

Case Study:

Hertfordshire PCT

A potent tool for a complex organisation



AT-Learning™

“ikonami’s AT-Learning™ web-based learning management system (LMS) is revolutionising interaction between our staff, trainers, managers, internal directorates and the learning & Development department. The link with skills and appraisals information means communications and activity can be better targeted to personal development plans that help the PCTs develop the right human capital to meet regulatory requirements and serve our community. Through a single interface, we can see where staff have learning needs, we – or they – can access an online course prospectus and in just a few clicks be booked onto a relevant course, or access and record completions of core e-learning modules from national and local e-learning portals. ikonami have been fantastic at delivering the functionality we needed, helping us to manage the transition to AT-Learning and in listening to us and working with us to tailor the setup, templates and reports to meet Hertfordshire PCTs’ specific requirements. AT-Learning provides great functionality and reporting tools, making it easy to get the most out of the system and fulfil the PCT Board’s and the Healthcare Commission’s information needs.”

Matt Munday
Workforce Planning Manager, Hertfordshire PCTs

In late 2006, Hertfordshire’s eight existing Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) were merged to create two PCTs - West Hertfordshire PCT, and East and North Hertfordshire PCT - under a shared, single management team. In the subsequent restructuring, the newly merged Learning & Development (L&D) team of just 20 people became responsible for the learning needs of over 3,500 staff distributed across more than 100 different locations, including GP surgeries, health centres and schools. At the same time, The Department of Health launched new strategies to improve skills and patient care within the NHS, which required changes to the PCTs’ L&D strategy. The L&D team needed a robust system to deal with these new challenges.

Implementing a new system – Top Three Tips

- Make sure key stakeholders buy in to the concept and feel involved in the process. Working collaboratively will help facilitate the culture change that is required, lower resistance to change and make the implementation process smoother.
- Build a network of internal champions; identify the people who have the right skills and bring them on board. Show them the bigger picture – they can help the organisation work more effectively and this additional responsibility can positively impact their job satisfaction and career progression.
- Keep the lines of communication open with your supplier – if you need specific functionality ask if it can be integrated into the next version of the software or whether the existing system can be used in a way that effectively delivers that functionality. Use that business relationship to make sure you get the most user-friendly system that delivers even greater efficiencies.



Evaluating Hertfordshire PCT's Needs

While training was a huge priority, the Hertfordshire PCTs' L&D team was also expected to generate greater efficiencies from training budgets – and they realised implementing a Learning Management System (LMS) with self-service capabilities was one way to facilitate this. The team examined their requirements around management reporting and administration and started to review the possible options.

Matt Munday, Workforce Planning Manager at Hertfordshire PCTs, was responsible for reassessing activities and systems: ***“We needed a robust Learning Management System to cope with new challenges, but only had ad-hoc information on Access databases and Excel spreadsheets, with limited reporting capabilities and no automated administration of L&D processes. This, coupled with the new reporting requirements for mandatory training, meant we needed a new solution in place – quickly.”***

“Across the NHS, there is an increased need to control and maintain the accuracy and quality of HR and L&D data for increasing numbers of staff. No one system does it all well, so there must be links and interfaces between each system to prevent double-entry and double-working between directorates. The trend towards pushing LMS access out to all relevant users – which for us includes clinical staff who may not have good IT skills and educational leads and co-ordinators based throughout the county – means technological solutions need to be user-friendly and flexible, too. It removes a burden from the L&D team if external trainers can also use the LMS to review course attendees, input performance and attendance details and print certificates,” continued Matt Munday.

For Hertfordshire PCTs, this meant opting for a web-based LMS that would be accessible universally, quickly and easily. The LMS had to be flexible enough to be administered centrally but also offer self-service end user functionality and integrate seamlessly with the PCTs' existing IT infrastructure. Furthermore, the team had realised that the NHS' Electronic Knowledge and Skills Framework (e-KSF) was becoming increasingly popular, so wanted the LMS to provide a formal link between the L&D process and function, and individual staff appraisals and personal development plans on e-KSF.

