CASE STUDY

Open School British Columbia

Open School BC (OSBC), provides elearning services to government ministries, public sector organizations, and school districts in the Canadian province of British Columbia.

BACKGROUND

Open School BC (OSBC), provides elearning services to government ministries, public sector organizations, and school districts in the Canadian province of British Columbia. OSBC services include instructional design, writing, editing, desktop publishing, and multimedia development. An important component of their business is online learning, primarily in the form of courses. In 2009, OSBC found themselves at a decision point. They were self-hosting multiple LMS platforms with onsite servers. But doing so wasn't cost-effective and it caused headaches that pulled them away from clients and what they do best. OSBC's team are experts in training and education who encourage their clients to embrace efficiencies and best practices. When it came to hosting their LMS, they knew they needed to do the same. They needed help.

THE CHALLENGE

Self-Hosting

OSBC started out self-hosting its LMS platforms with onsite servers. This caused a number of issues. They struggled to identify and confidently purchase necessary hardware. British Columbia, where OSBC is based, is prone to earthquakes and their office lacked appropriate server rooms and security. And their business is dependent on being able to provide their customers with guaranteed uptime and reliability.

Resource Allocation

OSBC are experts in education and training—not technology. Attempting to manage a hosted environment and onsite servers were distracting and depleting their resources from providing expertise and services to their customers.

Expense

OSBC was using multiple LMS platforms to serve the needs of different audiences. Like any organization, OSBC was interested in identifying ways to save money by streamlining its operation. Consolidating platforms—without sacrificing quality for their clients—seemed cost-effective. It would also afford them the opportunity to build expertise with a single platform rather than dividing their time between several. After evaluating the market and listening to its customers, OSBC decided it wanted to pursue a Moodle™ platform and issued an RFP for a 'managed Moodle hosting service'. Whoever would be OSBC's hosting company had to meet a stringent list of criteria. Of particular concern was British Columbia's FOIPPA requirement, which sets strict guidelines for protecting, storing, and accessing personal information. In the end, OSBC chose Remote Learner (now a Learning Pool company) to host and manage its platform.

THE SOLUTION

Hosting Services

When Learning Pool began hosting OSBC's Moodle site, on offsite servers, it positioned OSBC for future growth by ensuring a stable, secure, and well-maintained platform. Monique Brewer, Director of OSBC, notes, "*Moodle has some buzz now, even in the government sector, where it didn't before. We've seen an increase in the number of public sector groups interested in the LMS since we've implemented Stream LMS.*" And with Remote Learner's guaranteed uptime of 99.9%, OSBC can ensure its clients can access their mobile-ready LMS sites on-demand at any time.

Subject Matter Expertise

OSBC solves problems for clients—whether it be managing the Moodle site, instructional design services, or overall training—by handling everything for the client. By letting Learning Pool handle the hardware, OSBC can offer its clients the "turnkey solution" they need. "*We can focus on what we do well, the instructional design, the development, and customer service, and let (Learning Pool) handle the back-end,*" said Brewer.

Cost Savings

"Moodle over the last number of years had gotten to be a much better solution than it was historically and the licensing costs with (proprietary competitors) are very high," said Brewer. "We're in a sector where nobody has money. Using open-source solutions through Moodle and (Learning Pool's) hosted environment allows us to maintain our cost, so we don't have to charge our users."

THE RESULTS

OSBC receives a great deal of positive feedback from their clients. They receive a high rate of customer referrals and have many repeat customers interested in developing new courses. Even as contracts are winding down, many clients are eager to discuss the next steps and new projects.

OSBC's relationship with Learning Pool has also grown. One Moodle site become two sites in 2013 and three sites by 2015, each serving a unique purpose for its clients. They have increased their storage capacity as well as their concurrent-user threshold. In 2013, they expanded their business with Learning Pool to include training services. The relationship continues today and Learning Pool's commitment to customer success is a big part of why. Learning Pool's technical support team provides quality implementation, assistance, and prompt customer service. And Learning Pool's Customer Success team meets with OSBC leadership monthly to make sure that their goals are in alignment with the service being provided. Implementation is more than just a day one activity, it's a long-term commitment.

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