

Opsera enhances London Business School's Virtual Learning Environment

Opsera re-developed London Business School's virtual learning environment to provide better functionality, ease of use and manageability. We designed and implemented the re-branding, added a range of features to improve usability, and helped the School move to a model for supporting the application in house. This resulted in both an improved learning experience for participants and significant cost savings for the School.

The Challenge

London Business School's Executive Education department provides a wide variety of executive education for global organisations, with participants located all over the world. The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) system facilitates tutor-guided reviews of progress towards goals set during the classroom phase of training and supports cross-functional team projects.

As well as helping participants, the VLE is used by programme managers to upload administrative information and by faculty and School tutors to publish their own material and manage online interactions, putting the institution at the forefront of business schools for online learning support.

The existing system had successfully supported the business for several years, but was in need of a new user interface to improve usability and comply with the School's recently introduced brand guidelines. In addition a series of enhancements were required by programme managers, training administrators and IT support staff to improve how it could be used to facilitate the process for managing training programmes.

Our Approach

We established a team consisting of a senior technical architect, user interface designer and developers (based offshore), led by a senior Opsera project manager.

We facilitated workshops with key staff to prioritise the list of enhancements, and agree budgets and a phased implementation. Having specified the changes needed for the re-brand, we then implemented the code changes in manageable chunks, using a combination of on-shore and offshore development resources.

As a further phase, we analysed the technical architecture of the application to identify where improvements could be made to increase the reliability and supportability of the system.

Our team worked closely with the Executive Education and IT personnel throughout to ensure requirements were clearly understood, coordinate testing and transfer technical understanding to the in-house teams.



Our Client

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London Business School is one of the top ten business schools in the world, and ranked in the upper tier by Business Week and the Financial Times. It offers a broad portfolio of postgraduate degree programmes, including MBA, Sloan EMBA and Masters in Finance, both full and part time. The School also delivers executive education programmes attracting around 6,000 participants each year drawn from all over the globe.

The people at Opsera originally developed the VLE at their former company, so they were a natural choice for us when we decided to enhance the system with new functionality and a new branded user interface. Their technical knowledge, understanding of our business and their ability to work collaboratively with the School's IT team meant that the project was an outstanding success.

Ian Hardie, Associate Dean, Executive Education

Solution

Technologies used: All Java (J2EE) Servlets (Struts with session facade), JSP, JDBC (plus custom data access layer), SQL Server databases, Solaris, SunOne web server, iPlanet Portal Server, Eclipse IDE, Tomcat web server, Struts MVC framework, Mailman, iText, Velocity.

Results

The site has been redeveloped to better reflect the School's branding and improve usability for customers. It now promotes the School in a stronger way, providing better functionality and ease of use, ensuring that the School continues to deliver an unrivalled executive education learning experience.

As a result of working closely with the IT team, we also enabled the School to migrate away from an outsourced hosting and support supplier to the in-house IT team, resulting in significant annual savings.

For more information on Opsera please visit our website or contact us:

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