What is a Learning Management System?

At a basic level, a Learning Management System is software that automates the administration of training by:

- providing an easily updated, online register of training users and enabling details of training courses to be tracked in an online catalogue
- recording data from learners – on which courses have been completed and, where appropriate, the level of understanding or achievement gained by the learner (e.g. logging that the learner reached a certain level of competence through the training)
- offering an easily accessible repository for individual learning plans (i.e. the training schedule mapped out for an employee based upon their job function and learning needs)
- automating the production of management reports on data held on the LMS.
- Depending upon the software used, the LMS may be integrated with other management and administrative systems e.g. HR, payroll.



Implementation

In their evaluation process, ikonami's AT-Learning stood out as offering all the functionality needed by Hertfordshire PCTs. The team built its case and lobbied senior management to support the purchasing decision, which was agreed in the summer of 2007.

It took Hertfordshire PCTs just eight weeks to implement the system – four to migrate data from the legacy systems (including details on future courses and bookings) onto AT-Learning and ensure the data was cleansed – this was managed by ikonami. A further two weeks were spent training users on AT-Learning and aligning activities to identify where paperwork or processes needed to be changed. The final two weeks were spent ensuring each of the initial eight users were familiar with the system, communicating the introduction of AT-Learning and launching the system.

The system was not piloted, as there was no time, but it went live in September 2007 with a virtually seamless transition - L&D staff and users including training co-ordinators across Induction, HR, IT, Mandatory training, Child Protection and Clinical Training. Any initial fear of change was quickly assuaged by the simplicity, functionality and user-friendliness of AT-Learning.

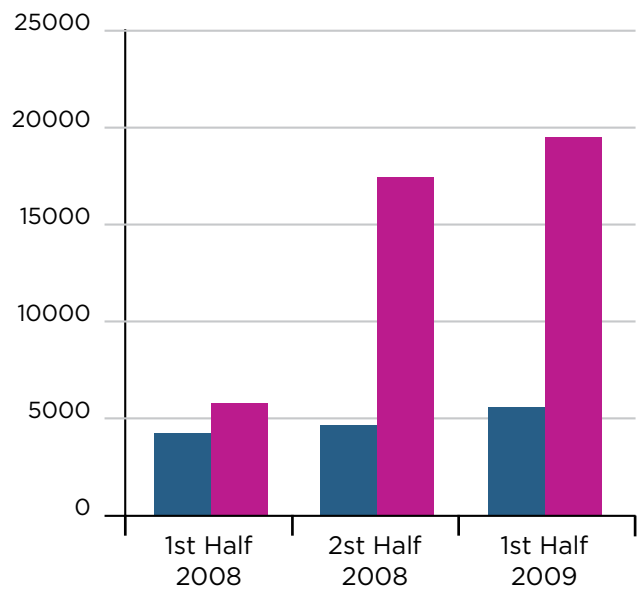
Matt Munday comments: *“The ikonami team were very responsive in ironing out any initial minor issues with templates etc, which built confidence among our users and made them feel they were listened to and involved during the introduction of the new system.”*



How Hertfordshire PCTs use AT-Learning

AT-Learning is user-friendly, with good functionality for L&D administration. Correspondence, attendance list generation, recording of course completion and results and automated communication by email save a huge amount of administration time. The L&D team can also set refresher periods for mandatory training – an increasingly important facet of training within the NHS, with AT-Learning automatically generating emails and reminders for the user. More specifically, Matt Munday says: *“AT-Learning enables us to target training requirements based upon the e-KSF appraisal and KSF Personal Development Plans (PDPs), for individuals, services and staff groups (for example, all qualified nurses). This in turn helps to ensure mandatory training needs are met and critically allows us to report on compliance. Equally staff can access AT-Learning from e-KSF, review our course prospectus and register for a course, with form generation, requests for managerial approvals and budget allocation reviews all automatically generated online.”*

