

case study

Blended learning solution delivers effective use of budget and addresses training needs at Octopus

In November 2004 Nelson Croom began working with the Octopus Publishing Group on a range of learning resources for staff. As the company had grown and become part of one of the leading international publishing groups, they wanted to be seen to be investing in staff development as well as providing effective learning resources for their team. The project was introduced as a pilot within Hamlyn in 2005, one of the companies in the Octopus Publishing Group and was rolled out to the rest of the company at the beginning of 2006.

The problem

At Hamlyn there were 55 staff who were all office-based. There had been constant requests from staff for more training, but these could not often be met because the training budget was tight and because there was a general feeling that many of the courses run out-of-house were not relevant and therefore not a good use of time. Time was a key factor as the pace of work was relentless and the schedule fast. Other issues were recurring such as authors not delivering; tight schedules and budgets which created problems if not adhered to; negotiation across many functions within the business; dealing with different personalities and maintaining a level of service with internal and external customers. The problem was how to offer learning that could be accessed flexibly inside and outside working hours to help address these concerns. At the same time, it was agreed that face-to-face workshops were important, but that learning should be on a continual basis both before and after a workshop.

The solution

After consultation and planning with the project team at Octopus, it was decided that Nelson Croom would provide a range of online courses created especially for the publishing industry tailored specifically for the Octopus group of companies. The initiative would be called Apprentice. Nelson Croom would provide regular workshops to accompany the online courses to encourage the staff to work towards specific goals.

“ We have been proud of our staff retention levels, but wanted to improve them further. Working with Nelson Croom enabled us to tailor their content to reflect our business and introduce a range of face-to-face workshops that staff could attend AFTER completing the online module. This has now become a central part of our training provision. We’ve had fantastic feedback and we’re looking forward to developing the programme further ”

Alison Goff, Managing Director, Octopus Publishing Group

The first step was to create three series of courses to test the water and then to set up a programme of ongoing development to add more courses to Apprentice to ensure the initiative was kept alive and met the ever-changing training needs of staff.

Imago, Nelson Croom’s learning technology, is a web-based application that enables learners to access courses online from anywhere as long as they have access to the Internet and a browser. Staff were able to work through courses in or out of the office and learn at their own pace and level by skipping through material that they knew and spending time on areas that were relevant.

A range of sales skills and personal effectiveness courses were selected from the Nelson Croom publishing portfolio to roll out in 2005. The courses were designed to be accessible and fun and were tailored for Hamlyn staff to ensure the learning was relevant.

A champion was assigned to each course who took responsibility for overseeing the tailoring process and liaising with the development team at Nelson Croom who guided them through the tailoring process. Each course was tailored to ensure the appropriate language, terminology, examples and graphics were used.

The results

There have been 103 members of staff register across 13 courses. A programme of workshops has been running for a year and a half and three new courses on financial awareness have been rolled out since launch.

OCTOPUS
Publishing Group

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

Registered under company number 3924989 • Registered office: as above