

case study

Interactive Elearning System for Benefits and Council Tax Staff

The Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) is the professional body for local taxation, benefits and valuation. They promote best practice and support the professional activities of their members working in government and commerce.

Over the last few years the IRRV has been spearheading a special joint partnership with Mid Sussex District Council, the Local Government Agency and e-learning specialists, Nelson Croom, to develop and launch a new interactive induction tool for local taxation and benefits staff.

The problem

Training and induction of new staff can range from one-to-one mentoring to face-to-face induction programmes for larger numbers, but many Local Authorities simply do not have the levels of staff to justify running regular induction programmes or to allow for individual training. It was to help their members with this training issue that the IRRV first developed the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit Exercise Kit as a workbook based training system covering the first three months of a trainee's job.

However, by December 2003, there was growing demand for the Exercise Kit and the IRRV was finding an increasing amount of time and resources were being spent on producing it. In order to continue to make this training practical and accessible for as many users as possible, the IRRV decided to develop a radical new e-learning system, that would act as a comprehensive induction tool for Housing and Council Tax Benefits.

The solution

The result of over a year's research and development, assessing potential users' needs and the results required by Local Authorities, was the Euclidian Benefits online training system, developed by Nelson Croom.

As with all Nelson Croom programmes, it is browser based, so it is familiar to most users and easy to navigate. The programme is aimed at new starters but using the Smart Candidate Profiling system at the beginning of the programme, those with more experience can plot a route through the course that allows them to learn what they

“**Euclidian Benefits is an example of the innovative approach to member services, that is of paramount importance to IRRV. This project will enable us to reach more members, reduce costs and the time on administration. Euclidian Benefits truly puts the IRRV at the forefront of innovation in professional development in the Benefits sector**”

David Magor, Director, IRRV

want to and avoid going over topics they already understand.

Euclidian Benefits has been structured so that it enables the user to learn in a way that suits them. Users can focus on specific issues that may be core to their role or of particular interest to them. They can learn through an FAQ-based system or from a series of 'real-life' scenarios, which users can then match to their own working requirements or environment.

With the ongoing changes in Benefits legislation, keeping the Euclidian Benefits training programme up to date, live and topical is a key issue. The programme has a real-time online

feedback system which is constantly monitored and any changes can be made quickly and easily, so the information is never out of date.

Because the programme is online, once it is updated all learners view the new up-to-date information immediately.

The results

To date 4724 individual learners have registered for Euclidian Benefits Basics. Following this success IRRV have since launched a Professional version for more experienced officers and Basics and Pro versions for both Council Tax and Business Rates. In all IRRV now offer more than 15 courses created in partnership with Nelson Croom.

Euclidian has been described by *Opportunities Magazine* as “functional, accurate, flexible, effective and easy to use.”



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