“The fact that training co-ordinators across different directorates work with AT-Learning means we have seen an increase in cross-directorate working. The joined-up nature of the system has enabled us to become better at managing and communicating training needs across the organisation – for example, we have improved the synchronicity of training required for new starters, from induction training, to relevant HR courses, to mandatory, subject and clinical training. AT-Learning is also enabling us to offer e-learning in a much more effective way – we can offer access to learning modules from a number of different suppliers through the same interface and automatically record results on the AT-Learning LMS. This information is then included in our overall reporting, which in itself has improved immeasurably with the introduction of AT-Learning. Whether a manager needs to evaluate skills in their team, or the Board needs data for risk management reporting, or the Healthcare Commission needs up to date information on our mandatory training completions, the detail is all available at the click of a mouse, with breakdowns by course, directorate or department. That simply would not have been possible before AT-Learning,” commented Matt Munday.



■ User Base
■ Correspondence e-mails sent

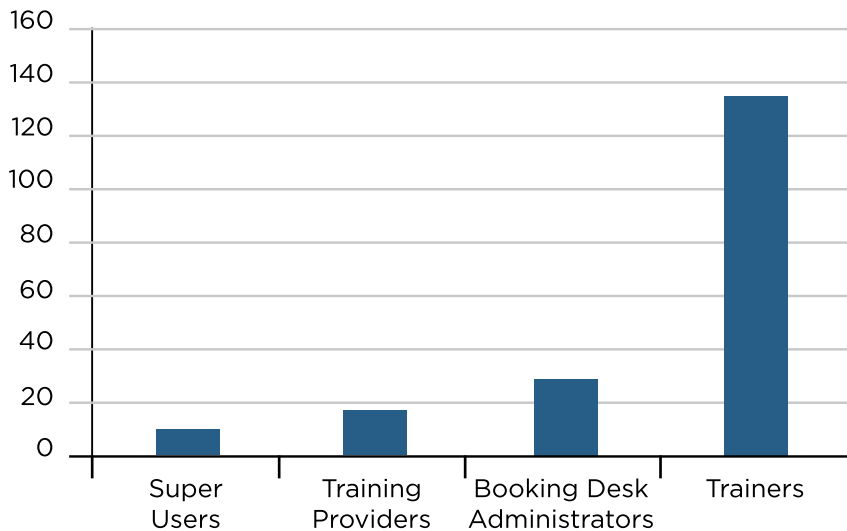
	1st Half 2008	2nd Half 2008	1st Half 2009
Correspondence e-mails sent	5523	17143	19517
User Base	3993	4827	5525



Conclusion

“We benefit hugely from having a well joined-up system that offers good value for money. Had we purchased an off-the-shelf or bespoke system, we would have had to pay additional fees to integrate the links with e-KSF that are automatically included with AT-Learning. Another huge benefit of AT-Learning is that it facilitates an unrestricted number of users, unlike many other databases. In addition to eight booking desk administrators, we have 110 internal and external trainers on the system – around 10% of whom access AT-Learning to manage their own courses. With the wider rollout of e-learning and self-service with the PCTs, the number of users will only continue to grow. The iterative release schedule for the software also means we have seen our requests to ikonami for new functionality being delivered in a quick, tangible way. The push towards self-service does not threaten the L&D team – rather, AT-Learning takes time consuming and onerous tasks off our hands, so we can concentrate on more mission-critical planning and activity,” concluded Matt Munday.

