Case Study
Moodle VLE aids National Training Provider
Case Study

Summary

Business Impact UK Ltd, are national providers of results focussed training, delivered nationally across all industry sectors.

The Training providers work with companies of all sizes, ranging from large multinationals to small local businesses, delivering Apprenticeships, NVQs, pre-employment and commercial training.

Required the implementation of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that could deliver simple online inductions nationally for learners embarking on their apprenticeship.

Inducting new employees via VLE and continued education for their existing staff on updated processes and procedures.

The importance of acquiring a suitable, experienced VLE expert was paramount, to help the training providers implement and run their chosen e-learning platform successfully.

Moodle VLE aids National Training Providers with Learners and in-house training

Background

Business Impact UK, is a leading workforce training provider based in Team Valley, Gateshead - operating nationally, was founded in 2008. Their aim is to deliver work based apprenticeship programmes to young people going into employment, thus helping businesses in the current climate, remain competitive by accruing well trained, highly skilled staff.

Since their national launch in 2008, Business Impact UK have enrolled over 13,000 learners from over 900 companies around the UK. In 2013 they set a ‘400 Challenge’ target to enrol 400 new apprentices in four months, to coincide with National Apprentice Week. The target was exceeded beyond expectation with a total of 995 enrolments within the period. No doubt assisted by Business Impact UK’S expertise in engineering and the healthcare sectors.

During the important induction process for apprentices, staff were often spending up to 5 days a week on the road across the country. Conducting face-to-face inductions that were taking the trainers up to 2-3 hours in travelling time to and from, spending two hours on site with them going through relative processes and procedures. Evident in many instances that after a short while that the attention of learners was being lost. This prompted Business Impact UK to look into the effectiveness of their inductions and question whether their current practice was efficient enough.

Seeking alternatives led Business Impact UK to explore the potential benefits of facilitating the induction via a virtual learning environment (VLE). After researching all the possibilities, Moodle stood out from the other VLE alternatives.

Implementing Moodle

On receipt of board approval, Business Impact UK took an individual centred approach to implementing Moodle in the shape of Phil Grainger, their National Training Support Manager. Phil was the only person within the organisation at that time who was aware of Moodle and its capabilities.

The Moodle project being very much a side-line to Phil’s job he sought help from JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) at Sunderland University, who had originally introduced him to Moodle at one of their showcases. After much research and ‘shopping around’ for a suitable Hosting Partner, Business Impact UK identified HowToMoodle as their preferred choice. Phil stated that “when I made initial contact with HTM via email there was a quick response that was detailed in answering the questions that I had asked, other organisations just refereed me to their websites. Overall, I found the helpfulness from HTM was much more than from others”.

HowToMoodle were able to set-up their Moodle site quickly and smoothly in plenty of time for the official launch on 1st January 2013.

In addition to becoming procuring hosting services, Business Impact UK also purchased a Support Package, which proved to be a great benefit in maintaining momentum during development of the Moodle site and beyond. Phil was able to overcome obstacles quickly during the initial set-up with the impartial advice and help from HowToMoodle.

HowToMoodle developed a bespoke brand matching Moodle theme for Business Impact UK, which they Phil reports they were “over the moon with.” Colleagues at Sunderland University and support workers frequently comment on how good they find it, and how it works seamlessly with their website. It was important to Business Impact UK that the learner would still feel were engaging with them as a Business by extending their corporate identity to their Moodle site.
Challenges encountered and how they were overcome

Owing to their valued processes and procedures, it took a while to get Business Impact UK to receive board approval. After navigating the 3-step process of being approved, (the board of directors, board of investors, back to the board of directors for final sign off). The process was prolonged as, at the time, Phil Grainger was the only person “Flying the flag and driving it forward”.

Following the initial launch in January 2013, Business Impact UK experienced a bout of panic, lacking confidence in their ability to drive it forward. Early sampling of the HowToMoodle support package helped reassure Phil Grainger he could make it happen and everything on their Moodle site seemed easier to construct and simple to use. It was beneficial that HowToMoodle managed enquiries so that they mainly dealt with the same team member. Mistakes were made along the way, but having experienced support to turn to when needed, enabled Phil to learn and become a better Moodler.

One of the biggest overall challenges Business Impact UK faced was the resistance to change by their staff. They was some scepticism and initial reluctance to engage with Moodle. It was a new concept to staff and they were unsure of how it would benefit the learners and also help them in their own jobs. After much encouragement over the last 18 months and what continues to be an ongoing project, the majority of staff at Business Impact UK now have relevant experience of Moodle and now see the benefits of utilising a virtual learning environment (VLE) within their company. With the benefit of hindsight, Phil would have engaged staff at an earlier stage, but is extremely happy that staff are now using Moodle to good effect. It is now being rolled out further within the organisation as confidence has grown in its potential to be utilised in full.

