

	<h2>Next Generation Learning @ The Ministry of Justice</h2>
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## Ministry of Justice – Business Driven Learning

From its early formation in May 2007 the Ministry of Justice recognised the need to review learning across the organisation. As part of this a new business driven learning approach was adopted where responsibility for learning sits where execution is most effective.



# Business Challenge

## Business Need

The Ministry of Justice was set up on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2007 in response to political and public concern on the divergent priorities of the Home Office. Its purpose is to provide for a fair and just society. Its foundation brought together, for the first time, responsibility for the Justice system – HM Courts Service, HM Prison Service, probation services and Tribunals. It was important to establish a clear identity across the Ministry to distinguish, for all its employees, the Ministry from the Home Office.

This cohesive and common sense of purpose has to be provided across 900 locations in the United Kingdom, including 650 Courts and Tribunals and 139 Prisons in England and Wales.

## The Strategy

By early 2008 the Ministry had established a strategy of business driven learning. It is the approach for corporate learning and set out to establish the first pan-departmental identity for learning at the Ministry of Justice. A key element within the resultant blended learning strategy is a requirement to establish and pilot a platform for delivering and tracking e-Learning for the first time in the Ministry.

The new organisation required a rapid and visionary deployment of the new learning approach which carries the Ministry of Justice brand and is called the Justice Academy. The faculties within the Academy gave each individual business group the capability to build on their existing learning and move confidential into e-Learning that is right for their people.

The new learning strategy was underpinned by a clear set of principles:

- To support the goal of business-driven learning. The provision of learning that supports the achievement of business results is considered a key enabler and differentiator of an employer. It is vital that learning is directly relevant to business goals.
- To enable leaders to develop and grow. A key element of an organisational capability particularly in times of turbulence is the quality of leadership at all levels.
- To create a culture of openness and equal opportunity. Everyone has a part to play, indeed an important part to play in the performance and success of the organisation.

- To support greater efficiency in the public sector. Whilst reducing cost may not be the prime motivator for investing in learning technologies it is essential that every function must increase its efficiency by increasing output and driving down cost.
- To create access for everyone. Delivery at any time and in any place is a significant benefit of blended learning and the strategy required of 24 x 7 service provision for learning.

However, the business goals of the organisation are at the heart of its learning strategy. *“We needed to build a business-driven learning strategy that would meet the Ministry’s needs, not just in the short-term but looking to the future”*, Paul Rudd, head of the Justice Academy.

## Initial Requirements

Two key learning priorities were identified at an early stage. These were induction and performance management. It was essential that these would establish credibility with internal stakeholders by speed of delivery, quality and content. The titles used to support these initiatives were *“Making Connections”* for induction and *“Performance Matters”* for performance management. The intention was to deliver a pan-departmental approach that would benefit all staff and provide a sense of cohesion.

# Learning Solution

## Making Connections

Induction focused heavily on telling stories to paint a picture of life in the Ministry. These were based on the views and quotes of people in a range of key roles. *“Making Connections”* extended from the initial period of joining through to the stage of finding your feet with colleagues. It developed an understanding of how an individual’s career could be supported through learning opportunities. The Course presents small snapshots of life in the Ministry and the type of interactions that employees face with each other and with the public.

## Performance Matters

This Course presents a storyline approach based on practical scenarios supporting the everyday performance dilemmas that managers have to commonly deal with. The Course emphasises the relationship and emotional

intelligent aspects of managing people. There is less of a discussion of the process and more practical advice on dealing with individual situations.

## Ongoing Development

Both packages were delivered rapidly, within an eight-week period and piloted within a four week period. This early piloting allowed review and feedback by learners enabling modification where required. Above all the piloting built expectation amongst the target audience, which whilst enthusing the audience, did not raise expectations to the point at which disappointment would follow. The e-Learning was hosted and tracked through a customised Moodle site based on the Justice Academy branding. The excellent results from the initial pilot, in terms of stakeholder satisfaction, have led to an ongoing development of a suite of learning. The site has grown significantly as the hub for central training initiatives and the home for many departmental specific initiatives as well.

The core brand and principles of treating learners as adults, supporting their performance and providing access to learning at times, places and methods that are convenient and suitable for learners. There has been a constant and consistent check on the quality of content to ensure that it adheres to these three main principles. The adult-to-adult straight-talking style is one that is appreciated by learners across the Ministry. The entry site offers multiple routes into content. The flexibility of web design has been used to good effect to enable learners to plan individual routes through content varying from a five-minute refresher to longer term planning plans.

