, or challenges)
- Virtual Reality or Augmented Reality training experiences
- Mobile learning (on-the-go learning via apps or mobile-optimized content)
- Podcasts or audio-based learning
- Webinars or live-streamed training sessions
- Learning communities or cohort-based learning
- Interactive eBooks or digital guides
- Job aids or performance support tools (on-demand quick reference materials)
- Knowledge-sharing platforms (e.g., wikis, internal blogs)



- **Can any of these methods be adapted for different learning needs?**
- **Are employees favoring one format over another?**
- **Are there low-cost or high-impact alternatives that haven't been fully explored?**

Post-Checklist Homework

Once you've completed the checklist, take a moment to reflect. With a snack.

Choose one area where you have the least available resources (content, tools, people, or delivery methods), and pick a goal from the options below to focus on **next quarter**. These are meant to be easy, actionable steps to get you moving forward without feeling overwhelmed!

CONTENT

- **Repurpose** an old training module into a new format. For example, turn a webinar into a microlearning module or transform a PDF into an interactive eLearning course.
- **Update** one outdated resource by adding new information or making it more engaging. Try adding multimedia to a static job aid or refreshing outdated statistics in an old presentation.
- **Create** a bite-sized version of a long training module to fit a new learning need, such as a short refresher for employees on the go.

TECHNOLOGY

- **Master** a tool you're underusing. Take the next quarter to explore a tool in your current tech stack that you feel you haven't fully tapped into.
- **Create** a tool-sharing system. Set up a central place where team members can share their favorite, underused tech tools or tips for maximizing the ones you already have.
- **Automate** a repetitive process using existing tools. For example, automating content delivery or setting up a regular reporting process.

PEOPLE

- **Train** one internal SME or peer mentor to create or share their own learning materials for your team, reducing the load on you and creating a sustainable resource.
- **Pair up** SMEs or power users to co-create new training content or run knowledge-sharing sessions. This spreads the workload and builds a culture of learning.
- **Implement** a “train the trainer” program. Focus on developing the skills of 1–2 SMEs to become go-to people for specific topics or tools in your organization.

DELIVERY

- **Convert** one traditional in-person session into an online or hybrid format, leveraging existing content and tools you have on hand.
- **Create** a content calendar that allows for bite-sized, consistent learning (like weekly email tips, short videos, or 5-minute refreshers).
- **Test** one new delivery method with a small group—whether that’s gamification, social learning, or peer-led learning groups—and see how it works before committing to a larger rollout.

You’ve **taken stock, identified your focus area, and set your quarterly goal**. Now it’s time to roll up your sleeves and get to work! With your plan in place, you’re ready to make the most of what you’ve got and drive meaningful results. Stay resourceful and keep moving forward—progress is built one step at a time! Just like eating an entire wheel of cheddar...one bite at a time.

Repurpose & Maximize

In the last section, you took stock of what you already have access to with our checklist—whether it’s old content, tech, or people you can tap into. Now, it’s time to think about how to rethink, reduce, and reuse what’s at your disposal. Just like recycling without the trauma of cleaning out a peanut butter jar.

It’s all about reimagining your existing content, tools, and methods in new and exciting ways that save you time, effort, and budget. **Here’s the triple “R” breakdown:**

- **RETHINK:** How can you approach existing resources with fresh eyes? Maybe that old content just needs a bit of a remix to feel relevant again.
- **REDUCE:** Less is often more. Can you simplify your training offerings and still get the same impact?
- **REUSE:** Why start from scratch? Let’s find ways to adapt what you’ve already created into something new and useful.

Each of these strategies comes with a matrix to help you identify what to rethink, reduce, or reuse in your training program.


The Rethink matrix helps you evaluate your existing content and materials to see where you can tweak and repurpose them into something more efficient or relevant. For example, if you have an outdated full-day workshop, you could transform it into a blended learning experience to engage learners over time, or an annual compliance course can be refreshed with new case studies to avoid repetitiveness.

The Reduce matrix focuses on streamlining content so you can deliver just as much value in a shorter, more digestible format. The goal is to eliminate unnecessary complexity while still delivering the core message.

And finally, the **Reuse matrix** guides you on how to take your existing resources and adapt them into new formats or contexts to suit different learning needs!


Break out your finest leather trench coat and sunglasses, it’s time to enter the matrix...

Rethink: Instead of starting from scratch, what can you repurpose?

What to Rethink	How to Repurpose It	Why it Works 
A full-day instructor-led workshop	Convert it into a blended learning program with prework (videos, readings, self-assessments), virtual instructor-led sessions, and follow-up reinforcement activities.	Keeps learners engaged over time while reducing seat time and cognitive overload.
Annual compliance training that feels repetitive	Use last year's course but update it with new, real-world case studies, refreshed scenarios, or interactive branching challenges.	Keeps the content fresh and relevant without a complete rebuild.
An outdated PowerPoint deck	Transform it into a video-based explainer, an interactive Rise course, or a scenario-driven module instead of another bullet-point-heavy slideshow.	Makes the content more engaging and interactive for modern learners.
A standard policy document or handbook	Break it into bite-sized, searchable job aids, infographics, or chatbot-accessible microcontent.	Ensures employees can quickly find and use the information when they need it, rather than having to sit through training.
One-size-fits-all onboarding programs	Develop role-specific, adaptive learning pathways that adjust based on the learner's role, experience, or knowledge level.	Reduces training time for experienced employees while giving new hires what they need most.


