

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTED LEARNING: The Peugeot Case Study



With the impending introduction of new EU legislation known as "block exemption", Peugeot was faced with a potential future training problem. This new legislation effectively opened up the traditional closed franchise system to all-comers: anyone with the necessary resources could act as a vehicle retailer, which meant that they would also need training support in areas such as servicing and maintenance.

In the past, manufacturers have provided training to their dealer network through centrally located classroom and workshop facilities. In Peugeot's case, almost all of the training took place in Coventry for all 460+ existing dealers. Clearly, if the volume of training requirement were to increase, these facilities, already running at peak capacity, would be unable to cope.

Although Peugeot France was already in development of a corporate wide online training portal and content, timescales kept slipping and, moreover, the curriculum offered through this portal was deemed unsuitable and incompatible with the UK's requirements. A UK specific e-learning solution was sought.

What the project set out to achieve was a complete overhaul and re-design of the existing training structure and curriculum, with the aim of developing a blended learning environment, entirely controlled and managed through a custom-built Learning Management and Assessment System. The system had to be online and functional within six months of start-up, with the e-learning course content being brought online incrementally and coinciding with the wind down of practical courses that they would replace. With more than 8,000 individuals spanning three main departments (Service, Parts, Administration) to cater for, an age range of between 16 and 55, and limited data on IT skills, this was a challenge.

The process of change would be managed through the appointment of Training Advisors, or Mentors, each assigned to a geographic area, and given responsibility for student registration, personal development and individual support.

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
<p>How to effectively re-design the structure of the training curriculum to suit a blended learning environment, where there were no role models for comparison, and where ownership of the training curriculum was split across several different departments, each with their own agenda.</p>	<p>This was more of a challenge than originally anticipated, because of the complexity of the course structure and content, and its split responsibility. The solution lay in re-mapping the curriculum structure into clear learning path-ways within a hierarchical framework structure, and with a visible career development path. Within this framework, each course was treated individually and re-engineered in accordance with suitability and viability to each learning activity type.</p> <p>This solution would have been untenable if the aim had been to manage the system through an off the shelf LMS. However, as the project was based on the development of a bespoke LMS from the ground up, the fact that no two courses within the training framework operated on exactly the same pathway was workable.</p> <p>The re-designed structure was "paper-piloted" with Peugeot's SMEs and instructors to ensure that the proposed solution was practical from a training and management perspective, and that it contained sufficient capability for future updates and enhancements.</p>
<p>How to effectively manage and deliver the blended learning programs, and manage the process of transition from existing to new systems.</p> <p>A key requirement was that the e-learning content should be of the highest quality and make considerable use of different media types such as 3D</p>	<p>An awareness campaign was mounted in the weeks running up to system launch. This took three main fronts: a glossy brochure was produced outlining the business objectives of the enterprise, including screen shots of the LMS and e-learning content, plus a route map for the new training framework. This publication also established a hotline for</p>

models and animations, video and audio. This meant that the content had to be distributed via disc, whereas the LMS and assessments were accessed online. Few of the dealerships were known to have access to their own IT support or in-house expertise.

support and enquiries.

Secondly, Training Advisors were appointed and fully trained in the use, performance and capabilities of the system. Their job would be to visit each dealer site and register new users into the LMS whilst at the same time providing a one-on-one overview of the system, and establishing each individual's initial training plan. Their dual role was therefore that of mentor and also IT support to the dealer.

Thirdly, a training quorum was established to monitor progress and ensure that regular communications were held with all dealers. This included a number of dealer pilot sites.

Despite being delivered on disc, e-learning content, like assessments, could only ever be accessed via the LMS. This meant that, from the outset, an individual's performance and usage of the e-learning system could be monitored and tracked. A next technical development of the LMS would be to build in an add-on content download program.

How to ensure the validity and legitimacy of the role of e-learning within the new system, and ensure its acceptability by the entire training community.

Initial research had highlighted the acceptability of e-learning at dealer level as a potential issue, with the main hurdle being the transference of training from a training centre to the workplace, where time and resources were often under pressure.

By making the career development path transparent, and providing considerable support through the Training Advisors, the e-learning elements of the new training framework scored an early success with their users. Early accreditation of the e-learning course content and assessments from City & Guilds ensured that the output from these courses carried as much weight as their practical counterparts. Equally, the practical and effective combination of both e-learning and practical coursework helped to create a

<p>How to develop and introduce measures for success, and how to define success.</p>	<p>"learning community".</p> <p>To further embed the e-learning solution into the dealer business, the use of e-learning content as Interactive Electronic Technical Manuals was stressed, which proved successful and particularly useful in gaining the confidence and enthusiasm of less IT literate individuals.</p> <p>Each project or enterprise has its own definition of success, which can be related to financial savings or volume take-up for instance. In this case, many of the measurements of success - because of their nature - could be built into the LMS itself, and these could therefore be monitored on a regular basis. What we could not do was to measure training output from the new blended learning environment against that of the previous system because no statistics existed for pre-blended system status.</p> <p>The project was deemed to be successful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was launched on time, which allowed all targetted personnel to be registered into and have access to the system in advance of the new "block exemption" legislation coming into force; • The first target for graduates from the blended learning environment was met; • The use of pre-qualifying online assessments allowed the more efficient management of practical courses; • The system could be used to target individual training needs; • There were increasing reports of students undertaking learning assignments in their own time; <p style="padding-left: 40px;">and most importantly,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the Technical Department, there
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	<p>were clear indications of an increase in first time fix rates, which had been one of the most important objectives of the exercise.</p>
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