



Computacenter creates dedicated Questionmark website for staff development

Plans to accelerate use of online assessments and surveys across the organisation with Perception

Computacenter is Europe's leading independent provider of IT infrastructure services with around 5,000 employees geographically spread across the UK. The largest single office is the company's head office located in Hatfield where 1,500 staff are based. Staff development and training is a priority at the company to ensure that standards of knowledge about products and services remain high across the boards and that staff are able to hone their skills to better support customer needs. This drive to improve presents its own set of challenges in terms of the delivery and administration of training courses, materials and assessments.

To that end, Computacenter first became involved with Questionmark when the company ran a pilot assessment programme in early 2005 to deliver and administer surveys and assessments online. Until this time, assessments were either paper-based, administered by an external supplier, or they did not happen at all due to cost and/or time limitations. The concept of using an online assessment platform was met with great enthusiasm as it would address both of these constraints at once.

John Elliott, Online Learning Resource Manager at Computacenter, comments, "With such a significant spread of employees the most effective means of delivering information and assessments is via the Internet and we have established a dedicated Internet site for Questionmark for that purpose. Our employees log onto this server to take their scheduled assessments from whichever location and at an appropriate time for them and us."

At the moment assessments are being used for 2 internal training programmes. One is directed towards new staff to assess their knowledge of the company's products and services once they have completed a series of short introductory training courses. The other is part of a leadership programme that is approved by the Institute of Learning and Management. All delegates take an online assessment within eight weeks of attending training as part of a project.

Computacenter are also using Perception for end of course feedback which allows individual views on a number of subjects to be collected. This information is collated and reported to the business and course directors for appraisal. This reporting and the ability to schedule with time and number of attempt limitations allows the company to plan what is delivered and when. There are a variety of reporting options available to enable analysis of the topics and learning outcomes of courses. Course managers and directors view question statistics and analyse individual development needs of delegates.

Elliott comments, "We have our own internal system that hosts everything so employees log on via the Internet and take their assessments or fill in their surveys at a time to suit them and from a convenient location. We currently have approx 70 assessments and the same number of feedback forms live on the system and being delivered to about 100 users. As a number of our company processes are online, holiday, sickness etc, they accept this way of working. In fact, they have come to expect company programmes to be available online."

Computacenter has a centralised authoring pool for all assessments created. A project manager meets with the relevant learning consultant to scope the questions, outcomes and reporting needs and then the assessment is created to meet those requirements. However, the Perception specialist is responsible for creating and controlling the assessment, from writing the questions, through coordinating the reporting, to the scheduling process.

Elliott concludes, "To date the online assessment process has been a positive experience for all of those involved and we expect use of the system to expand rapidly within our business. Now that we know we can deliver them in the manner we want, we have a number of projects for which we are looking at using online assessments and feedback forms. Also, upgrading to Perception version 4 will improve our ability to report information to the business further which is an important aspect moving forward. There's no question mark over the future of online assessments with Perception at Computacenter."

More information

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