

Case Study: Use of Virtual Worlds for Learning

Product: myLearning Mobile

Company: Accenture, Capability Development

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services, and outsourcing company. Committed to delivering innovation, Accenture collaborates with its clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. Accenture has approximately 187,000 professionals in 52 countries, and works with clients in nearly every major industry worldwide, including 91 of the Fortune Global 100, two-thirds of the Fortune Global 500 and government agencies around the world.

Building a convincing business case for mobile learning can be challenging. In a time when organizations closely scrutinize every expense, convincing leadership that a new delivery channel is necessary, despite increased costs in re-designing learning assets, requires clear thinking about the value that is added through providing multiple delivery channels. It also requires a clear link to business needs and evidence that the innovative delivery channel adds value. Training organizations may know that for the generations that have grown up digital, users will expect mobile learning — it needs to become part of the standard business model for training. Still, making a convincing business case is not easy.

For Accenture’s Capability Development group, three factors converged to build a solid business case and gain sponsor support for mobile learning: a clear business need, a receptive audience, and sufficient technology.

The company’s business need centered on the recognition that key segments of its target audience for corporate compliant training are traditionally difficult to reach. These groups understand the importance of required training and want to take it, but their schedules seldom allow the 30 or 60 minutes in front of their computer needed to complete it. This receptive audience, therefore, welcomes any convenience that makes training easier to complete. These same groups are our most prevalent users of handheld devices — mostly Blackberries and Windows mobile devices. Collectively, they have sufficient technology and are technologically savvy.

Learning Objective Support

The company’s overall objective for its project was to provide an alternate, more convenient way for professionals to complete corporate required training and thereby increase the speed and ease of uptake for these courses.

The overall learning objectives vary by course, but the following are typical objectives:

- Explain your responsibility in protecting Accenture’s, its clients’ or a third-party’s confidential information and how you can put those companies at risk if you fail to protect that information.
- List the various methods of protecting confidential information.
- Explain the importance of protecting Accenture’s Intellectual Assets (for example, PowerPoint presentations, software, and other materials).

- Describe how legal protection of assets is an important part of our business strategy.

The company created a prototype course, 12 screens of content (see Figures 1 and 2) from its “*Confidential! Protecting Assets and Information*” corporate required course.

The design included:

- Multiple-choice, select all that apply, and fill-in-the-blank interactions
- End of the course quiz (sample)
- Scenarios/dialogs
- Graphics and simple animations



[Figure 1]

myLearning Mobile Menu, Content, and interaction Screens



[Figure 2]

The reaction of the target audience to the prototype was overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-two percent indicated they would use their mobile device for taking required training. Most preferred training that could be completed in chunks of 10 minutes or less. More than half indicated they wanted a solution they could download on their device rather than one that would rely on a live connection, since a downloaded option would allow them to take the training on an airplane, in a subway, and in other locations where connectivity is a problem. Interestingly, some participants indicated they used the prototype while sitting at their homes at the end of a long day. In other words, they used it during naturally occurring downtime.

The culture of consulting work is mobile, and the workforce was looking for a solution that fit the consulting lifestyle. The nature of downtime is that it comes in 10 to 20 minute increments. Offering mobile learning solutions makes learning more prevalent inside the consulting culture when learning is not tied to the desk.

The company's next step was to create a Mobile Learning Capability Blueprint (see Figure 3) to define its goals for mobile learning, guide it in the process of development and deployment, and establish metrics that would let the company know when it had achieved its goals.

Mobile Learning Blueprint requires us to know where we want to be AND how we'll measure our success



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[Figure 3]

Since the prototype, it has built and deployed seven mobile courses. These are still early days, yet the data it has so far suggests that satisfaction with the mobile courses and the learning environment is significantly higher than the CBT versions, and 95 percent indicate they would recommend this learning approach to colleagues.

Accenture's first three courses delivered through a mobile platform are:

- **Avoiding Insider Trading:** Designed to keep employees updated on key points related to the subject of insider trading
- **Fight Against Corruption:** Designed to keep employees updated on key information related to anti-bribery laws
- **Using the Code:** Designed to keep employees updated on key information on Accenture's Code of Business Ethics

The four additional courses have just been released and are similar in purpose.

Measurable Benefits & Outcomes

Accenture's course evaluations so far show that the mobile courses outperform the CBT courses in every area of satisfaction. The mobile courses rate an average of .2 higher than their CBT equivalents in total ratings. In satisfaction with the learning environment, the

difference in satisfaction is even more pronounced, with the mobile courses rating an average of .32 points higher than their CBT equivalents.

Avoiding Insider Training Course Evaluations:

	Mobile Course	CBT Course
Overall Satisfaction	4.35	4.02
Increase in Knowledge	3.35	3.33
Productivity Increase	3.35	3.26
Applicable to Work	4.38	3.98
Learning Environment	4.41	4.11
Recommend to Others	4.112	3.98
Total Rating	3.99	3.77

Fight Against Corruption Course Evaluations:

	Mobile Course	CBT Course
Overall Satisfaction	4.44	4.01
Increase in Knowledge	3.53	3.29
Productivity Increase	3.59	3.36
Applicable to Work	4.15	3.96
Learning Environment	4.41	4.09
Recommend to Others	4.12	3.94
Total Rating	4.04	3.78

Using the Code Course Evaluations:

	Mobile Course	CBT Course
Overall Satisfaction	4.45	3.98
Increase in Knowledge	3.36	3.24
Productivity Increase	3.09	3.41
Applicable to Work	4.05	4.06
Learning Environment	4.41	4.06
Recommend to Others	4.09	3.93
Total Rating	3.91	3.78

Participant comments from course evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive. The vast majority of the participants are pleased with the convenience and the learning environment that the mobile platform offers.

