LifeLearn
Bring Learning To Life

OneDesk

Client Case Study:
International distance learning organization
LifeLearn "gets collaborative" on OneDesk's
Unified Product Platform

A Global Mission with a Local Focus

LifeLearn puts Web 2.0 and mobile technology to work to improve animal & human health worldwide

Founded in 1993 as a startup incubated within Canada's leading veterinary college in Guelph Ontario, LifeLearn (lifelearn.com) has emerged as a global leader in the development of leading-edge educational resources for life sciences professionals. With a broad scope of services in support of a global mission to "Bring Learning to Life", LifeLearn merges science, design and technology to create engaging, effective and easy-to-use educational programs and interactive content.

Exporting Success

LifeLearn's steady growth and success over the last 20 years hasn't shifted its focus. Started as a college project with a mission of providing distance learning for a network of far-flung veterinarians serving rural communities, it has successfully ported that model to great success in Africa, Asia and other developing countries around the world.

Providing multi-pronged, multimedia programs and resources to help develop and maintain best practices in nutrition, preventative medicine, treatment and drugs, LifeLearn today serves thousands of vets around the globe and maintains partnerships with all of the major pharmaceutical pet food companies.
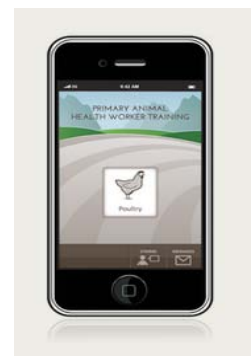
LifeLearn's latest mobile app DVM puts life-critical information in the hands of farmers and vets.

Challenge

With multiple programs and projects to be designed, managed and delivered continuously by working teams distributed across Canada, the US and at project sites in the developing world, LifeLearn was looking for a collaborative platform that allowed communication and engagement at every stage of development.

"Because we work with complex, time-intensive projects, we need visibility across the entire team to see where we are," says Kim McKay, Technology Operations & Service Manager at LifeLearn. "We need to be able to communicate and have discussions without losing it in a giant email paper trail."

And, she says, it was quickly becoming an enormous paper trail.

No Borders

Most recently, LifeLearn joined forces with international NGO, **Veterinarians Without Borders / Vétérinaires sans Frontières** as a part of a major, multi-year, multi-site project to deliver mobile distance learning programs to agricultural communities in developing countries.

"if you're a farmer in a developing country and your livestock gets sick, then you're pretty much destroyed."
Kim McKay

Being a hands-on, savvy group, their initial solution was a homespun combination of excel spreadsheets and email. Although it was effective in some ways, McKay admits that a lot of critical material was getting buried or lost in the shuffle. LifeLearn then took what seemed the next logical step and purchased a project management system. Unfortunately, McKay says, the software didn't deliver in the way they had hoped.

At the very cutting edge of technology and education, the program will serve to help improve food security in some of the world's most at risk regions where an unmanaged contagious disease in a livestock population can mean famine and death.

"Unfortunately it become little more than a very expensive timekeeper, which was really the only thing the solution was good for. There was no real collaboration, no communication and no easy way to talk to other people on the project."

With the scope and complexity of their operation, LifeLearn needed something more than a traditional project management application could deliver. They needed an environment that allowed them to socialize the collaborative process, to work in concert and contribute to contextualized discussions at different levels of a project while maintaining a clear, macro view of the big picture.

Solution

McKay says that after that first experience, they started a new search with a much clearer idea of what they needed. "Typically our deadlines are very tight, you know *'build this whole multimedia system, but do it in 6 weeks!'*, so we need to have tight communications, not lose things, and know exactly what team members need when they need it."

LifeLearn began testing the software at the start of 2012 and quickly made the decision to bring the entire team aboard. Given the tight turnarounds and multiple locations, OneDesk immediate demonstrated its ability to deliver on the core demands for something more streamlined and social.

"We looked at least at 30 pieces of software, everything from simple online gantt charts to sharepoint systems to full-blown waterfall giant implementation projects. The one that suited us the best was OneDesk."

And as they expanded their OneDesk environment, they quickly took advantage of some of the other core benefits of the product, particularly the ability to move and escalate items through the system adding functionality as an item matured.

"It's really a neat product with a slew of useful things that aren't in other project software. You can have discussions at different levels of a project, and within tasks, you can have larger blog discussions that are open to the team and community and that's really helped us with all of the simultaneous projects and iterations going on at the same time. You always have context and know exactly what you're talking about."

Improving Health: One Project at A Time

This year, LifeLearn is poised to launch its most ambitious project to date. Working with **Veterinarians Without Borders / Vétérinaires sans Frontières** and Rogers Communications, LifeLearn is building the first mobile learning network of its kind based on its mobile DVM platform, first in Laos, in South East Asia, and later this year in Africa. Focused on bringing life-saving information to at-risk agricultural communities, the project has enormous potential to improve health in some of the world's hardest hit regions.

As the program expands and brings in more project workers on the ground, McKay says she looks forward to expanding the OneDesk virtual team and through that their extended collaborative reach in mission-critical projects.

To find out more about LifeLearn visit www.lifelearn.com

To learn more about how OneDesk can help build the collaborative environment you need, contact us by phone or email or visit us online at www.onedesk.com

OneDesk Inc.
774 Décarie, Suite 205
Montreal, Quebec
H4L 3L5
Tel: +1 514-731-6878
Toll-free: 1-855-OneDesk (663-3375)
Email: sales@onedesk.com (Sales inquiries)