

case study

CPA Ireland use online portfolio to enhance their CPE provision for members

The Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland is one of the main Irish accountancy bodies with in excess of 2,500 members and 1,600 students. The CPA designation is the most commonly used designation worldwide for professional accountants and the Institute's qualification enjoys wide international recognition.

As well as core qualifications, CPA Ireland is committed to helping their members keep up to date with information on accounting, business practices and technology as well as the latest skills. The CPA runs a mandatory Continuing Professional Education (CPE) programme that all its members must comply with.

The problem

CPA Ireland approached Nelson Croom with an issue. They had over 2,500 members who needed to complete up to 120 hours of CPE to meet the Institute's requirements.

Members dispersed across the country were struggling to find face-to-face programmes being run at a convenient place and time. They were concerned about how they would complete their required hours of CPE.

The CPA needed useful, relevant programmes for their members and they needed them up and running, so their members could complete them before the end of the year and acquire the number of CPE hours required.

The solution

Nelson Croom already had a portfolio of online programmes designed to help people in professional practice and consultancy to be more effective and improve their client management skills. These courses already existed and needed only minimal tailoring for the CPA.

Initially the CPA rolled out six courses aimed at developing their members' business and personal skills. Following the initial success of these courses, CPA Ireland worked with Nelson Croom to develop some more specialist courses. *Activity Based Management, Business Performance Management and Strategic Financial Management* were added to the CPA's portfolio.

"Nelson Croom enabled us to provide a more flexible alternative to traditional courses or seminars without any upfront cost. We knew the topics would be relevant because we were invited to suggest which courses should be developed" states David Fitzgerald, Members Department Executive, CPA Ireland.

As with all Nelson Croom programmes, the CPA portfolio is online and can be accessed with just a phone line and an internet browser. So members anywhere have access to CPE at any time of the day or night – whatever suits them.

Revenue sharing: A win-win situation

The project was set up on a revenue share basis, which means that the CPA minimised their up front investment allowing them to offer a broad and varied portfolio.

The results

CPA Ireland now offer 12 courses to their members and, at time of writing have sold over 1,200 access keys.

"Our experience is that the uptake has increased significantly year on year. It is clear from our analysis that there is a particular appeal to members who are trying to balance their professional and family lives and who are under time pressure ... they can do their CPD when it suits them, and without spending any travelling time to and from events."

David Fitzgerald, Members Department Executive, CPA Ireland

