**LG ONLINE OUTDOORS PROJECT**

Recently a council in regional Queensland managed to bring all outdoor workers online.

Their solution was elegant and effective and resulted in exceptionally positive feedback from staff.

LG Online Learning has engaged with the team leaders to work through the project in detail and compile lessons learned.

The “LG Online Outdoors Project” is a free group project for councils nationally where we will conduct monthly webinars and group assignments to help councils follow this pathway.

**CASE STUDY**

A regional Council (who has requested not to be identified) embarked on a project to deploy a compliance training system (LMS) across Council. The project aims to bring all workers including outdoor workers on board with completing online compliance training modules and using new ICT systems including the new LMS.

The LMS purchased is essentially a compliance platform that allows Council to load courses. Council decided to utilise the systems for completion of compliance training for employees as well. The project team is working with the provider to utilise and tailor modules to suit this need.

The launch of the system was brought forward and rather than a phased approach moved to a WOB approach for the deployment of short monthly safety training topics as part of Council’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The launch went well. The project team are continuing to focus on the deployment of the system and adjusting project plans and are working to prioritise actions to improve the take up and utilisation of the system.

The combination of challenges and changes of timeframes has provided the project team and team members with many learnings that they are using to make the project successful and they believe will improve the success of future training projects.

**Approach:** This was accomplished in a rather creative way - by involving Municipal Library staff to assist where required in training external workers in using technology like computers and iPads as needed.

The effect had a twofold benefit – it had the potential to engage a group who can become isolated from other staff, while drawing on the educational skills of this group.

The case study team sought to work with managers and staff in the field to understand their issues and perspectives rather than be seen to be imposing a preconceived solution. The centralised deployment approach due to Covid-19 meant some groups were more engaged than others.

Internal workers had adapted to the new system quickly and with little fuss, enabling project team members to be able to spend more time with external teams.

The way the system was introduced to people was an important factor.

Rather than appearing to take a stance that the change is mandatory, the case study council advises that they found that the best approach was to say “this is what we did – would you like to look or try it?” and their team is collating feedback to provide continuous improvement.

It’s important that any content used on a Council’s platform is seen as being backed by effort and the content developed is kept fresh – and updated continually. There is capacity to include new local imagery, videos and audio and new modules are being added periodically for internal and external audiences.

**Reactions:**

The team were keen to support managers but in a way that does not appear condescending to their reports and be misinterpreted as a judgement about people’s ICT skill level.

Some groups initially resisted the change as it raises accountability levels. Previous assessments had not always been taken seriously and had been seen by some as a “tick and flick” and teams completed learning assessments together as a team.

The new system requires staff to engage more with their training and assessment and for assessment to be completed as a group. This is important for safety modules where employees’ knowledge of the subject matter is critical to keep them and their workmates safe.

**Results:**

The Project team is engaging in a structured feedback process and feedback will continuously be sorted and reviewed even once the project is operationalised. In addition, a lot of courses cover topics such as safety where tracked KPIs can be used to help determine the ROI of the project over time.

That said, depot Office Administrators in particular are advocates and are becoming true change champions. The success of the project can be measured in terms of feedback from them such as:

* “normally I’d be printing out the take5s and reprinting b/c people have lost. Then upload manually… then goes to central team… etc. This will save Council money and time, and
* “I can’t believe how easy that was”

**Challenges:**

During the course of this the project, the team confronted a range of challenges such as:

1. Resources could not be expanded beyond what is available with Business as Usual activities and during Covid-19.
2. Senior managers and project advocates have needed to focus on other people, business and community imperatives.
3. Resources weren’t committed for the full period and people were moving in and out of the project. This required milestones and deliverable dates to be adjusted and an agile and flexible approach by the core project team. An indicative estimate of the resources required was found to be half a person-year.
4. The vendor of the platform had not attempted a project like this previously and the vendor of this platform have had to develop and document processes that were new.
5. The depots where training was to be undertaken had basic IT equipment and did not always offer access to computers.
6. The effort required for change management was underestimated initially and with hindsight more time should have been made available for this. In this instance, change management effort included:
* All training had been manual before the project – this was to move online and courses needed development as the LMS system at the heart of this project was designed primarily for contractors.
* The delivery of materials was changed – for example, some centralised materials became distributed and vice-versa. At the same time, a skills audit is underway in collaboration with HR. There were additional requirements introduced as a result. This resulted in a revision of PDs for example and satisfying the Safety and Audit recommendations proved to be a significant proportion of the effort.
* Cultural change was required. For example:
	+ staff now need to do Take5 (microlearning), upload their certificates etc for the first time.
* Staff were reluctant to use their own personal mobile devices at work to complete the training.

