

Case History: Riverside County Human Resources

TrainingPartner helps Riverside County's HR Department Extend its Reach to Improve County Services.

Sector:	Government
Geographic Scope:	Regional/ County
Employees:	18,000
TrainingPartner implemented:	2007
Learner Licensing:	22,000
Administrator Licensing:	10



The County of Riverside in California is one of the most populous counties in the United States. Ranked 11th in population size in the country and fourth in the state, it has more than 2,000,000 residents.

Riverside County's Human Resources Department is responsible for 18,000 full-time, part-time and temporary employees spread throughout 50 different departments and agencies. The department's mission is to strategically partner with county departments to effectively attract, retain, develop, nurture, compensate, manage and lead a world-class workforce.

To accomplish this mission, Riverside's HR department has a number of divisions, programs and systems in place. One of these systems is the TrainingPartner™ Learning Management System, purchased from GeoMetrix Data Systems.

TrainingPartner at Riverside County

TrainingPartner was purchased by the HR department to centralize and administer training records, which previously had been maintained by individual departments. "The initial goal was centralization of training records," noted one county employee. "Over time other benefits were recognized." Some of these benefits included automating and streamlining the registration process so that employees could self-register for training. The system also offered a more efficient and cost effective way to deliver training using online, blended learning and document distribution.

As with most government agencies, the county must ensure that its employees complete training on specific topics such as harassment prevention, information security and safety. Some of this training is required by law and some is mandated by the County Board of Supervisors. "The County also provides a large offering of courses and development programs for executive leadership, managers, supervisors, and all employees to enhance their effectiveness in their respective roles. Additionally, most employees are required to take additional courses related to a role or professional licensure."

The TrainingPartner Learning Management System, implemented in 2007, provided a centralized database and a county-wide learning administration system to ensure that employee learning records were comprehensive and easily accessible.

Without a centralized system of administration, accounting for the training records of 18,000 employees was a huge job. "Databases and spreadsheets had been historically housed separately by each department," observed county employees.

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"As a result, information related to compliance had been fragmented, and accurate reporting had been difficult." Ensuring compliance to standards for the county was a challenge because there was no consolidated system of notifying employees or tracking completion.

Personnel in the HR department saw an opportunity with TrainingPartner to not only reduce the county's liability in terms of maintaining compliancy rates, but also to expand the outreach of their programs.

Center for Government Excellence

The Center for Government Excellence (CGE), a division of the HR Department, seized the opportunity and has taken the LMS one step further. CGE is "leveraging this powerful tool in unique ways to help Riverside County departments save valuable time and money," said staff. And the benefits have far exceeded expectations.

"The Learning Management System has dramatically improved our ability to coordinate the County's talent. It is a powerful tool that has been able to eliminate waste and duplication, improve accuracy, reduce the cost of delivering training, and improve accessibility and compliance rates."

County HR staff asserted that before TrainingPartner, obtaining accurate training records and compliance reports for employees was nearly impossible. Records for a single employee may have been spread across dozens of departments. "Having a cohesive system allows us to ensure adequate training and mitigate potential risks and liabilities to the organization. The Center for Government Excellence is maximizing the use of the Learning Management System in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness with dramatic results."

Those results include a reduction of response times from days to hours on some employee claims due to improved data access. The county projects that online training access provides a savings of 25,650 hours in avoided travel time and productivity loss — the equivalent of 12 full-time employees. Compliance for one mandated training course increased to nearly 100%, mitigating risk and liability for the county.

"The LMS has provided Riverside County department heads with unprecedented online access to employee learning data and compliance reports for their departments."

TrainingPartner's software architecture is compatible with all information technology environments and has the ability to manage learning for a diverse range of county operations and applications. "The LMS is designed to track all county employee training and/or competency development including college coursework, degrees, continuing education units, and any other internal or external development."

TrainingPartner can be populated with individual learning plans specific to each job role or job classification. "Such learning plans might include mandated courses, continuing education unit courses (required for maintaining a license or certification), as well as courses recommended by a supervisor as part of a work performance management program. Deadlines for completion and/or required updates can be set in the system with automatic notification and reminders."

Notifications and Real-time Information

TrainingPartner is configured to notify learners when opportunities are available, when deadlines are approaching for required training, or when requirements have changed; thus, reducing the amount of manual follow up needed by training coordinators and/or supervisors.

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"The LMS currently contains the only comprehensive database of county employee email addresses linked to employee data, which is query-able by any of the data fields contained in PeopleSoft... This has allowed CGE to send time-sensitive notifications via email to employees in specific union groups, job classifications, or work locations.

