Scenario-Based Course With Self-Paced Exploration

Customer Profile

The American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI) has been providing training for the hospitality industry since 1953. AHLEI delivers its expertise around the globe across Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America through affiliates and Hospitality Education Program (HEP) license agreements.

Supported by industry experts, it provides quality education, training and professional certification. Additionally, it also certifies and validates competencies for 35 positions in the hospitality industry.

Client Speak

"We are extremely impressed with Upside Learning's instructional designing approach, the quality of the graphics and the project management process. The overall experience of working with them has been impressive."

Robert L. Steele, III
CHA, President and COO, AHLA

Business Needs

This project was commissioned as an interactive eLearning version of AHLEIs' previous online content on Front Office Operations Management. The existing online content, deployed on the institute's LMS, was linear and completely text based,

supported by case studies with subjective questions. AHLEI was looking for a more engaging repackaging of the content.

The target audience for this program consisted of hospitality industry employees who either had been promoted to or were preparing for the role of Front Office Manager.

The challenges in developing an engaging course were several:

- The content was primarily factual – which meant that it would be needed to be presented directly, as is. This restricted the use of audio (since audio is indicated more when there are concepts to be explained). Animations would also have limited use. Scenarios would be used more as illustrations and stories, rather than as decision-making environments.
- The total content to be covered was spread over 10 modules. This meant that learner engagement would be needed to be maintained over a total seat time of approximately 10 hours.
- The interface was to be 800 x 600 pixels, which meant that there was a limited area for content presentation.

The Solution

Creating an environment that mimics the actual surroundings that learners will be dealing with, and using characters and situations that reflect reality, creates a high degree of engagement and gives context to what is being learnt. Using this principle, Upside Learning developed a solution that overcame the inherent challenges of the project.

The scenario-based course comprised a fictitious hotel, presented to the learner for exploration. This formed the base for all 10 modules. Depending on the topic for each module, different areas of the hotel were made accessible. In each area, content was presented either through hotel staff dealing with different situations and interacting with guests; or through tools and documents used for their daily work. Where needed, inline questions were built in to check the learner's understanding of the topic.

Graphically, the course was designed to reflect realism in its characters and environment. The scenarios, with realistic conversations, in terms of dialogues as well as the voiceovers, made the course very engaging, while the free exploration approach helped remove the restrictions of a linear course. Infographic-style visuals and animations for concepts ensured that the learner took away a complete picture of what had been taught. Wherever needed, plain text was presented for the learner to read through at his/her own pace, without audio.

Interactivities were used for content presentation, and in two specific modules, for applying hotel industry related calculations.

To counter the problem of the restricted content presentation due to the player, lean visuals were used.

Highlights

- Non-linear navigation which allows self-paced exploration
- Graphically realistic characters and environment
- Engaging, realistic scenarios
- Judicious mix of infographic-style visuals and animations, and plain text without audio