Independent case study: Competence management in a large health system

The attached case study analyzes the impact of strategic competency management using Dossier in a large regional health system managing 31,000 employees and nine hospitals.

It is written by Towards Maturity, a leading UK based benchmarking and research organisation in the field of workplace learning and development.

The case study reflects work specifically completed in the Western Norway Health Authority, in particular at Haukeland University Hospital, using Dossier.

Please note the following highlights:

New unique capabilities:

- Creating and managing competence requirements locally
- Managing competence assurance and development at the point of work
- Monitoring, reporting and acting on compliance in real-time

Performance shifts in the areas of:

- Patient safety
- Compliance
- Workforce planning

Positive ROI:

- Quantifiable ROI on administrative efficiencies justify the investment
- More significant value lies in quality improvements as well as new capabilities at micro and macro levels

Saving lives by ensuring competency at a Norwegian Health Trust

This is an independent case study on the impact of competency management in Helse Vest, Norway – a state-owned regional health authority that operates five health trusts, which operate nine hospitals.

Imagine this: you are managing a large hospital and a patient comes into your care. The patient is treated by a doctor who has met hundreds of competency requirements across over 80 competency plans. They are treated by several nurses, all needing to individually meet several hundred competency requirements, who must each be individually certified to use over 30 different pieces of equipment.

How do you maintain the certainty that each of these individuals have been able to meet the competency standards required to ensure patient safety?

Furthermore, how do you *know* that you've put the right people in the right place to do the job safely and to the best possible standards?

Tracking competency in this context is literally a matter of life or death. By involving users in the design of their solution, the Western Norway Health Authority could demonstrate positive impacts on patient healthcare and overall performance.

Working with Dossier Solutions, they have created a Competency Portal which has surpassed the expectations of not only the staff and colleagues at the hospital, but is transforming the approach to competency management across the Norwegian health sector.

Context: a Norwegian health trust with 31,000 employees

Public hospitals in Norway are organised in 4 regions, with around 50 localised health trusts and over 150,000 employees. Haukeland University Hospital is one of 4 trusts owned by Helse Vest, the Western Norway Regional Health Authority, with every employee completing around 4 courses per year as elearning or classroom sessions.

In addition to this, side-by-side training, procedure checkouts and supervised training form part of colleagues learning activities. New standards, procedures, re-certifications and legal liabilities all need to be considered when meeting competency requirements, with around 31,000 employees providing specialized healthcare to almost 1.1 million people, it's important to get it right.

Another challenge they faced was that people didn't know why the new system had to be implemented, so a new way of considering how to involve and include learners would be essential to the project. Helse Vest worked closely with the provider to build a solution that not only ensured positive business outcomes, but that also instilled a new way of thinking behind the purpose of competency to ensure maximum engagement and success.

Haukeland University Hospital knew there were fundamental time and quality issues with paper-based systems, so they needed a solution to combat this.

The Helse Vest Competency Portal

They identified a need for competency assurance for all learning; a 70:20:10 approach across LMS systems. The LMS on its own wasn't enough – they needed a business-critical solution that was decentralised, worked with a 70:20:10 approach and allowed for fully auditable competency plans.

The solution would act as an L&D portal, enabling the tracking and management of competency profiles and much more.

The Competency Portal needed to:

- ▶ Document competencies
- ▶ Identify needs for training and further development
- ▶ Enable the assembly of teams with the right skills
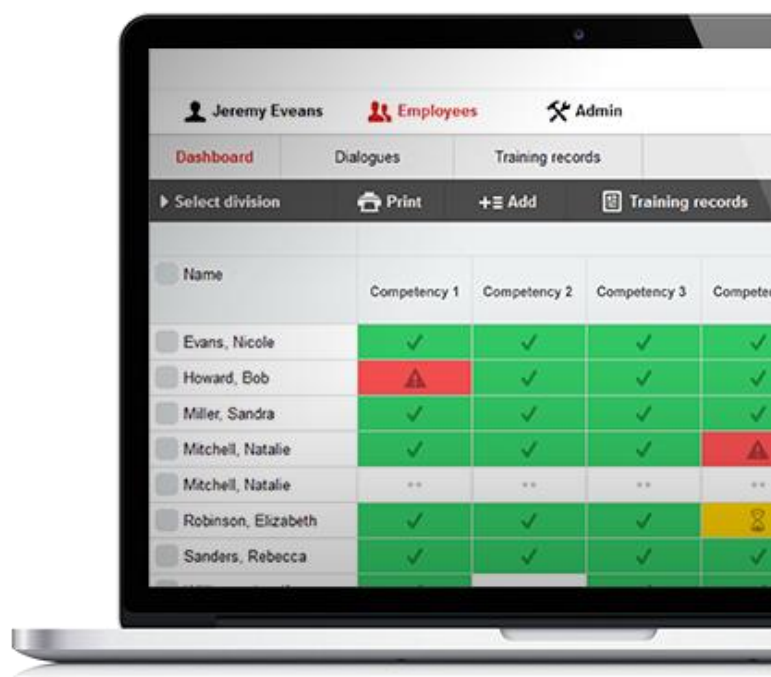- ▶ Help staff prepare, implement and follow up on agreed development activities

Six years later, the Helse Vest Competency Portal was born.

A hub for all learning

A key feature of this platform is the capability dashboard, which offers a comprehensive overview of learning progress and compliance across all organisational units and levels at a glance.

