

Using IT to scale IT training

With LinkedIn Learning, Shoalhaven City Council's single IT trainer has been able to scale essential training to 1,500 employees quickly and effectively



Headquarters:
Nowra, NSW, Australia

Industry:
Government Administration

Employees:
1,500

“ If our employees’ first impression of online learning is less than great, they’re not going to use any solution we give them. It must be a quality introduction and LinkedIn Learning delivers on that. LinkedIn Learning essentially changed the perception of online learning within our organisation. ”



Lena Altinger
IT Trainer
Shoalhaven City Council



Shoalhaven City Council looks after 49 towns and villages in New South Wales, Australia, where over 100,000 residents call home. Its 1,500 employees work together to foster a safe and attractive community for people to live, work, stay and play by providing services and facilities that range from the development and maintenance of local infrastructure to strategic planning and economic promotion.

Scaling to meet organisational needs

In 2017, the Council implemented Microsoft's Office 365 for Business. End-user training is essential to ensure that employees are well-versed in the suite's many apps and services, and able to use these effectively for greater productivity and stronger collaboration. The challenge, however, is that the Council only has one dedicated IT trainer for its 1,500 employees.

"As the sole IT trainer, it's physically impossible for me to deliver face-to-face training to all employees at the pace that the Council needs. With natural attrition, there's also a steady stream of new joiners to train, so it's really an endless cycle," shared Lena Altinger.

Along the way, the Council also implemented an ERP system, which added more organisation-wide training requirements to Lena's already-full plate.

"Lena was basically being pulled in multiple directions. Both sets of IT training were essential so we began exploring alternatives," said Matthew Bowden, the IT Business Analyst who was responsible for the Office 365 implementation, among other projects.

The Council considered engaging external trainers but a cost-benefit analysis revealed that it was far from optimal. Both Lena and Matthew agreed that online training, where employees could learn at their own pace, would be ideal. They discussed this with their Learning & Development colleagues and, in end-2019, received management approval to procure a Learning Management System (LMS) and online learning solution.

Challenge



- To deliver essential IT training to all employees in a scalable manner
- To change employees' perception of online training, given earlier less-than-successful attempts

Solution



- Purchased 1,500 LinkedIn Learning licences — one for every employee
- Leveraged existing learning paths to quickly roll out Office 365 training
- Added a link to LinkedIn Learning in Office 365 apps so that employees can learn as they go
- Positioned LinkedIn Learning as an employee benefit to deepen culture of learning

Results



- **41%** average monthly repeat learners
- **16** average monthly video views per learner

On-demand support

The Council was still in the midst of the procurement process when COVID-19 reached Australia. With the exception of essential field workers, all employees were sent home. The IT department had to move quickly to ensure that everyone was equipped to work remotely.

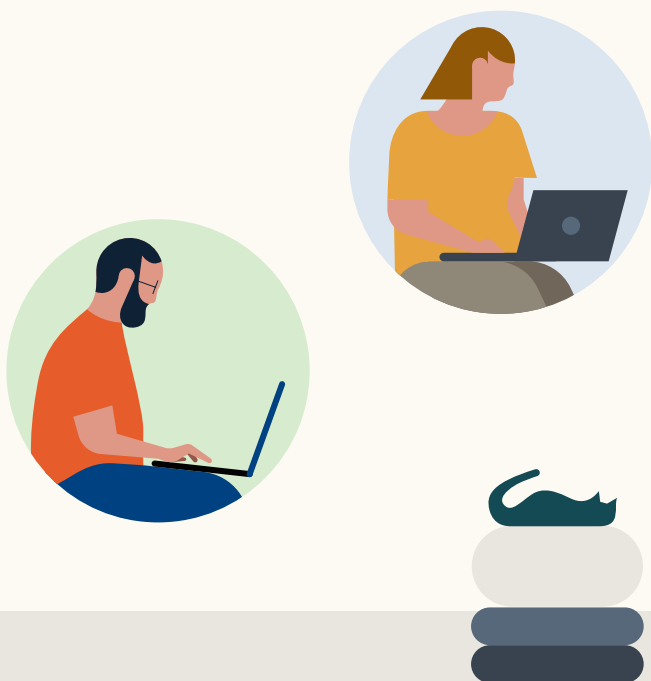
“It was such a relief that LinkedIn Learning could be deployed immediately, especially since our new LMS needed a few more months. LinkedIn Learning has existing learning paths for Office 365 that we had earlier reviewed and approved, so we were confident of rolling it out right away. That was also one of the main reasons why we chose LinkedIn Learning — the courses are high-quality and relevant to our needs. This also means that we don’t have to invest resources in creating customised content.”

Lena Altinger, IT Trainer

With support from the LinkedIn Learning team, the Council quickly introduced the online learning platform to its employees. The IT department created an easy access link to LinkedIn Learning in its Office 365 apps so that employees could help themselves to learning content as questions arose.

Office 365 usage skyrocketed during this period but Lena and Matthew discovered that they received fewer-than-usual troubleshooting enquiries as employees got used to seeking out the answers on their own.

“It was such a pleasant surprise,” said Lena. “In my 16 years with the Council, I’ve seen several attempts to introduce online learning but all were less-than-successful. The pandemic was obviously a huge push for our employees to give online learning another shot but I think it only took off because LinkedIn Learning pulled them in with a good, high-quality experience.”



Encouraging a learning lifestyle

While several learning paths around Office 365 and information security have been formally incorporated into the induction programme for new joiners, the Council has resisted giving its employees specific LinkedIn Learning goals. Instead, access to the platform is positioned as an employee benefit.

“We want our employees to embrace learning beyond the needs of work. Before the Easter long weekend, for example, we sent an email comms featuring fun courses on LinkedIn Learning, like learning an instrument and how to paint. The idea was to offer ideas on how to spend leisure time in meaningful ways. We also encourage our colleagues to share LinkedIn Learning with their family, especially young children who may be bored at home,” said Matthew.

Doing so has had the added benefit of helping the Council stay attuned to its employees’ needs. In one anecdote, Matthew shared how he noticed that in March/April 2020, the top courses on LinkedIn Learning were all centred around mental health. He took this observation to HR and found that it synced with feedback that they were receiving from managers—that many employees were struggling to adapt to the

situation. Working with the Learning & Development team, they quickly selected several mental wellness learning paths on LinkedIn Learning and shared these with employees as a form of support.

Almost a year after introducing LinkedIn Learning, employees continue to benefit from anywhere, anytime learning while the Council deepens its culture of learning. Looking into the future, Lena and Matthew are excited about the prospect of a blended training approach, with LinkedIn Learning taking care of basic IT training and Lena focusing on delivering higher-value application training in the classroom.



“We want our employees to embrace learning as a way of life, not just a way to work. In our next learning push, we intend to promote LinkedIn Learning’s audio-only feature, especially to our field workers, so they can listen and learn when they’re on-the-go.”



Matthew Bowden
IT Business Analyst
Shoalhaven City Council

LinkedIn Learning is a leading online learning platform that helps professionals learn relevant skills and achieve their goals. It combines a library of 16,400+ up-to-date courses in 7 different languages with an engaging, intuitive, and personalised learner experience. LinkedIn Learning also includes real-time skills insights that help learning leaders identify skills gaps. For more information, visit <http://learning.linkedin.com>.