

A&L Goodbody



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Moodle proves to be an effective solution for A&L Goodbody's Trainee Recruitment Process.

THE BUSINESS PROBLEM

A&L Goodbody is Ireland's premier law Firm, having recently been named 'Law Firm of The Year' for the fifth consecutive year at the Who's Who legal awards. Such accolades make the Firm a popular choice for law students seeking traineeships, a prerequisite in Ireland for those who want to become solicitors. The solicitor application and assessment process is detailed and involves a number of key stakeholders in the Firm. Previously, each applicant applied by submitting a hand-written Application Form downloaded from a PDF on the Firm's website. The information was then collated manually by an administration team and distributed to the stakeholders for review and interview selection. This process became increasingly cumbersome and time consuming as the number of applicants increased. A more efficient process was required.

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THE SOLUTION

A&L Goodbody investigated an online solution in 2007 in order to streamline the recruitment process and cut down on administrative work. Hazel Mullan, Assistant Director of Training and the elearning project manager at the Firm, had previous experience with Moodle while studying for her Masters in Training & Education Management in Dublin City University and working as a lecturer. Hazel had already successfully piloted Moodle as a Learning Management System within the Firm and thought it might be a good option for the recruitment process, given its extensive functionality.

"We looked at a number of off-the-shelf commercial packages", commented Hazel Mullan, "However we were attracted to Moodle as we could heavily customise it to suit our specific requirements. The fact that we could maintain control of the software and manage the site ourselves proved very attractive".

The solution was a customised version of existing activities within Moodle, namely the questionnaire, quiz and reporting modules. A&L wanted potential trainees to initially fill out personal details in the questionnaire module. From there they would be directed to a Moodle quiz to test key competencies via an online assessment and then back to the questionnaire to complete and submit the form. The administration team had specific reporting requirements for selection and assessment purposes.



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SERVICE PARTNERS—WHY ENOVATION?

The uniqueness, and in some ways, complexity of the project meant that A&L were keen to engage with a service partner that had extensive knowledge of Moodle to enable them to bring the project to a successful completion. Enovation not only had the Moodle knowledge and experience that A&L were looking for, but also a proven reputation in the legal sector with their long term customer, The Law Society of Ireland.

Key development work included removing all the navigation options from the site. This locked down the site and steered applicants, 'with a heavy hand' through the application process to completion whilst removing any possibility of browsing within the site. The main objective was to make the completion of the Application Form a seamless process between the Moodle activities and the user login profile. The site was also branded using the Firm's logo. Enovation worked with A&L to achieve this.

"I have nothing but the highest praise for Enovation Solutions," said Mullan. "They accommodated us in every way during the whole development process. We were completely satisfied with their services."

WHY CHOOSE MOODLE?

The Firm chose Moodle for a number of reasons:

- The previous success of Moodle as a learning management system within the Firm.
- It was easy to customise. It could accommodate the Firm's specific requirements—commercial off-the-shelf solutions allowed much less flexibility and control.
- It is easy to use. Through her knowledge of Moodle, Hazel was confident that applicants and those processing the Application Forms would find it easy to use and navigate.
- From a cost benefit point of view it was the best option for the Firm.
- Applicants had more control of the process. They could log in and out, completing their Application Form in different sections until they were happy to submit it.
- It enabled the integration of an online assessment as part of the Application process.
- It provides excellent back-end processing facilities and reporting features.
- Law Students are already familiar with the software as it used in Universities in Ireland and the Law Society of Ireland.



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WAS THE PROJECT A SUCCESS?

A&L Goodbody successfully piloted the application process with a number of existing trainees in early 2008 and, based on positive feedback, officially launched the system in September 2008.

Hazel continued: *“Moodle has proved to be a very effective solution for a very important process. Applying for a traineeship is a daunting and intense process for applicants and we wanted to provide them with a user-friendly online experience which not only improved the process, but gave applicants more control over the process. Using Moodle involved some degree of risk as it hadn't been used for this purpose before but it worked and it has been a resounding success.”*

The value of Elearning, including A&L Goodbody's use of Moodle, has been recognised with the following nominations and awards:

- A&L were nominated for the 'Best Commercial Initiative Under 1000 Employees' in the 2009 UK Training Journal Awards for ALG elearning
- A&L Learning & Development won an 'outstanding achievement' award at the IITD National Training Awards for the second year in a row 2008 & 2009
- A&L elearning receives 'highly recommended' commendation for the IITD Pearse Walsh Award 2009
- A&L elearning won second place in the Managing Partner Forum Awards: 'Best use of Technology' 2008

BENEFITS GAINED

- A&L Goodbody's online Application Form site hosts several different types of Application Forms seamlessly and the application process is completely automated and streamlined.
- The administration time associated with the recruitment process has been greatly reduced.
- Applicants now experience a much more user-friendly and cutting edge application process.
- The reporting features, such as those on the Moodle quiz, give key stakeholders a breadth of information which benefits the selection process and was previously unavailable.
- Applicants can print submitted Application Forms from their own computers for their records. An html editing box allows applicants to edit their applications (e.g. Spell check) before submitting them.
- Completed applications can be emailed between stakeholders.
- The administration team can produce crucial reports from every data field in the system for the purposes of mail merges and trainee application follow ups.

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LESSONS LEARNED: ADVICE FOR FUTURE BUSINESS

Hazel Mullan:

“We used Moodle in a way that it had never been used before. We came at Moodle from a different angle and harnessed its unique functionality to meet our requirements.

Release the potential; throw away the box!”

The screenshot shows a Moodle course page for 'All Application Forms'. The page is titled 'A&L Goodbody' and includes a navigation menu with items like 'Summer Intern Application Form 2011', 'Northern Ireland Trainee Solicitor Application Form 2010', and 'Trainee Solicitor'. A 'Turn editing on' button is visible. The main content area displays a 'ROI Trainee Solicitor Online Application Form' with a 'Save' and 'Next Page' button. The form content includes the A&L Goodbody logo and a welcome message: 'Welcome to the A&L Goodbody Online Trainee Application Process 2010. We hope you have found the Trainee section of our website interesting and informative. Please ensure you read the instructions for filling out the Online Application Form, which are posted on our website, before commencing completion of your Application Form. The closing date for the Online Trainee Application Form is 5:30 pm, Friday, 29 October 2010. Application Forms will not be accepted after this time. Once you submit your Online Trainee Application Form, a message will appear on screen, confirming that your Application Form has been received. We invite you to submit your completed Application Form at your earliest convenience.' Below the message is a 'Guidelines for completion' section.