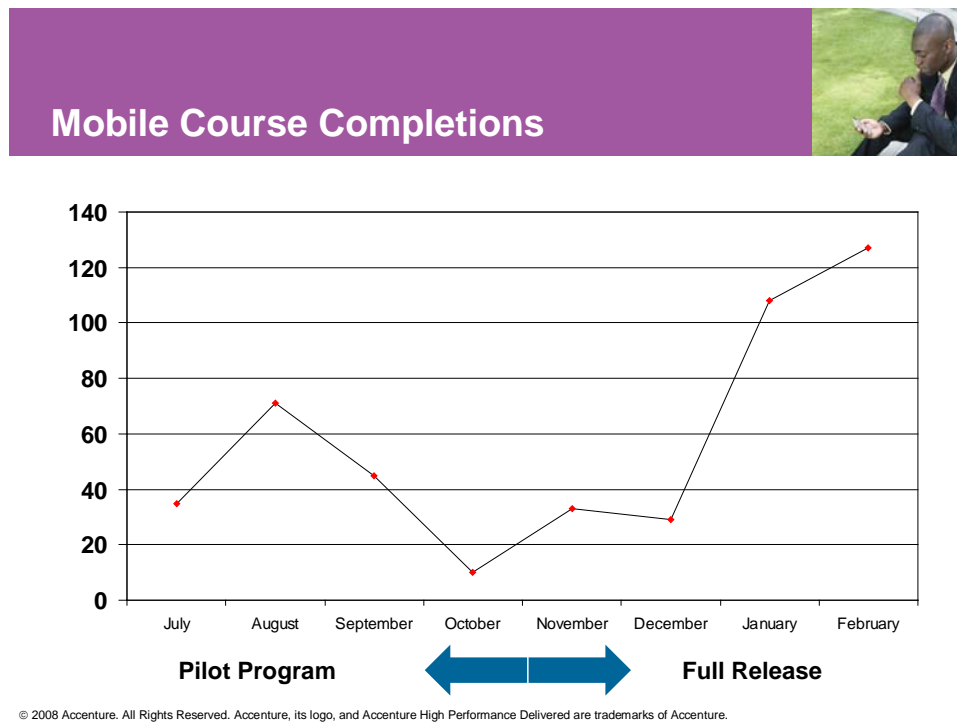
Quotes from Senior Managers:

“I just took my first Blackberry Mobile Training course. What an awesome experience. It was easy to do and effective to take. This is such a great example of ‘future’ learning environments that meet the needs of busy people. Thank you for the experience and effort.”

— Allison Hickey, Senior Manager, Public Service

“What a great tool – you never know when you’ll have time to use something like this, I can see me using this quite often... V v cool!”
— Bonnie Anderson, Senior Manager, SI&T

The myLearning mobile initiative has also shown itself effective in meeting the business goals for the delivery platform. Evidence gathered so far indicates that the audience is both receptive to the delivery platform and grateful for the increased ease of use. The company has been tracking uptake and course completions since the beginning of the pilot program last July. Course completions have been rising since the rollout of the full release in October (see Figure 4), evidence of the continuing success of the delivery platform and the enthusiasm of our target audience for taking mobile courses. The demand for the creation of more mobile platform courses has been very high among our target audience.



[Figure 4]

Effective Use?

Accenture used mobile learning to reach a specific audience, hungry for the convenience that the mobile platform could provide, and technologically savvy enough to take immediate advantage of the convenience, in order to fulfill a clear business need. The consequences of failure to complete required compliance training can be serious for the individual, who cannot be above a certain performance rating and is not eligible for promotion unless required training is complete. The consequences can be equally serious for the organization, by decreasing the pool of employees available for promotion, not to

mention the consequences, both legal and productive, of having employees in violation of compliance requirements.

Evidence from course evaluations show that the learning objectives for the content are being fulfilled by the mobile courses, as well as, if not better than, courses on other delivery platforms. Yet, it is in the mobile platform's ability to reach the hard-to-reach, on-the-go population of learners that abound in the consulting industry that it has shown its true value. The rising number of course completions and the continuing positive response of course participants demonstrates the effectiveness of the myLearning mobile initiative in reaching the target audience.

Due to the success of the mobile initiative, and the positive reaction of participants, Accenture has added four additional mobile courses and will continue to grow its mobile course catalog. It is currently launching these same courses in Windows Mobile environment and, in the near future, also will launch them on iPhones. These three platforms constitute those used by the vast majority of the company's target audience.

In addition, the success Accenture has had delivering mobile learning to its own employees is now being leveraged to deliver mobile learning solutions for its clients.