

case study

Innovation in CET delivered cost effectively to Optometrists

In September 2003 Nelson Croom began working with DOCET on the development of DOCET's first purely online programme.

DOCET is a special Committee set up by the Department of Health in 1989 to oversee the management of government funds set aside for the provision of optometric continuing education and training for all UK registered optometrists.

DOCET's remit is to commit its funds to:

Making CET available to every optometrist in the UK in a 'user friendly' form. CET content should assist the profession in meeting the eye care needs of the population more effectively and efficiently.

Measuring the effectiveness and validity of CET.

Encouraging innovation and experimentation in the way in which CET is delivered to the profession, having regard to the need for cost efficiently and value for money.

Since its inception DOCET has centrally produced and distributed distance learning on the various media of audio cassette, video, written material and on computer disk. As well as evaluating effectiveness of all distance learning material, DOCET also conducts in-depth research into the training needs of optometrists to plan more effectively for the future.

The problem

DOCET had been using a print-based distance learning package on Occupational Optometry for nearly ten years. The material was old and needed updating and they were fast running out of stock.

Although the programme is primarily developed for qualified optometrists, DOCET was experiencing significant demand from trainees and new members of the profession who had not previously had access to the programme. So DOCET needed to make the programme more widely available which presented cost as well as logistical issues.

The objectives

The project team identified the following objectives:

- To develop a programme that could reach up to 10,000 people efficiently and easily
- To ensure that the programme demonstrated value for money
- To demonstrate their commitment to innovation in training

The solution

DOCET took the decision to develop the programme online

“ ***The development process was smooth and painless. We worked in close partnership with Nelson Croom throughout the development and the result is a programme which really meets our needs and those of our learners*** ”

Geoff Roberson, DOCET Training Advisor

and cease to produce the hard copy version.

An online programme provides many advantages for DOCET. The training can be done when and where the learner wishes. This was relevant because the changing demographics of the optometric profession suggested an increasing reluctance to travel and spend time away from work and family.

The programme was designed specifically to be relevant and appeal to a diverse audience, which DOCET certainly has. Learners of various backgrounds, levels and experience will all be able to find a path through the programme which benefits them.

The results

The DOCET programme was rolled out to learners in May 2004. The success of the project was measured in the following ways:

- Number of learners accessing the programme
- Pass rate of the programme
- Value for money for DOCET
- What DOCET can learn that helps it develop better courses in the future

DOCET
Directorate of Optometric Continuing Education & Training

Nelson Croom Ltd

N307 Westminster Business Square • 1-45 Durham Street • London • SE11 5JH

t: 020 7582 3309 • e: info@nelsoncroom.co.uk • www.nelsoncroom.co.uk

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