CGE has leveraged this function to notify all staff members working at specific locations that Occupational Health was providing H1N1 flu shots at that location. The database is also used to help the county-owned Exclusive Care Health Plan to provide real time information, newsletters and other updates

- ✓ provide easy access to notification and completion reports "to reduce risk and liability now, and make potential future claims more defensible"
- ✓ increase completion rates using automated notifications and reminders

Practical Applications

One of the big advantages of TrainingPartner over other learning management systems is its built-in Online Designer. This tool lets non-Web designers modify or create Web pages quickly and easily using a library of components. These Web pages can be used to extend the LMS's reach.



to its approximately 8,000 plan members via e-mail, rather than postal mail, saving valuable time and money."

Electronic Document Distribution

Electronic document distribution and verification is another benefit of TrainingPartner for the county. "CGE is now utilizing the LMS to electronically distribute, verify, and track employee receipt and understanding of policies and other critical information countywide. Paper distribution is costly, unreliable and tracking is cumbersome." County employees assert that electronic distribution provides a range of benefits including:

- ✓ eliminating printing costs
- ✓ eliminating the labor required to collect and file forms
- ✓ verify employee understanding of information through testing, "which can reduce costly mistakes and thus, potentially avoid litigation especially in high risk environments like the County Hospital or Sheriff's Departments"

As a result, each county department can maintain its own individual identity through portals and branding (with different logos, fonts and colors). The county also utilized this capability to create its own Wellness Program. CGE used TrainingPartner to launch a website, provide online wellness classes and manage program data. "This was accomplished within weeks: much more rapidly than anticipated through utilization of the LMS infrastructure."

Another example of how several of TrainingPartner's benefits came together for one goal is with a conflict of interest form. CGE utilized the LMS to assist the County Clerk of the Board (COB) in the notification of staff and distribution of this California Fair Political Practices reporting form. "Employee learning plans were populated with the form requirements by classification based on the county codes. Notifications and reminders were sent from the COB through the LMS automatically to only those applicable employees.

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Utilizing the LMS system in this manner not only saved the COB hundreds of staff hours (versus their past practice), but also improved the accuracy and timeliness of annual submittals. In the future, we anticipate it will significantly improve access to the completion data and reports since tracking of this information is currently done by hand."

Achievement Award

In 2010 Riverside County received an Achievement Award for its use of TrainingPartner from The National Association of Counties (NACo). NACo is a national member-driven association that provides essential services to 3,068 counties in the U.S.A. NACo represents 3/4 of all U.S. counties and over 85% of the nation's population. NACo's annual Achievement Awards recognizes innovative county government programs. This is a non-competitive awards program and each entry is judged on its own merits. CGE's Achievement Award was given for an application called: The Center for Government Excellence Leverages Learning Management System to Improve County Service.

A True Partnership

Riverside County HR staff members say that one of their biggest challenges with the implementation of TrainingPartner was obtaining buy-in from departments to fully centralize all training records. HR had to assure department managers and training coordinators that streamlining work process was in their favor and would free up staff to do more relevant work.

Luckily, TrainingPartner not only lived up to expectations, but exceeded them. An IT staff member stated that TrainingPartner's "data base structure and design is elegant" and that it "was easy to learn and understand." A senior HR clerk liked "the simplicity of the system compared to the previous program used." She also liked TrainingPartner's ability to integrate with WebEx to deliver online training.

A principal HR analyst at the county reported that TrainingPartner had streamlined operations and procedures and "reduced the amount of clerical staff utilized pre-LMS to process enrollments.

She continued, "The GeoMetrix TrainingPartner client software product was designed in a way that made the implementation process a bit easier to understand how the system works, and the tools are easily configurable and not too complex like other systems I've worked with. The design also includes certain safeguards to prevent major loss of data in the event the end user deleted data; data can easily be retrieved."

When asked about the experience of working with GeoMetrix, the same analyst reported that she was pleased with the expertise level of staff.

"They've demonstrated for me competence in their areas, and what I like most is they anticipate future client needs. Another important note is that if necessary, they've sought out appropriate expertise and/or have been open to learning from us/their clients, etc."

The analyst identified the relationship between the County of Riverside and GeoMetrix Data Systems as a "true partnership."

For more information about the County of Riverside visit: www.countyofriverside.us

For more information about Riverside County Human Resources Department visit: www.rc-hr.com

For more information about TrainingPartner visit: www.trainingpartner.com