Delivering Data Driven Results

Metro Continuing Education (Metro), the continuing education unit of Edmonton Public Schools, processes over 20,000 registrations per year. Located in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, Edmonton Public Schools is one of the largest school districts in Canada serving over 80,000 students per year. Metro offers open enrollment classes and online classes for the general public and customized contract training courses for local businesses. Metro is a cost-recovery unit and is expected to collect enough revenue to cover the expenses of all three of its units: English Language Training, Academic High School credit and non-credit classes and Adult Continuing Education.

Business Needs

In 2006, Metro began to work with Learning Resources Network (LERN) and used the various tools LERN offers to implement best practices to improve their continuing education operation. At the same time, Metro began looking at replacing the in-house online registration system and was introduced to Augusoft and Lumens at the LERN Conference.

“We were very excited about Lumens when we first saw it, particularly when we learned that Lumens was built with LERN best practices, as that was extremely important to us,” said Kevin Stevenson, Director of Metro Continuing Education. “After getting to know Augusoft a little better, we felt they were a very progressive company.”

After overcoming concerns of data storage and reluctance by some staff to switch from the old system, the decision was made to purchase Lumens. In March 2009, implementation and training started, and Metro went live with Lumens that November with our data being securely stored on Canadian soil.

Online Student Self-Registration

Metro’s online registration has increased significantly with Lumens. Before Lumens, Metro’s online registration was responsible for 20-25 percent of all registrations. After Lumens, online registration has continually improved each month and increased to 45 percent. Metro’s class cancellation rate has dropped from approximately 35-40 percent to eight percent since implementing Lumens and adopting many of LERN’s best practices. The

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average class size before Lumens was 11, and it now is 17.

“Lumens has been a big time saver for our staff when it comes to registration,” said Maria Deacon, Business Manager, Metro Continuing Education. “Prior to Lumens, we had to print out registrations and put information in the mail to confirm a student’s class. This is now all done automatically through Lumens.”

Lumens Reporting Engine
Lumens provides Metro the ability to pull all kinds of data and create customized reports to track the success of their program. “I’m always looking to make data driven decisions based on LERN best practices. I’ve found the Lumens reports very useful in allowing us to do this,” said Deacon. “Before Lumens we tried to track this data using Excel spreadsheets. This process was very onerous and we never had up-to-date information.”

Using the Registration Analysis Report in Lumens, Metro has been able to better identify its best customers based on characteristics such as age, location, and current and past spending habits. This has helped Metro to develop more targeted marketing strategies that reach new customers with similar characteristics. “Using Lumens custom reports, we were able to determine that our top 10 markets — based on postal codes — generated 47 percent of our registrations,” said Tiffany Teslyk, Marketing Consultant, Metro Continuing Education. “We then leveraged this data in planning future catalog distribution. By targeting our top markets, we were able reduce the number of catalogs we sent out without seeing any decline in registrations.”

Targeted emails are also used to promote next-level class offerings by using a Lumens Class Information report to identify classes with registrations below the set go number. This has helped to reduce class cancellations, increase ROI and repeat rates.

“Overall, Lumens allows our marketing team to customize reports and obtain data that goes beyond demographics. This includes customer spending habits and detailed class information that is useful for marketing planning and promotions,” said Teslyk.

Class Profitability: Go/No Go
Before Lumens, Metro used an excel spreadsheet to get a rough estimate of the minimum number of customers needed to make a class profitable. With Lumens, Metro can program in instructor costs, marketing costs and other supply costs to figure out the total expenses each class will incur.

“Lumens allows us to better analyze our revenue and costs,” said Christine Murphy, Program Advisor, Metro Continuing Education. “We’re now able to pull total instructor earnings, class performance scores and other costs associated with a class which helps us to determine if we will run it again or not.”

Conclusion
“‘What gets measured gets results’ (Michael Schmoker). We’re really glad we chose Lumens, because there is a lot we can measure and it has helped us get results by becoming more profitable and helping us follow the LERN best practices,” said Stevenson. “We are extremely data driven, and that is important in any learning organization.”