

PROFESSIONAL SOLUTIONS

Association of Professionals in Business Management

Goals

Provide a robust self-study tool capable of housing a large amount of core content material

Increase success rate of certification candidates

Alleviate high cost of shipping materials

Challenges

Integration of academic design into specific needs of corporate training arena

Create one platform across several content-rich course offerings

Solution

MyPearsonBook online learning system, Pearson content, and customized media supplements

Results

A Pearson-supported, cost-effective, flexible, and scalable online course curriculum

The ability to serve more degree and certification candidates than ever before

Rave reviews: more than 90 percent of current candidates would recommend APBM's online system to a colleague

The Association of Professionals in Business Management (APBM) knows how to get ahead in business. Launched in 2000, APBM offers a standardized, cost-effective, and time-efficient process for becoming certified in business management from any location around the globe. Via a rigorous framework of evaluation across 10 functional areas of management, APBM's two flagship certifications—Certified Associate Business Manager (CABM) and Certified Business Manager (CBM)—are fast becoming today's global standards for management competency.

APBM prides itself on two things: a comprehensive body of knowledge in the field of business management and the ability to make that knowledge accessible to all individuals regardless of professional background, level of education, or geographic location. In 2007, upon close examination of its content delivery model, Devi Vallabhaneni, chief executive officer, determined that the means of delivery could be better and that technology was the means whereby it would happen.

Vallabhaneni sought a partner with (1) the proven skills to handle innovative and large-scale instructional design and (2) the ability to fully understand and incorporate such design into the unique needs of the corporate training arena. "Most of our audience are full-time professionals," she says. "Their time is valuable. They need content that offers many resources, from which they can pick and choose only those they need. Most of all, they need resources that are convenient and easy to access."

The challenge was monumental: create one platform for a tremendous amount of content (the CABM certification alone comprised 1,800 pages of text and 2,000 practice questions) and develop a delivery process that was scalable and accessible to all. "Our target market is huge: accounting managers, marketing managers, finance managers, human resources managers, information technology managers, and those who need to know about all of a company's functions to do their job well, anywhere in the world," says Vallabhaneni. "Only Pearson Learning Solutions could fulfill all of our requirements. Anyone can publish a book, but only Pearson could successfully span the depth and breadth of both its own industry and ours."

A team comprising members of both Pearson and APBM started work in 2007, committed to launching the best product possible the first time around. "It was a very active two years—starting with focus groups on exactly how our exam candidates study, so as to ensure that every possible option was presented to facilitate their success," says Vallabhaneni.

Using Pearson's proven myPearson eBook platform as its foundation, the team created an e-learning system for APBM that includes everything that learners of all learning styles could possibly need: eBooks, podcasts, lecture notes, videos, interactive flash cards, unlimited quizzing, and onetime pre- and posttests accessed via one convenient Web portal. Intuitive navigation enables students to select and focus on what their individualized assessment indicates they need to learn. Plus the entire text is searchable and can be bookmarked, highlighted, and marked up with the student's own notes.

"Pearson never lost sight of the specific needs of [APBM's] audience," says Vallabhaneni. "For nonnative English-speaking students, Pearson placed content into podcasts and videos, which feature the option to slow down content and repeat it. And for those traveling, working full-time, or living anywhere around the world, technical support is available 24 hours a day."

APBM's fully online-delivered courses launched in June 2009. "It was worth the wait," says Vallabhaneni. "Pearson delivered—based on our curriculum and according to every one of our requirements—an online learning system that takes students from the day they register to the day they take the exam and earn their credentials. They produced beyond our expectations."

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