

RETAIL

Retail LMS Total Cost of Ownership Worksheet

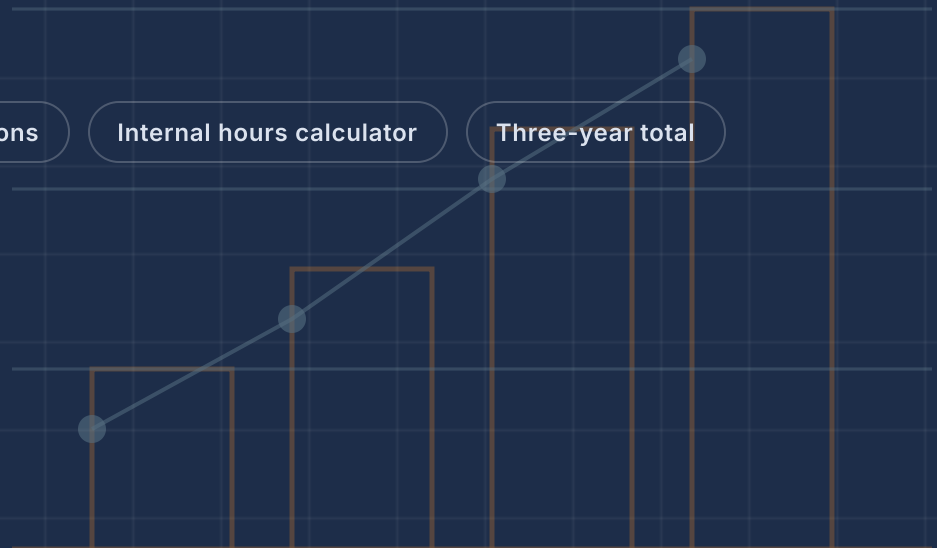
Eleven cost categories, the questions to put to every vendor, an internal hours calculator, and a three-year total, so you compare the full picture instead of the invoice.

11 cost categories

33 vendor questions

Internal hours calculator

Three-year total



The subscription is the most visible number in a retail LMS decision and usually the smallest one. This worksheet puts the rest of the spend next to it, in the same units, so a cheaper platform that creates work at every store can be compared honestly against a more expensive one that removes it.

- 1 Fill one worksheet per shortlisted vendor. Use the same store count, headcount, and hiring volume for each.
- 2 Ask the three questions in every category and record the answer. Anything you cannot get in writing is a cost you will find later.
- 3 Convert internal hours to money on page 5 using a loaded hourly rate for each role.
- 4 Total year one and the annual run rate on page 6, then divide by your expected trained associates.
- 5 Compare vendors on cost per trained associate over three years, not on license price.

THREE COST TYPES

Invoiced	Appears on a quote or a renewal. License, implementation, add-on modules, support tiers, custom integration work.
Internal	Paid in hours rather than dollars. Head office admin, store manager time, IT effort, content production.
Consequential	The cost of the program not working. Slow time-to-competency, incomplete compliance, stalled adoption.

Set your baseline first. Write down four numbers before you start: number of locations, total associates, seasonal hires per year, and current average time-to-competency for a new associate. Every figure in this worksheet is easier to sanity check against those four.

01 License and subscription

The unit of pricing rarely matches the unit of work in a seasonal, high-turnover business.

- ☐ Is pricing per registered user, per active user, per tier, or per module?
- ☐ How are seasonal hires and terminated associates counted and billed?
- ☐ What is the renewal uplift, and is it capped in the contract?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

02 Implementation and migration

A quote that says self-service is not free. It moves the cost into category 5.

- ☐ What is included in implementation, and what is billed as professional services?
- ☐ Who migrates existing completion and certification history?
- ☐ What is the committed timeline, and what happens if it slips?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

03 Location and audience setup

Every store, region, banner, and franchise needs its own group, permissions, and assignment rules.