Five main styles of content delivery are used:

- *In Theory* articles to enable individuals to explore particular areas of knowledge they wish to know more about.
- *Insight* guides provided to enable managers with a framework for dealing with various day-to-day work issues.
- *Nudges*, which are limited to one page of interactive e-Learning objects to provide just-in-time support for a manager dealing with an immediate problem.
- *Storylines*, which are episodes in a story around work and home themes.
- *Knowhows*, which are short interactive tutorials to help managers put skills into practice.

This consistency makes it simpler and easier for a learner to recognise the type of learning support they have available and helps them choose the type of support they need at the time they need it. Content is clustered around learning initiatives (e.g. leadership), strategic themes (e.g. lean thinking) and by faculties (e.g. business areas).

### **Maintaining Pace with the Business**

The content and presentation of the Justice Academy is not static it is an actively managed business-focused resource. For example to reflect a focus on performance, a dedicated area was set up on the site to support the initiative and drive people to it. As the initiative moved forward and the whole organisation progressed so the site was adapted and moved forward in parallel with the initiative. The Justice Academy constantly seeks and takes action on feedback from business stakeholders. As part of the interaction with stakeholders learners are asked what they would like to see to support the various business initiatives and engagement programmes. An example of the constantly changing nature of the learning web site is an approach to learning entitled “Rough Justice”. This e-Learning is a storyline on the personal challenges a fictional employee encounters in their work and personal life. With a plot that supported the business aims of the Ministry linked with the human interest of a storyline, the initiative created a lot of interest and learner engagement. This was run as a learning campaign with posters, email marketing, banners on the web site, which were all designed to pull people towards the initiative. The plot did not present a simplistic view of life in and outside work. There were no neat endings. Characters had real challenges at work and at home. They were far from perfect. Readers were able to draw their own conclusions and reflect on their own approaches, attitudes and beliefs.

The choice of Moodle has enabled a secure hosted service providing for a very rapid deployment without significant annual licence costs of conventional Learning Management Systems.

## **Business Impact**

The increasing involvement of individual departments and senior stakeholders in learning initiatives demonstrate one of the benefits of ensuring a strong business focus within the learning brand.

## Staff Impact

There has been wide acceptance of the Justice Academy by learners. On a regular basis there are over 250 users each day. For just one example the e-Learning module on Information Assurance has been completed by 98% of the target population. Anecdotal user comment has also been supportive. Examples include 'I especially liked the storyline approach you've taken for the leadership learning, I think it's refreshingly innovative and I am intrigued to see how the story unfolds!', a management learner; other feedback comments included: 'Great course, thank you.' 'I found the course very worthwhile to do and very user-friendly. Thank you.' 'The course is well written and logically sequenced. It calls for a measure of application by the user which is a good thing.' 'It was a different and fun way to reinforce our knowledge regarding information assurance.' 'I found the course very interesting and enlightening.' 'Excellent course pitched at the right level for general staff use!' 'I admit I am not a fan of Elearning but the course was easy to use and informative.' 'Good course, well designed and easy to follow.'

## **12 Top Tips for Strategic Development of e-Learning from the Ministry of Justice**

1. Consult on and develop a learning strategy of which e-Learning is an integral part and ensure this is endorsed at senior business leader level.
2. Identify pilots that directly support key business imperatives.
3. Be open to the use of open source technologies to ensure value for money and open competitiveness with suppliers.
4. Ensure open source technology is scalable up to the size of the organisation. In the case of the Ministry of Justice the core Moodle LMS is available for their 90,000+ staff with no licence payment.
5. Innovate in delivering for speed, lower costs and enhanced flexibility.
6. Ensure initial pilot is delivered rapidly and measured in weeks rather than months.
7. Engage and enthuse the whole training team as part of an overall blended learning strategy.
8. Include compliance and regulatory training at an early stage of implementation. Key stakeholders will recognise the significant added value of a robust, auditable solution for meeting their compliance requirements.
9. Ensure the site is dynamic and constantly evolving; specifically supporting ongoing key business initiatives and needs to be as good as the those sites that learners regularly visit in their day to day lives outside work.
10. Implement a strong brand that can reach across the whole enterprise; sub-dividing this brand into departments or faculties where needed. This ensures that the home page is the route to learning for all although each individual can have an individual experience.
11. Develop a structure of learning objects that learners can relate to and recognise. Recognise them not only on the screen but how each type of object contributes to their learning. For example: is this a quick win or an opportunity for reflection or an extended item of theory, or some practical guidance to getting the job done.
12. Respond to organisational need by reflecting themes in the business as they emerge. In the last 12 months this has been on personal performance, engagement, lean thinking and addressing mandatory requirements. These learning needs are in exact alignment with the business needs.