



CASE STUDY

Warwick Business School

Warwick Business School (WBS) is renowned for its teaching of Service Operations Management; instructing workplace service leaders the principles of operations management.



Challenge

Warwick Business School (WBS) created a series of new qualifications designed to help organizations improve their Service Operations Management capabilities.

By taking manufacturing principles and applying them exclusively to the service sector, WBS hoped to create qualifications that not only improved individuals knowledge but also contributed to the bottom-line improvement of their sponsoring employers.

The new qualifications would be fully accredited by the university but would be run entirely online, at distance. Candidates were encouraged to apply from all over the world – mature students from the UK, Middle East and Australia all formed part of the first cohorts.

Solution

WBS's faculty selected Stream (formerly Curatr) as the right platform to deliver the new qualifications as a ground-breaking social learning experience. It wasn't enough to learn theory; students would need to apply their thinking to the real-world, constructing their understanding in line with workplace experiences, if they were to truly contribute back to the workplace.

Using Stream's unique approach to curating content and encouraging conversation, four separate learning experiences were created in a matter of weeks. Each experience orientated around one of the four modules to be studied over the next six months.

Integrated with WBS's own LMS, students use their Single Sign On to access Stream. From here they are free to explore content within each module; earning points for viewing, commenting and contributing back to the virtual classroom.

Assignments are orientated around workplace problems and by completing social discussion questions, learners are creating a portfolio of ideas to be implemented back in the workplace. Students are challenged to mark each others work and to upload new content they find whilst exploring the subject; with a typical a class of just 30 students contributing thousands of new thoughts in a module.



STREAM

Outcome

In the latest cohort to participate, 35 students undertook the course, with 33 going on to complete the course. Each Stream module comprised of between 45 and 80 learning objects, such as videos from Harvard Business Review or articles from well-known business blogs. Discussion points accompanied these objects, challenging students to connect the lesson back to their own workplace.

On average each student made 165 contributions over the 24-week period. The comments tended to be detailed, thoughtful and considered; the average student wrote over 4,000 words in comments and contributions. Amongst the bottom 5 contributors in terms of participation in online conversation, the average final mark was 64.05. Amongst the top 5 the average final mark was 71.75 – a difference of 7.70 and a shift of 1.5 standard deviations in outcome; a whole grade different.

We surmised from this data that the level of participation a student exhibits in an online collaborative learning environment is a good indicator of their likely academic performance. This isn't to say that we know participation is the cause of good performance; we just know it is a potential indicator.

Feedback from the students themselves has also been entirely positive.



The website is fantastic; the format of a game-like site is excellent and helps to motivate. I feel so much more confident as a result of doing this course.

On completion of the course, students achieve 24 MCATs points and a Postgraduate Award in Service Operations Management from the University of Warwick. To date, more than 200 individuals have completed the qualifications and earned their award. Sponsoring organizations feel positive about the course too; one employer reported savings in excess of \$1.5mm following the implementation of a process improvement highlighted by a student taking the qualification.



STREAM



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