**Lessons Learned:**

The team would recommend that a council looking to embark on a project of this kind should:

* Get a commitment for dedicated resources and ensure that the project itself carries authority – that the team can insist that others engage with it as necessary;
* Involve IT personnel earlier in the scoping of the project to make it easier to incorporate integrations such as to SSO and HRMS;
* Focus on change management, and particular the cultural side of this piece;
* Ensure that there is continuity – a dedicated project manager and key people deployed for the duration would help with consistency in messaging between the team and depots;
* Tablets are critical but there was no plan to provide them. It would be better if the project had included an infrastructure acquisition piece or wait for acquisition of resources before deployment.

**LG ONLINE OUTDOORS – PROPOSED PROJECT PLAN**

**Key Benefits and Goals:**

The primary goal for this project is to get outdoor and mobile workers more engaged with the IT

systems with a focus on learning so that Councils are able to offer e-learning to outdoor workers and

mobile workers more consistently.

To accomplish this goal, council will require stakeholder buy-in to ensure the consistency of

resources available throughout the course of this project.

A major benefit for participating in this project would be a rare opportunity to get support from our

colleagues from other participating councils through the LG Online Outdoors users group.

**Month 1**

* Introductory Webinar: This will be an introductory discussion about the project and a discussion around the identification of key resources that will need to be committed and how to accomplish manager and stakeholder buy-in, in order to get those resources committed.
We will also cover the project scope, milestones, intended deliverables and lay down a framework for how the project will work. We will talk about the level of participation required to give this project the best chance for success.
Success KPIs: In this webinar, we will engage a group discussion around “Project success” and what that means to each participating council and what KPIs need to accomplished at the end of this project to justify the broader implementation of this project.
We will provide a “Success KPIs” form for each participating Council to fill out and share with the group (if they are comfortable doing so) so that all participating councils are able to view each others’ success KPIs. Throughout the course of the project, this will provide a valuable tool to track milestones and progress levels.
* There will be a discussion around the “first steps”:
(a) Identifying what resources will be required to ensure success.
(b) Getting those resources allocated.
(c) Ensuring commitment to the project that enables councils to see it through to completion.
(d) Having a clear statement that defines what the benefits will be for Council.
(e) Creating a realistic plan which participants will work on in preparation for the next

 meeting on month 2.

* Pro-forma material to be provided at Month 1: At the end of the meeting, we will provide pro-forma material to assist councils to accomplish stakeholder buy-in and attaining committed resources.
This will include a pro-forma Business case to assist in getting resources allocated and a “Manager Survey” which can be used to get feedback from Managers in support of this project.
* Introduction to the “LG Online Outdoors” portal:
We will walk you through our custom portal for this project and walk you through it and set you up with an account.
The portal, exclusive to participating councils, will be a space where we will share all our resources designed at assisting participating councils with their project goals and offer the use of a forum for councils who wish to ask questions to us and the group at large to engage group conversations throughout the project and beyond.
The portal will also be the place to access recordings of webinars conducted.

**Month 2**

* In month 2, we revisit the case study this project was originally based on.

In our case study, one of our clients, a local council in Queensland, accomplished an extraordinary level of IT systems induction for their mobile and outdoor workers by involving their local municipal library staff to aid in digital literacy training for the outdoor workers.

Library staff typically bring high levels of educational experience and is also a group that traditionally tends to become isolated from other staff, and this would be a great way to empower them and help them feel more involved.

Following the example of the council in Queensland, Month 2 will involve a comprehensive look at the local Municipal library for each participating Council and a discussion around the most effective way to get their library staff involved.
We will now comprehensively map out the involvement for the Municipal library staff.
(The library will essentially serve as a kiosk for supporting mobile and outdoor workers for the dissemination and delivery of digital literacy training for mobile and outdoor staff.)

* Month 2 Webinar:
The webinar will kick off with a forum discussion around how the Business case to get resources committed to this project is going for each participant. (This will be a valuable platform for each participating council to get feedback from their counterparts).
This will be followed by a presentation on how best to get the Municipal library staff involved and mapping out their level of involvement.
The session will end with a group Q&A session.
* Resources we will provide:

At the end of the webinar, we will disseminate resources that participating councils can share with their Library staff for training and coaching purposes. The resources will focus on the tools and techniques designed to train people with poor IT literacy on how to use council’s IT systems.

**Month 3:**

* In month 3, participating councils will be given access to a whole range of eLearning resources and information related to the training, onboarding and provision of continued L&D support to their staff, both outdoor and mobile workers and also for their internal staff who are keen to develop their ICT skills further.

The objective behind the provision of these resources through the LG Online Outdoors portal is to provide participating councils with some free eLearning courses which will assist with the project.

In month 3, we also begin engaging with Managers and supervisors.

Provided the COVID 19 lockdown restrictions allow for this, we would also want to visit participating councils and assist project participants in running training workshops for their managers and supervisors.

Of course, If we are not able to physically visit councils, we would run these sessions virtually to assist participants in running webinars of their own for their managers and supervisors. If possible, we would be happy to run these webinars ourselves to assist all participants.