Underpinned by a 70:20:10 approach, the solution offers real time, actionable analysis of competency, allowing leaders at all levels to monitor and manage learning, and connect individual learning to organisational capability.

By taking competency requirements as the starting point for L&D, Helse Vest could experience a range of unique benefits.

Decentralised competency management changed everything

Whilst the HR department decides on some competencies, creating traditional elearning courses can be costly and time consuming. In the Helse Vest region, most training is now managed using 70:20:10 competency plans developed by specialist teams and subject matter experts. Thus, only learning targeted to a large group of participants is developed centrally.

Being able to manage competencies on the job in this way allows managers and leaders to track and monitor learning daily, ensuring capability is supervised at the point of need. It is one thing to ask an employee to learn from a colleague as they administer an injection – it's much more resource intensive to create a virtual environment, elaborate coursework and assessment models to achieve the same outcome.

Below: Employees in the cardiology unit

This decentralisation allows for more relevant, timely and cost effective competency development. Haukeland University's 1775 competency plans could never have been created and managed centrally.

"Success happened because we listened to leaders" says Anne-Mette Koch, Special Advisor at Haukeland University Hospital. For this project to work, local leaders needed to be engaged and help decide what was important for the solution to be successful. Helse Vest involved local leaders in the process, finding out what was important to them and how decentralising could help people do their jobs better, faster and safer.

Being able to track both visually and statistically in one place has proven both successful and manageable for colleagues.

Competency plans for large user groups, managed **centrally**: • Required training for all employees • Children as next of kin • Mental healthcare	Competency plans for highly specialised functions, managed **locally**: • Analysing Buprenofin, Methadone and mianserin in serum on LC-MS-MS • Advanced rare endoscopy • Medical equipment, gynaecology ward (nurses)

70:20:10 at work

The 70:20:10 model asserts that around 10% of workplace learning happens through traditional coursework and educational training, whilst 20% happens through social exposure (such as side by side learning or job shadowing), with a huge 70% of learning taking place through experience in the working environment.

The competency portal is merely a framework for a 70:20:10 approach, meaning it does not, like a traditional LMS, manage learning as an activity. The portal focuses on managing demonstrated competency, remaining agnostic as to how the learning occurs.

This means that the bulk of competency development reflected in Haukeland University Hospital's competency frameworks is not course based, but social or practice based.

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Above: The employees in emergency dispatch use the competency portal to manage competencies, relying heavily on side-by-side learning and supervised practice.

Always "audit ready"

Getting compliance reporting right required time and effort. Checklists, digital signatures and advanced document management is required to document demonstrated competencies.

Learning compliance can be managed by leaders through digital tracking and supervisor sign off on competencies when and where learning occurs, not just through an LMS system.

By going through a checklist, an employee can demonstrate that he or she masters a task at the point of work. Practical experience and guidance is documented with digital signatures using mobile devices, sometimes requiring double and triple sign-offs.

Furthermore, competency compliance requires rigid standards of document management. The Trust can always document competency plans and learning content versions and revisions. Based on this foundation of competency data, the Trust can access real-time dashboards and produce reports to meet any relevant internal or external compliance requirement relating to competency. The trust is, in short, always audit ready.

Actionable "big picture" insights

The analysis and reporting capabilities of the solution goes far beyond what traditional LMS or HR solutions can offer by providing an overview of *all learning.*

Every year, Haukeland University Hospital invests several million pounds in competency development.

The competency portal not only offers the opportunity to analyse spending after the fact – but allows the HR department to foresee and plan for cost effective competency development expenditure across global and local L&D, across the 70:20:10 spectrum, compliance requirements and business needs.

Outcomes

What has the impact of the process had on the quality of healthcare? Patient safety has improved due to employees having the skills necessary to do their jobs properly.

This project isn't just for Haukeland University Hospital – it has been rolled out across the entire Helse Vest region. Leaders and managers can now plan frameworks for the future, with doctors' competency profiles being managed and tracked from the moment they graduate university to starting work at a hospital.

"This platform has given our leaders a better view of and control over competency development."

Anne-Mette Koch, Special Advisor

So, what does the tool allow people like Anne-Mette to do differently? "Many departments had paper lists or used excel for registration of employees' competency and education. "This platform has given our leaders a better view of and control over competency development."

The tool also proves useful during audits, and an important function with the solution is the possibility both to decide training in one specific department (decentralized) and with an overall trust-wide view too.

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Reported benefits include:

- ▶ Increased patient **safety**
- ▶ **Reduced stress** for leaders and employees
- ▶ External/internal **compliance**
- ▶ Cost **control**
- ▶ Easier shift/workforce/team competency composition **planning**
- ▶ **Better governance** using real-time data

Managing competency: lessons learned

If a learner has areas of concern in their competency plan, how are decisions made to establish where they go next? Managers and learners now have access to a dashboard in the form of a traffic light system, through an app. Learners can take ownership of their competency plans and be self-driven by them.

5 Tips for changing the way that staff learn and work

1. Start where there is **most enthusiasm** for the process
2. **Involve all stakeholders** early and often – identify "what's in it for me"
3. Monitor and ensure compliance **centrally** as competency plans are assigned

Competency framework design and maintenance:

4. Identify the right level of granularity for competency requirements – **keep it simple**
5. Designate **ownership** for competency plans: ensuring there is appropriate separation for global and local plans
6. Ensure a **strong alignment** between the theory and practice (70:20:10)
7. Create processes and governance to ensure that competency requirements are always up to date

Case study independently developed by Towards Maturity.

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Photos: Haukeland University Hospital