

LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Transcript #15 *Interview with Victor Dacey*

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Mary Kay Lofurno: Welcome to the next edition of the [SyberWorks LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Series](#), where we look at real-world [LMS \(Learning Management System\)](#) implementations and e-learning program rollouts. SyberWorks specializes in custom e-learning solutions, [learning management systems](#), and e-learning development for corporations, governments, and non-profit institutions. My name is Mary Kay Lofurno, and I'm the Marketing Director here at [SyberWorks](#) and your host today. In this edition, we are talking with Victor Dacey of Broker Educational Sales & Training, Inc., or B.E.S.T, about their unique use of the [SyberWorks Learning Management System](#) to sell and manage online broker training.

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Mary Kay: And now let's [talk with Victor Dacey of Broker Educational Sales & Training, Inc.](#) Good afternoon, Victor. Thanks for coming to talk with us today.

Victor Dacey: Well good afternoon, Mary Kay. And thanks for having me here today.

Mary Kay: Sure. Victor, tell us about yourself.

Victor: Well, I am in charge of the IT department here at Broker Educational Sales & Training. I've been working with Broker Educational for almost a year now. I was hired to implement their [online course content](#) for the Broker Educational Sales & Training outfit — also known as B.E.S.T.

Mary Kay: That sounds like a great acronym. Tell me about Broker Educational Sales & Training, Inc., Victor.

Victor: OK, well, Broker Educational Sales & Training is a continuing education provider for professionals in the financial, accounting, and legal industry. B.E.S.T. has been providing these services since 1999. Broker Educational Sales & Training (or B.E.S.T) is an approved continuing education provider in all 50 states.

Mary Kay: Victor, can you describe some of the business factors that drove your company to investigate [Web-based learning management systems](#) as a potential e-learning solution for your company?

Victor: Sure. Web-based learning had come to our attention as a means to apply quality [course](#) content to individuals of the insurance industry. We have had several of our partners ask if there was a way for their producers to receive continuing education credits other than by classroom or self-study correspondence courses. B.E.S.T. started investigating means to be able to accomplish this task for our partners and for individuals.

Mary Kay: Why did your company select the [SyberWorks Learning Management System](#)?

Victor: Well, after contacting several companies about their [Web-based solutions](#), I narrowed down the selection to three different companies. I started out looking at about 15.

Mary Kay: Wow.

Victor: So I weeded down based on the functionalities of all the different programs, and finally arrived at three companies that could fulfill all of our needs now and in the future.

So after discussing with each of the companies the benefits and all of their available add-ons, their [support availabilities](#), and the pricing, B.E.S.T. decided on SyberWorks as the provider for our Web-based learning concept. The most important decisions for selecting the provider were the [e-commerce](#) integration and the [course content development](#). So SyberWorks provided the course content development program (known as the [Web Author](#)) and provided B.E.S.T. with a way to create courses without having to purchase any other secondary software to create the course content.

Mary Kay: Victor, I learned that your implementation entailed some unique customization on the system that allows you to offer [online courses](#) in all 50 states. Can you tell us a little bit more about that — describe that more fully — as to how you implemented the [SyberWorks Learning Management System](#) and its [e-Commerce Registration Module](#)?

Victor: Sure. In our industry, when we provide a course, not all states offer the same credit hours for that particular course. So what I had to do was develop a way that when the individual signed up into the SyberWorks system, I assigned them to what we call their home state or resident state. As an example, if someone lived in Florida, they would have a resident license in Florida. So I had to make sure that when they logged into or signed up and registered with the [SyberWorks](#) system that they would be associated with Florida courses only. If they were associated with any other states, then a course may have seven credit hours in Florida, but it may have nine credit hours in another state. So, we didn't want to give them more credit than what we were allowed to give them by state statutes. So in looking over the registration pages and with working with some of the fine professionals at SyberWorks, we were able to establish a way to use some hidden values inside the web pages themselves, so that when the individuals clicked on the "submit" button on the registration form, they were actually put into a specific group — that group being each one of the 50 states. And then I associate each [course](#) subject matter with that particular group. So they only get Florida courses or they only get Ohio courses or Massachusetts courses. Most of these states will reciprocate their credited hours, so if you take seven hours in Florida, then you would already get seven hours, say, in Texas or New Hampshire, and be able to get the non-resident license that you need in those particular states.

Mary Kay: All right. Well, that makes a lot of sense. Who works with the [SyberWorks Learning Management System](#) at your company, besides yourself?

