Optimizing learning through collaborative technology implementation for internal and external users

Founded in 1794, the University of Tennessee serves about 50,000 students on five campuses across the state and has a presence in all 95 counties through the UT Institute of Agriculture and statewide Institute for Public Service.

For three UT organizations, continued reliance on outdated learning management systems (LMSs) made it difficult to provide engaging, seamless learning experiences:

- *The UT Institute for Public Service's (IPS)* "cumbersome" LMS was disliked by customers and staff alike.

- *The UT Institute of Agriculture (UTIA)* is the only institute in the world that offers an online "Better Process Control School" curriculum, required food safety training for anyone wishing to sell acidified and low-acid canned food. Yet UTIA's use of three different LMSs put users through a confusing registration and payment process.

- *The UT System Administration HR department's* manual enrollment and reporting system ensured compliance training was difficult to complete on schedule, as HR spent valuable resources manually entering data.

Why Cornerstone

In 2015, as existing contracts approached expiration, UTIA reached out to other areas of the university to propose a unique solution. "We asked if anyone wanted to go in with us on a new LMS," said John Toman, extension specialist at UTIA.

Struggling with their own learning challenges, IPS and the System Administration HR department joined UTIA in the search for a new platform. "Cornerstone

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Learning

Extended Enterprise

Industry: Higher Education

Region: Tennessee

Employees: 18,000
(Active in Cornerstone)

Live Since: 2017

Business Impact: Increased registration for paid classes, expanded LMS usage, enhanced compliance training completions, provided a customized experience, refocused administrators to work on more strategic activities

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OnDemand stood out for several reasons," said Scott Gordy, chief information officer at IPS. "The system is very configurable, which meant that, while we shared one system, each unit could create unique portals for different customer bases."

This unique approach to shared services earned the university the 'Brandon Hall Group Excellence Award – Gold Winner' in the Learning Technology Implementation category. "By sharing the Cornerstone platform, we've shown what good collaboration looks like," said Kate Sowrey, business analyst at UT. "We feel this is a great example of how a university system can be smart with its resources."

"This model is a key leadership behavior we desire to foster across the UT System, to work in partnership, rather than potential silos," added Ron Tredway, executive director of System Administration HR.

The Results

Increased registration for paid classes. Since implementing Cornerstone Extended Enterprise, registration for paid IPS classes has increased. "The registration process is much easier. More people are registering. This has translated to an increase in revenue," said Gordy. "Because we don't have to walk customers through the process on the phone, we're free to work on other things."

Expanded usage. Via Cornerstone, UTIA customers now have a streamlined checkout process and improved access to courses. "Since implementing Cornerstone, we've seen usage increase," said Toman. "The interface looks modern. And we know that if your system looks good and is easy to use, people think good things about your programs."

Enhanced completions by 670%. With Cornerstone Learning, UT System Administration HR can quickly customize, deliver, and track compliance training. "Not only is it simpler to deliver compliance training to different units, we experienced a 670% increase in completions for one training from the year prior to implementing Cornerstone," said Sowrey.

Customized the user experience. While IPS, UTIA, and System Administration HR all use the same Cornerstone platform, individual portals are customized for different groups: students, professionals, and faculty and staff. "Each unit can create unique portals for different users while sharing one resource," said Gordy. "We also can segment our audience. That's been an incredible advantage."

Refocused administrators on strategic activities. Prior to Cornerstone, leadership spent valuable time troubleshooting systems. "With Cornerstone, I now get to do more development work," said Toman. Gordy added, "Cornerstone has allowed me to focus on other processes. That's been a big benefit."

For Sowrey, Cornerstone has reduced time spent on manual data entry. "Previously, departments worked with the SAP team to upload training data. We don't have to do that anymore. It's all done automatically and both systems—SAP and Cornerstone—are kept current. We're saving so much time."

Added Tredway, "Our old, outdated database was replaced by an actual LMS, making our work more efficient and effective. This efficiency enables us to focus attention on partnering with department heads and administrators on developing much-needed internally developed eLearning content and expanding LMS usage to our campus HR partners."