For further information visit www.ikonami.com



Count of Staff Roles

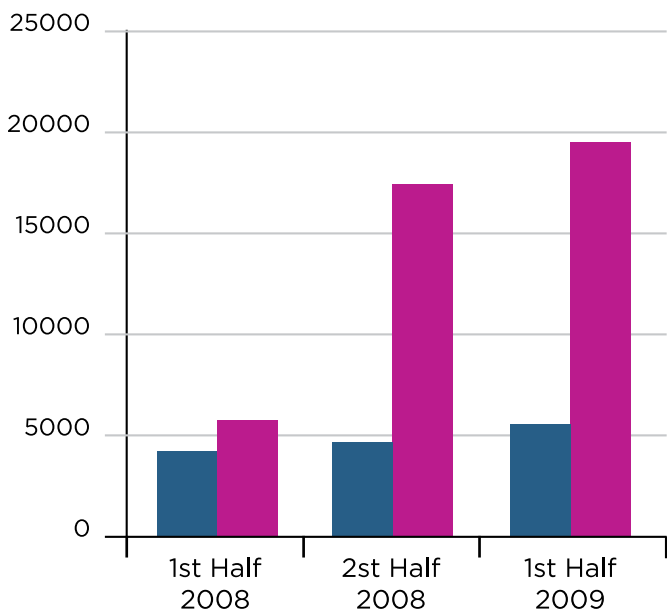
	Super Users	Training Providers	Booking Desk Administrators	Trainers
Count of Staff with Roles	11	17	27	137

Hertfordshire PCTs' Top Three Tips

- Technology plays an increasingly central role in how the NHS improves, develops and modernises, so it's vital to work with a technology provider that is user-led, sympathetic to the needs and skills of users, access requirements (particularly for remote access) and fit with the overall IT infrastructure; AT-Learning has no specific software requirements as it is totally web based. The provider should also offer regular updates, to augment the software and respond to changing user needs.
- Try to take a long view of NHS strategy, to help future-proof purchasing decisions. The PCTs assumed that e-KSF would become a key NHS staff application (which it did) so integration with e-KSF was a key requirement. This decision has been validated by the efficiencies generated from the AT-Learning interface with e-KSF.
- Be clear about the benefits, identify how the system meets the organisation's needs and helps to integrate or link other key information systems. Then ensure this is communicated to engage the support of senior management – the budget holders, decision makers and opinion leaders who will influence the viability and success of the implementation.



Conclusion



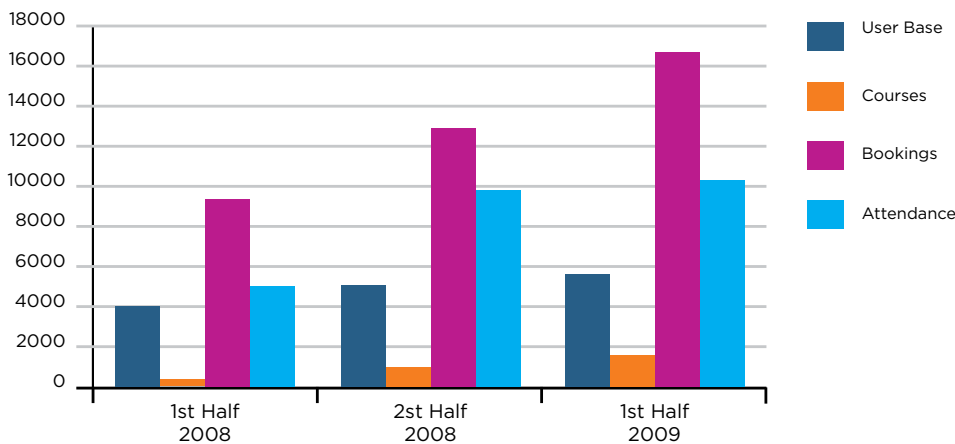
User Base
 Correspondence e-mails sent

	1st Half 2008	2nd Half 2008	1st Half 2009
User base	3993	4827	5525
e-Learning Bookings	5	248	598