- ☐ Who builds the location and region structure, and how many hours does it take?
- ☐ Can assignment follow HR data automatically, or is it a maintained list?
- ☐ What does it cost to add a location, a banner, or a franchise later?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

04 Integrations

HRIS, scheduling, POS, and identity connections are what keep rosters current without manual uploads.

- ☐ Which connections are standard, and which are custom work?
- ☐ What does each custom integration cost to build and to maintain?
- ☐ How many of our IT hours are required, and is that time booked?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

05 Seasonal onboarding

Hiring waves repeat two to four times a year, so any friction in onboarding is paid repeatedly.

- ☐ How many hires per wave, and how many waves per year?
- ☐ How long from hire date to first assigned course, and who triggers it?
- ☐ What is the current time-to-competency, and what would the vendor change?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

06 Store manager and admin hours

The largest cost that never appears on an invoice. Twenty minutes a week across 140 stores is more than a full-time role.

- ☐ How much manager time per store per week goes to chasing and troubleshooting?
- ☐ How many head office hours per week run the system?
- ☐ Which of those hours does the platform remove, and how?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

07 Product and compliance content

Assortment changes, promotions, and policy updates arrive on a rolling calendar, not a project plan.

- ☐ Is authoring included, and does it cover video, assessments, and translation?
- ☐ What does one product update cost in hours, from decision to associate completion?
- ☐ Are we still paying for a separate authoring tool, and can it be retired?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

08 Learner support

High turnover means a constant stream of first-time users who need help logging in.

- ☐ Who answers associate questions today, and how many per week?
- ☐ Is learner support included by the vendor, or does it fall to store managers?
- ☐ What are support response times during peak season, in writing?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

09 Reporting time

Manual exports and spreadsheet merges are a weekly tax when the platform cannot produce a store-level view.

- ☐ Which reports are in our tier, and which require an upgrade?
- ☐ Can a store or district manager self-serve, or does every request come to us?
- ☐ How many hours per month go to building reports by hand today?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

10 Learner turnover

The onboarding cohort is never empty, so every hour saved per hire is multiplied by every hire, all year.

- ☐ What is annual turnover by role, and what does each replacement cost to train?
- ☐ How much training history is lost and rebuilt when someone leaves and returns?
- ☐ Does the license model charge us for people who no longer work here?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

11 Delayed rollout and adoption risk

Training that is not completed produces none of the outcome the purchase was justified on.

- ☐ What does a one-quarter delay cost in unrealized outcome?
- ☐ What completion rate do we need, and what happens below it?
- ☐ What is the vendor's role if adoption stalls after go-live?

YEAR 1 / ANNUAL
YEAR 1
ANNUAL

Internal hours calculator	Hrs / wk	Rate	Annual cost
Head office administration			
Store manager time × number of stores			
Content production and updates			
Reporting and data cleanup			
IT and integration maintenance			

Cost category	Year 1	Annual	3-year
01 License and subscription			
02 Implementation and migration			
03 Location and audience setup			
04 Integrations			
05 Seasonal onboarding			
06 Store manager and admin hours			
07 Product and compliance content			
08 Learner support			
09 Reporting time			
10 Learner turnover			
11 Delayed rollout and adoption risk			
Total cost of ownership			
Divided by trained associates			

License under 40%

HEALTHY SHAPE

Most of the spend is in the platform rather than in workarounds. Compare vendors on outcome from here.

License 40 – 60%

CHECK THE HOURS

Internal time is carrying real weight. Ask each vendor which of those hours they remove and how.

License over 60%

NUMBERS ARE INCOMPLETE

Manager time, content updates, or support are almost certainly missing. Revisit categories 6, 7, and 8.

NEXT STEP

Compare cost per trained associate

Bring your completed worksheets to the shortlist conversation and ask each vendor to defend their number against yours. If you want to see how Tovuti handles multi-location structure, seasonal onboarding, in-platform authoring, and store-level reporting, we will walk the same eleven categories with you.

Book a walkthrough