



# Research Proposal

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**Recommending an Online Learning Platform for Technical Training**

April 03, 2021

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## Purpose

The purpose of this research proposal is to compare several *massive open online course* (MOOC) platforms to find one that meets our company's needs. We will base our research on criteria specific to our business. We are a small software company located in the San Francisco Bay area with a training budget of \$1000 per employee. The deliverable of this proposal will be a research report recommending the MOOC platform that is the best fit.

## Introduction

Mr. David Shannon is the director of engineering at TribeTech. He requested that we research online learning platforms to train our engineers. Specifically, we are looking into MOOC platforms. Many MOOC platforms have a wide range of technical content available, presented as self-paced courses.

Technology is always changing to be more efficient, easier to use, and better performing. We are planning to update many of our products to use these advancements. Since some of our employees are not yet familiar with newer technologies, it has been challenging to upgrade to new frameworks and programming languages. Mr. Shannon believes if we have easy access to training, we can encourage our workforce to spend time learning. We will then fill those skill gaps which will greatly benefit both the employees and the company.

In the following sections, we will outline the proposed tasks, schedule, budget, and resources, along with the references used for this proposal.

## Proposed Tasks

To achieve our goal of recommending an online learning platform, we will need to perform certain tasks. These tasks are presented in the chronological order that they will be performed. The tasks include the following:

- Conduct interviews with engineering managers
- Identify the comparison criteria

- Perform preliminary research on popular MOOC platforms to narrow down options
- Conduct an in-depth comparison of three platforms based on the criteria
- Analyze the comparison findings and make a recommendation in a research report

### **Task 1: Conduct interviews of engineering managers**

The initial step in this process is to understand the types of courses that would be most valuable to our engineers. We can gather this information by interviewing the engineering managers. We will include questions about which technologies we want to target in future projects and what skill gaps we see in our current talent pool.

### **Task 2: Identify the comparison criteria**

As a result of the interviews, we obtain our first criterion: available content. Next, we will define the remaining comparison criteria. Another important one that we have already identified is price. Our training budget is \$1000 per employee, and we are allowed to allocate up to 50% of the budget for this service.

### **Task 3: Preliminary research of popular online learning platforms**

There are many different MOOC platforms available. We need to narrow our selection down to conduct an in-depth comparison of the top three contenders, which requires preliminary research. LinkedIn Learning, Udemy, Udacity, Coursera, Pluralsight, and, EdX are popular learning platforms that have technical courses. We would like to include them all in our initial research. Our goal is to eliminate any platforms that don't meet our criteria and to potentially discover other platforms that may.

### **Task 4: Conduct an in-depth comparison of each platform based on the identified criteria**

Once we have narrowed down our options to three MOOC platforms, we will conduct an in-depth comparison of them. We will base the comparison on the previously identified criteria from task 2. To gather this information, we will explore the individual websites for each platform and other third-party sites that can give us different perspectives.

### **Task 5: Analyze comparison findings and make a recommendation in a research report**

The final task is to analyze the results of the comparison. We will pick the one platform that most closely meets the needs of the company. The research report will include the findings from the comparison as well as our final recommendation.

## Schedule

The project should take four weeks to complete. We will start the first task on the week of April 11th, and expect to complete the final task on the week beginning with May 2nd. Figure 1 shows the proposed schedule.

#	Tasks	Date of Tasks (by Week)			
		April			May
		11	18	25	2
1	Conduct interviews of engineering managers				
2	Identify the comparison criteria				
3	Preliminary research of popular online learning platforms				
4	Conduct an in-depth comparison of each platform based on the identified criteria				
5	Analyze comparison findings and make a recommendation in a research report				

**Figure 1.** Project Schedule

## Resources

Riva McKnight will conduct the research for this proposal. Therefore, the primary resource is her time. We will also need access to the engineering managers for the interviews as proposed in task 1.

## Budget

Table 1 shows the budget for the proposed research project. We expect the total cost of the proposal to be \$2,360. This will cover the expenses for Riva McKnight's salary over 40 hours.

**Table 1.** Budget

Name	Hours	Hourly Rate (U.S. Dollars)	Cost (U.S. Dollars)
Riva McKnight	40	59	2,360
<b>Total</b>			2,360

## References

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