CONTINUE 

Rethink (cont):

What to Rethink	How to Repurpose It	Why it Works 
An in-person Q&A session with SMEs	Turn the most common SME answers into a video library, an interactive chatbot, or a knowledge-sharing platform.	Provides on-demand access to expert knowledge without requiring SMEs to repeat themselves.
A long eLearning module that covers multiple topics	Break it into a series of short, focused microlearning lessons that learners can access as needed.	Improves retention and allows employees to learn in the flow of work.
Endless slide-based product training	Replace with interactive scenario-based learning or gamification elements where learners explore different product features based on real customer needs.	Makes training more practical, engaging, and memorable.
Internal meetings or knowledge-sharing sessions	Record and edit key insights into bite-sized videos, podcasts, or written takeaways for a knowledge library.	Ensures that valuable insights aren't lost and can be referenced later.


Reduce:

Can you **simplify training** instead of making something complex?

What to Reduce	How to Simplify It	Why it Works 
Long eLearning modules (45+ minutes or more)	Break them into short, focused microlearning modules (5-10 minutes each) that learners can take at their own pace.	Avoids cognitive overload and allows learners to absorb information in manageable chunks.
Bulky training manuals or PDFs	Convert key sections into interactive job aids, infographics, or step-by-step walkthroughs instead of lengthy documents.	Provides just-in-time learning instead of overwhelming employees with excessive reading.
Lengthy onboarding programs	Streamline by identifying must-know vs. nice-to-know content , and provide role-specific learning pathways. Supplement with peer mentoring.	Reduces time to productivity while keeping onboarding relevant to each role.
Extensive PowerPoint slide decks	Cut unnecessary text and replace with visual storytelling, animations, or scenario-based learning .	Increases engagement while reducing information overload.
Too many assessments in a course	Instead of multiple-choice overload, use real-world simulations, scenario challenges, or spaced assessments over time.	Ensures assessment is meaningful rather than just a memory test.


CONTINUE 

Reduce (cont) :

What to Reduce	How to Simplify It	Why it Works 
<p>Live training that covers too many topics at once</p>	<p>Break into shorter, focused sessions, or turn part of it into self-paced prework so live sessions are more interactive.</p>	<p>Keeps learners engaged and improves retention.</p>
<p>Repeating the same training annually without change</p>	<p>Instead of making employees sit through the same course, use adaptive learning or a pre-assessment to test out of what they already know.</p>	<p>Saves time for experienced learners while keeping training effective.</p>
<p>Dense policy or compliance training</p>	<p>Replace long text-based courses with scenario-driven decision-making exercises where employees learn by doing.</p>	<p>Makes compliance training more relevant and practical.</p>
<p>Overwhelming LMS course catalogs</p>	<p>Audit and remove outdated, redundant, or underused courses, and create curated learning paths instead of long lists.</p>	<p>Reduces choice paralysis and helps employees find what they actually need.</p>


Reuse:

Can you take an **existing resource** and **adapt** it for a new format?

What to Reuse	How to Repurpose It	Why it Works 
Recorded webinars or virtual training sessions	Edit into short knowledge clips for a learning library, or break them into 2-3 minute microlearning videos with key takeaways.	Learners can access specific insights on demand without watching an entire recording.
Existing instructor-led training (ILT) materials	Convert slides and facilitator guides into self-paced eLearning, interactive Rise courses, or short job aids.	Saves development time while making content accessible to remote and asynchronous learners.
FAQs from customer service, IT, or HR teams	Turn common questions into chatbot responses, an interactive decision tree, or a searchable self-help guide.	Reduces repetitive inquiries while empowering employees to find answers quickly.
Old case studies and role-play exercises	Update with new industry trends, modernized data, or diverse characters to keep them relevant.	Avoids creating new scenarios from scratch while ensuring content stays engaging.
Slide decks used for past presentations	Adapt the key concepts into a podcast episode, infographic, or a series of short LinkedIn posts.	Reaches a wider audience in different learning formats.

CONTINUE 

Reuse (cont) :

What to Reuse	How to Repurpose It	Why it Works 
<p>Long compliance training courses</p>	<p>Pull out essential policies and turn them into short animated explainer videos or interactive scenario challenges.</p>	<p>Reinforces compliance training without requiring full course retakes.</p>
<p>Live SME Q&A sessions</p>	<p>Record and edit into on-demand expert insight videos, a podcast, or even an internal “Ask the Expert” blog series.</p>	<p>Captures valuable SME knowledge in a format that can be revisited anytime.</p>
<p>Internal newsletters or company announcements</p>	<p>Extract learning insights and package them into bite-sized microlearning content or an interactive timeline.</p>	<p>Keeps employees informed without overwhelming them with long emails.</p>
<p>Old leadership development programs</p>	<p>Repurpose key lessons into short coaching guides, peer discussion prompts, or social learning challenges.</p>	<p>Extends the value of leadership training and encourages continuous development.</p>

Free & Low-Cost Tools

Working with limited resources? **These free and budget-friendly tools can help you create, collaborate, and deliver** impactful training without breaking the bank.

