LEARNING
that engages.

UIF Transforms Learning & Onboarding
with **Absorb LMS**

Challenge

The University of Illinois Foundation (UIF) is an independent
not-for-profit corporation that serves as the official
fundraising and private gift-receiving agency of the University
of Illinois. Securing over $4.3 billion in donations since it was
founded in 1935, UIF runs a highly successful fundraising
organization. Traditionally, all training at UIF has been done
in-person, but scheduling training across the university's
three campuses—each located several hours drive from the
next—had become increasingly challenging. Mandatory
compliance and database security training was offered just
once every month or two, and if new hires were unable to
attend, they'd be left sitting idle, unable to start work until
first completing their in-person training.

Ginny Schlorff, UIF Training Designer, Learning and
Development, saw the challenge as an opportunity to
adapt the foundation's training for the modern learner by
implementing an LMS. "With the distance, our needs would've
been better met by online training," she says, "we had
outgrown being able to track and do everything in person."

Having overseen LMS implementation and management
at two previous organizations, Ginny understood how an
LMS could transform staff perceptions of learning and boost
learning material engagement. "When I arrived, we had

instructor-led training and training videos—but no way of tracking who watched them. No LMS at all. I knew if we found the right LMS, it'd change our entire approach to training."

Solution

After identifying the needed features and functions, UIF shortlisted four options. On paper, any of them would work, but Ginny's previous experience told her otherwise. "You have to find the differences. On the surface, it seemed they could all do what we needed. We were looking for what set each one apart." That's when Absorb became the obvious choice. "First of all, our salesperson was fabulous! She got back to us, but didn't harass us. When you're first getting to know a company, having your salesperson be responsive is so important. You'd think they'd all be, but they weren't. It really gives you a sense of what the customer service will be like–which for Absorb was very accurate."

Recognizing the connection between a seamless user experience—for both learners and admins—and increased engagement, UIF factored it in from the start. Working with the Absorb team, it set up single sign-on for uninterrupted navigation between learning materials and internal software. UIF also gave its LMS a makeover, customizing the look, feel—and even the name. "Our name for it internally is iLearn Advancement." Ginny explains, "We designed it to reflect our brand from the beginning, and that was very important for us to be able to do." Beyond aesthetics, UIF also uses assessments and tests within its training for an additional boost in engagement and improved comprehension.

Regarding support, Ginny insists there's rarely a need, saying "it's pretty trouble-free. It's so intuitive and easy to use that we don't really get questions from people." She adds that on the rare occasion that has contacted support, "we get someone that clearly knows the product. I've been really impressed. And they're great about following up to make sure that the issue was fully resolved."

Results

Training at UIF has radically changed since implementing Absorb just over a year ago. To date, UIF has added 270 documents and resources as well as 72 courses and training videos to its LMS, including the required compliance and security training that had previously been offered just once every month or two. In fact, just by moving those mandatory in-person training courses to iLearn, UIF has guaranteed a 100% adoption rate for new employees while simultaneously ensuring they're familiar with how to access other valuable materials.

iLearn's popularity has been steadily increasing among existing employees. In its first year, UIF saw a whopping 3,390 course and curricula enrollments with a 78% completion or in-progress rate. Ginny credits an unexpected benefit with having helped achieve such high engagement: improved communication. "It really changed things. We used to send enrollment emails, but that was it. Now we can communicate from within the courses, send information about session changes and even friendly reminders. Instructors can share materials and receive updates about progress and completion rates. It's honestly fabulous."

With the honeymoon over, UIF is still happy with its decision. "It's easy to say you're happy in the beginning, but when you can say it a year later, I'd say that speaks

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>
> — University of Illinois Foundation

for itself." In fact, according to Ginny, the momentum's still growing: "It's very well adopted. We hear a lot of positive comments. Departments that still do in-person training want to create online courses." She continues "Everyone wants all their training on Absorb."

About the University of Ilinois Foundation

Established in 1935, the University of Illinois Foundation is an independent not-for-profit corporation responsible for raising and administering private gifts that advance the University of Illinois, a world-class public research university system, and its excellence in teaching, research, public service, and economic development.

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