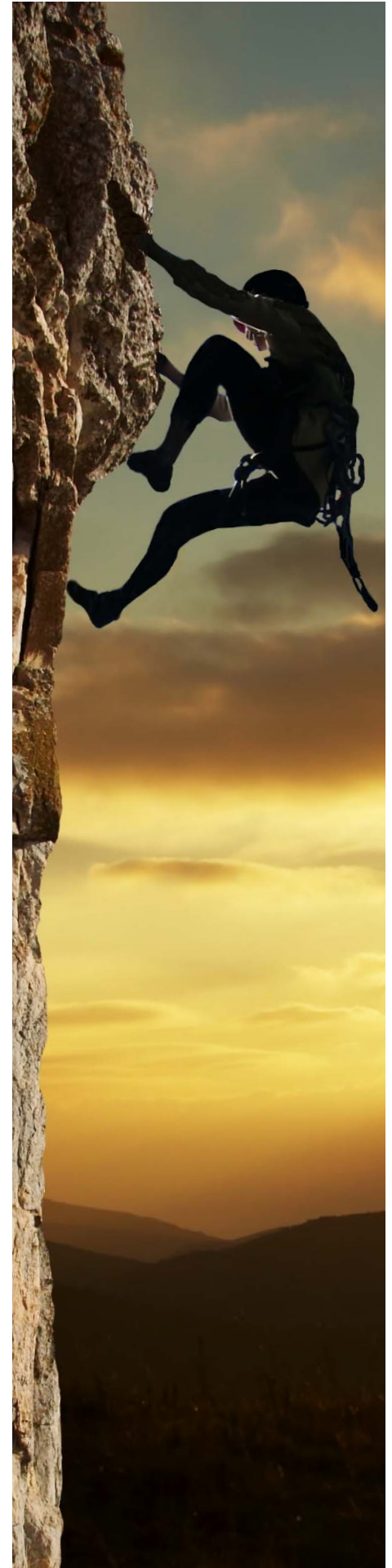
To learn more about AT-Learning please visit www.AT-Learning.com

The measures of success for Hertfordshire PCTs

- In the last 12 months, AT-Learning has supported 4,195 internal and 870 non-internal staff, and 20,347 course bookings, including an average of 1,104 mandatory training bookings per month. During the same period, 719 new activities and 205 venues have been added to the PCTs' AT-Learning system, which has facilitated 41,042 items of correspondence. The ease with which course bookings can be made and email communications and reminders delivered has resulted in a maximum delegate booked ratio of 95%, and a maximum delegate attendance ratio of 70%.
- There has been a massive improvement in the PCTs' reporting capabilities - we can provide managers with immediate information about the L&D achievements and needs of their teams, identifying any gaps against the skills identified in e-KSF. We are also much better placed to provide more accurate and up to date data to the PCTs' boards and senior management teams and the Healthcare Commission, particularly in the areas of risk management, diversity, ethnicity, and mandatory training, which is core to the NHS' learning agenda - **"Standards for Better Health"**.
- AT-Learning has enabled the Hertfordshire PCTs to progress their plans for widespread rollout of self-service learning and development and uptake of e-learning. The LMS has delivered the right framework, network, functionality and user-friendly interface to make an e-learning strategy viable; working on e-learning projects now accounts for nearly 80% of one L&D team member's time - a huge increase in just over a year.



	1st Half 2008	2nd Half 2008	1st Half 2009
User base	3993	va4827	5525
Courses	331	848	1596
Bookings	9299	12750	16424
Attendance	5134	9857	10132





About Ikonami

ikonami is a provider of bespoke learning software systems for government, independent healthcare and other organisations seeking learning and development efficiency.

ikonami was founded in 1999 and originally provided project management consultancy to help organisations exploit the benefits of technology. In response to client demand, ikonami evolved into a full-service technology company that combines its specialised software offerings with a variety of service capabilities, including full Learning Process Outsourcing (LPO). This is currently the fastest-growing area in the training sector, increasing by 32% per annum compared to 6% growth in overall training spend.

ikonami's solutions enable its customers to increase productivity and performance, align resources more closely with business goals and maximise and manage human capital. Millions of people benefit from ikonami's offering, through deployments such as the National Health Service's Electronic Knowledge and Skills Framework (e-KSF).

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