L&D Specific

- [H5P](#) (Free)– Create interactive content like quizzes, presentations, and interactive videos without coding.
- [Adapt Learning](#) (Free)– Open-source authoring tool for responsive e-learning courses.
- [SCORM Cloud](#) (Free for small-scale use)– Test SCORM-compliant courses without needing an LMS.

Project Management

- [MindMeister](#) (Free or \$6.50/month)– A simple but effective tool for brainstorming and mapping out ideas.
- [Trello](#) (Free or \$5/month)– A visual task management tool that works great for tracking learning projects.
- [Asana](#) (Free or from \$10.99/month)– More structured project management with task dependencies and automations.
- [ClickUp](#) (Free or from \$7/month)– A versatile tool with built-in docs, whiteboards, and task tracking.
- [Notion](#) (Free or from \$10/month)– Combines project management, knowledge sharing, and note-taking in one.

Video & Animation

- [Vyond](#) (From \$25/month, billed annually)– Create professional animated training videos with ease.
- [YouTube](#) (Free)– A go-to platform for hosting training videos and sharing learning content.
- [Loom](#) (Free or \$15/month)– Quick and easy screen recording and video messaging for instructional content.
- [Zight](#) (previously CloudApp) (Free or \$9/month)– Capture and share screen recordings, GIFs, and annotated screenshots instantly.

Graphics & Design

- [Canva](#) (Free or \$15/month)– Drag-and-drop design tool for presentations, social media, and training assets.
- [Pexels](#) (Free)– A massive library of high-quality stock images and videos.
- [Freepik](#) (Free & Paid)– Free and premium graphics, illustrations, and templates.
- [Unsplash](#) (Free or \$7/month) – A large collection of beautiful, high-resolution stock photos.
- [Flaticon](#) (Free or \$8.25/month)– A great resource for icons, vector graphics, and UI elements.
- [Icons8](#) (Free & Paid)– A diverse library of icons, illustrations, and music.
- [LottieFiles](#) (Free & Paid)– Animated assets to add motion to digital training content.

Collaboration

- [Google Forms](#) (Free) – Simple and effective for gathering learner feedback and assessments.
- [Zoom](#) (Free & Paid) – A widely used video conferencing tool for live training sessions.
- [Slack](#) (Free or from \$7.25/month) – Instant messaging and collaboration tool for teams.
- [Miro](#) (Free & Paid) – Online whiteboard for brainstorming and collaboration.
- [Mural](#) (Free & Paid) – Digital whiteboarding tool for teamwork and brainstorming.

AI-Powered

- [Grammarly](#) (Free or \$12/month)– AI-powered writing assistant for clear and error-free content.
- [ChatGPT](#) (Free & Paid)– Helps generate ideas, draft content, and refine instructional materials.
- [Gemini](#) (Free & Paid)– AI-powered text and image generation, useful for brainstorming and content enhancement.
- [ElevenLabs](#) (Free or \$5/month for 30k characters)– AI text-to-speech tool for voiceovers in training content.
- [Canva Magic Media](#) (Free & Paid)– AI-powered text generator right within Canva for quick content creation.
- [Synthesia](#) (Free or \$18/month)– AI-generated video avatars that can deliver training content in different languages.
- [Runway ML](#) (Free or \$12/month)– AI-powered video and content editing for creating training materials.
- [Otter.ai](#) (Free or \$8.33/month)– AI transcription tool for meetings, lectures, and interviews.

Audio Tools

- [Audacity](#) (Free)– A powerful, open-source tool for recording and editing audio.
- [Descript](#) (Free & Paid)– Transcribe, edit, and enhance audio and video content with AI-powered features.

Immersive AR

- [Adobe Aero](#) (Free)– Create augmented reality (AR) experiences without coding.

Community

- [IDLance Slack](#) (Free)– Oh my, who put this here? A supportive community for freelance instructional designers to network, share gigs, and swap expertise.

Keep In Touch!

Congrats, you made it to the end of the toolkit!

Being a scrappy trainer isn't *just* about making do with less—it's about making smart, strategic choices that still keep learning useful, interesting, and even fun.

No matter how many fancy tools, flashy trends, or “game-changing” technologies pop up, the foundation of good instructional design stays the same: **clear objectives, engaging delivery, and real-world impact.**

Yeah, working with limited resources stinks, but it doesn't mean your training has to suffer. A little creativity, some resourceful thinking, and a solid grasp of learning principles will always beat the latest shiny tool. At the end of the day, the best learning experiences don't come from big budgets—they come from smart design.

That being said, you don't have to figure it all out alone! Think of us as the Frodo Baggins to your Samwise Gamgee. We're not goin' near giant spiders though, sorry.

We'd love to hear how things are going for you and your team! What's working, what's not, and how we can lighten the load? We're all ears!

Click the button below to set up a free discovery call with us!

MESSAGE US





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