* Month 3 Webinar:
Month 3 Webinar will kick off with a group discussion around how the experience of participating Councils to date on mapping out Library staff involvement and associated feedback around benefits and challenges to date.
This will be followed by a presentation on how best to involve managers and supervisors over the subsequent month and tips and tricks around increasing levels of engagement and making the process fun and collaborative.
The session will end with a group Q&A.
* Resources we will provide:
Resources provided for Month 3 will be a series of free eLearning courses (mentioned above) to assist participating councils with this project.

**Month 4**

Month 4 will focus on Change Management.

At this stage in the project, we would have all covered a substantial amount of discourse and

research around what changes will need to take place to ensure project success.

In month 4, Global vision will provide all participating councils with a Document that will provide a

roadmap for a Change management plan relevant to this project.

This document will be shared via the LG Online Outdoors portal, free of charge to all participants.

Month 4 webinar:

Like previous months, the webinar will commence with a group discussion around the previous

month’s goals. The previous month’s goal in this instance covered further involvement with

managers and supervisors regarding this project through the use of a structured workshops.

At the start of the webinar, we will invite participating councils to briefly discuss their experience

with the process and what challenges were faced.

Shortly after the discussion, there will be a presentation on the Change Management plan discussed

above. We will cover what this plan could potentially look like and how best to begin the process of

getting it adopted.

The session will end with a Q&A component.

Resources we will provide:

A “Change Management Plan” document prepared by Global Vision to assist with the project’s next phase.

**Month 5:**

In month 5, we will begin the process of assisting participating councils with starting to carry out the

change management plan discussed and documented in month 4 to a pilot group.

We will discuss the actual implementation of this Change Management Plan and how to roll it out to

a trial/pilot group and testing the outcome of this change management in a controlled environment.

As this process involves collecting tangible results and metrics in support of this project, the

resources we will disseminate in month 5 will be a series of feedback surveys aimed at extracting

project results for this pilot group to provide tangible evidence of success.

We will consult with participating councils to help aid in the formation of a proposed pilot group. We

will also discuss the nature of results and metrics we would need to record that would provide

adequate proof that the project, if rolled out on a bigger scale would have the likelihood of attaining

desired project outcomes.

Month 5 Webinar:

The webinar for Month 5 will commence a discussion around the collective thoughts of all

participating councils on the viability of the change management plan proposed in Month 4, and this

will be an open discussion to further identify any resonating concerns or additional feedback.

This will be followed by a presentation covering the specifics of implementing the proposed change

management plan to a small pilot group and the logistics of extracting the required raw

data at the end in support of rolling out the change management plan to a wider audience.

There will be a group Q&A at the end of the session to help clarify the processes that the

participating councils will need to undertake in order to implement this proposed changed

management plan.

Resources we will provide:

A series of feedback surveys and data recording mechanisms to assist in extracting the required raw

data from the pilot group to support the validity of rolling out the change management plan to a

wider audience. (And strategic recommendations on how to use these tools).

**Month 6:**

By Month 6, our goal for this project, is to have assisted all participating councils to reach a stage

where they are confident with rolling out the change management plan to the wider intended

audience. And that they have the necessary approvals (if applicable) from key stakeholders to do so.

Month 6 Webinar:

Month 6 webinar will commence with a broad group discussion, where we will go around the group

one at a time and allow each participant to discuss the outcome of the Change Management plan to

a small pilot group discussed in month 5.

This will be followed by a presentation focusing on how to implement a similar change management

plan for the relevant audience Council wide.

At the end of the presentation, we would like to encourage participating councils to engage in a

group discussion around how they would like to approach the change management plan and bounce

ideas off each other in terms of where to begin and how to proceed.

**Month 7:**

Month 7 is “Celebration Month”.

In month 7, we will invite each valued participant who has been a part of this project to deliver a 10

minute presentation on the project outcome. What lessons they had learnt in hindsight and their

feedback on their experience to date.

At the end of this session we will issue each participating council with a Certificate of Completion in

honour of their bold undertaking and for having tried something truly innovative to help empower,

include, and bring together their outdoor and mobile workers into the fold during what can most

easily be described as challenging times.

**CONCLUSION**

From our collective conversations with councils across the country and Victoria in particular, it is

apparent that COVID 19 lockdown restrictions have caused a lot of councils to place a high priority

on keeping outdoor and mobile workers connected.

A lack of face to face training and support in particular has created a greater need for all staff

members, especially outdoor and mobile workers to gain access to learning resources while we all

wait for things to return to normal and resume BAU activities.

It is our hope that connecting these two factions of workers – municipal library staff and outdoor

and mobile workers to collaborate on this project with the support of Councils, managers and

supervisors will be an effective way to maximise productivity during patches of inevitable downtime.

Furthermore, this project will offer a unique collaborative environment where participating councils

can come together and engage a collective dialogue and be able to share ideas and strategies

around how best to navigate these unprecedented waters.