Successes of the project / Moodle

Business Impact UK’s biggest achievement following their implementation of Moodle (which they have affectionately named “The Zone”), is how they can now engage with learners. It is now possible to easily update course content (a regular requirement), adapt the induction process to accommodate ever changing criteria and to ensure they are creating the correct enrolment environment. After including a survey for learners to complete that assesses their experience of Moodle, Business Impact UK were overwhelmed by the feedback they received. Over the last 18 months it has been recorded that over 90% of learners have had a positive experience, enjoying the interaction they receive. Survey responses are from a diverse range of individuals that have varied experience of Moodle - some having familiarity from School others having never used Moodle at all. All having an “enjoyable” experience. Some of the recent feedback received shown below:

“I found the presentations very useful and easy to understand” 27/01/2014

“Useful information I will can incorporate into my course” 27/03/2014

“Make it fun while you learn” 26/03/2014

“Very clear layout and easy to follow” 22/03/2014

“The on-line format of the induction course was new to me but I did find it enjoyable and easy to use. I look forward to progressing through the rest of the program.” 10/04/2014

“It was all really helpful, I’ve even wrote down some notes to help me through my apprenticeship” 28/04/2014

“Found induction course interesting and helpful” 27/04/2014

“I think it has been great and an easy way to learn the important things in the work place. it would be easier if the programme were available on tablets and mobile devices” 26/04/2014

“I enjoyed the induction course, it was very useful and informative, however it should be made available on all platforms: tablets, smart phones, etc” 26/04/2014

“Yes I enjoyed using this site as it was easy and I was able to complete it in my own time. I found all parts useful and I wouldn’t make any changes.” 24/04/2014

The officers’ first online course was launched on 18 December 2008, which coincided with a new batch of graduate officers. Five cohorts of new students have now experienced online training. The team has also redesigned the residential courses and further changes are likely as the trainers evaluate which aspects can only be taught in residence and which would be better adapted to an online medium.

Students are now expected to develop their own personal leadership action plan, post it onto the learning journal in Moodle. Over a subsequent two-week residential, course tutors develop the plan with them, and when officers go back to work they put it into action.

Andy says, “We now try to ensure there are links between all our online and residential course work, which hasn’t been done before. At the moment the online learning is being received very positively, but we’re mindful that this may be because it’s so innovative, so we’re making sure that we constantly update the courses to keep them fresh.”

Before Moodle was introduced a large number of hours were wasted such as, spending so much time on the road travelling, to the induction processes being conducted onsite and not being as engaging as it could be. Staff time and saved costs can now be utilised more effectively.
All internal staff at Business Impact UK use Moodle as learners too. There is a ‘staff’ area where they can easily access updated processes and procedure. New employees also utilise Moodle for a large part of their introduction into the organisation. Through Moodle they take part in short courses on topics that are important to the business, such as equality and diversity, safe guarding of their learners and vulnerable adults. By uploading these short courses onto their Moodle site, Business Impact UK save a lot of time as a result of ease of updating new material.

**Future plans and goals with the Moodle Project**

Business Impact UK are participating in a research project with the Education and Trading Foundation. Phil describes their part in this project as: “How to engage learners and help them progress by using Moodle across the board. Progress from conducting the induction on Moodle to also running a lot of the course using Moodle. Compared to using the traditional approach.”

Business Impact UK will compare and demonstrate their learner’s progression and how quickly they learn. This is a national project with the results to be presented by the end of June 2014.

Business Impact UK now intend to explore how far they can develop and utilise Moodle. Being subject to Ofsted inspections that include appraisal on how they engage with e-learning, sharpens the focus of developing good practice, promotion of the benefits and objective quality measurements. The Ofsted inspection grade rather closely related to funding from the Skills Funding Agency, so effective use of Moodle and great learner experiences are firmly prioritised within the business.

Moodle was effectively a part-time job for Phil Grainger, on reflection, he now feels that if more time had been allocated at the outset they could have been further along with their Moodle project. With this experience in mind and the success experienced since launching Moodle, Business Impact UK have now identified that their Moodle project would benefit from being managed full time and have resolved to create a full time Moodle position.

**Initial benefits of Moodle VLE for Business Impact uk**

- The time and cost saved by staff not being on the road conducting inductions.
- The increased engagement and positive response they have received from learners and their enjoyment of using Moodle as part of the apprenticeship.
- Moodle allowed Business Impact UK to update processes and procedures simply and efficiently, as they were subject to frequent amendments.

**For more information on Business Impact please visit** [www.businessimpactuk.com](http://www.businessimpactuk.com).

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HowToMoodle is a client focused Moodle specialist, supplying a range of organisations with the complete Moodle package of consultancy, training, branding, hosting and support for those who are implementing for the first time or already using Moodle.

HowToMoodle was founded in October 2004 as the first company in the world set up to exclusively offer training and 'front end' Moodle consultancy and became a UK Moodle Partner, helping to sustain Moodle development for educators worldwide by contributing a royalty on all receipts for the delivery of Moodle services.

HowToMoodle has a team of practitioner consultants across the UK deliver quality training and pragmatic consultancy solutions for clients across academic, commercial, charitable and government sectors.

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