Victor: Besides myself, there are currently two other people that are utilizing the Learning Management Center. One of them is my marketing department. We are promoting our online system, of course. And in that respect, I have my marketing department, who will go in and make sure that all of the content that they are viewing is correct for whichever state they're getting ready to promote in. We make sure that we have all the licensing and state requirements available for the individual to look at and review if they need to. Such as, how many credit hours do they need; how many times can they repeat a course; who can they contact in case they have any questions about their license. So my marketing department goes through that front end of it. And then they'll go into the system and make sure that the [courses](#) that are available for that individual in that particular state are there. That the credited hours for that particular person are correct, so that we don't confuse or get any confusion when the actual individual comes into the system, registers, purchases and takes a course. The other person that I have is my self-study coordinator. We have a self-study department. Online [e-learning Web-based content](#) in most states is considered self study. You work by yourself. You study the material by yourself, so they consider it self study. In our particular industry, we have two types of self study. One being online, the second one being a correspondence or what we call a "book and paper" class. What an individual may do is come in, purchase the correspondence section — which means that we will get a receipt; they will get mailed a book which they can read at their leisure. We send them a paper test. They take the

test. They send it back to us. We grade it. We then send them a report as to pass or fail, plus their certificate if they did pass. The advantage of the [online course](#) is that now I don't have to set up with any kind of shipping. I don't have any printing that has to be done, if I have to ship out 30 books or something. I only have to create the course once, and then 30 people could come in and take it. So online Web-based is a much cleaner, more profitable way to go as far as our self study is concerned.

Mary Kay: Do you have future plans for rolling out some of the other functionality available in the [SyberWorks Learning Management System](#) — like the [Seminar Logistics Module](#), the Competency Module, or even the [integrated Web conferencing](#) application?

Victor: B.E.S.T. has discussed these additional modules, and most likely we'll roll out some of those in the future. The [Seminar Logistics](#) Module will probably be the first one. I did have a chance to go in and look at that. It seems like it will fit in one of our other departments, which is classroom classes. We have instructors that actually go out, rent a hall, teach the people inside of a classroom setting. And I think that module may be able to help us as far as setting up the hotel locations and times and dates and rooms and availabilities. And it looked like that module may be able to help us facilitate that part of our business.

Mary Kay: Can you tell me a little bit more about the online courses you provide to your customers using [SyberWorks Learning Management System](#)? I know you mentioned they go to financial professionals, but maybe if you could give us a little more...

Victor: Well, during the building of these courses we referenced several sections of the appendixes at the back of the books. I've taken those excerpts — I've been able to reference them inside the material. [Web Author](#) allows me to create view buttons and actually pick out pieces of those appendixes, so that the students or individuals — when they are reading it — don't have to go to the back of the book, flip it open, look up the whole appendix and try and find that section that we're referencing within the material. As far as the [online courses](#), again they are pretty much geared towards the financial insurance industry. In all the states we have, they have certain credit hours that they have to maintain to maintain their licenses. And we're continually developing books and material to get approved across the country, so that we may provide the insurance industry with these beneficial, up-to-date informational books.

Mary Kay: OK, so that's a good segue. Can you tell me a little bit more about the [instructional design](#) and planning process that you went through to develop these training courses? Lots of different organizations do this differently, so it's always good to try to talk about it.

Victor: OK. To tell the truth, I have gone through a couple. I have not gone through just one. When I started out, we had decided that we wanted to set up something real nice, something kind of flashy — something to keep the individual's attention on the [course](#) content. So we went in and created these books in a PowerPoint presentation. And I did slides, copying and typing in the information. Once I completed my PowerPoint chapter, I then took and converted that PowerPoint into a [Flash](#) presentation, which is like regular Flash that you see out on the Web today. I also had a secondary program that allowed me to create Flash quizzes. I then took at the end of the chapter, and created the review questions in Flash. After putting up the courses in the Flash, I realized that, for me, there was no real way to integrate all of the benefits of the [SyberWorks](#) system — one of them mainly being the fact that most people want to be able to bookmark (or mark) where they are stopping at so they can come back to it at a later time. With PowerPoint and [Flash](#), you can't really do that. So, consequently, I left that PowerPoint/Flash presentation, and I'm going back to working with the [SyberWeb Author](#)..

Mary Kay: That's all right.

Victor: And starting to learn a lot more about it and how to implement some of the fine extra features that are available in that.

Mary Kay: OK, well that sounds great. Can you tell us a little bit about your customer experience with SyberWorks?

Victor: So far, SyberWorks has been great when it comes to [customer support](#). The team of Dana Fine and Larinda Boyd — it's been a real pleasure to work with them. We've discussed feature enhancements for SyberWorks based on things that I see that it could use, and things that they pointed out to me. We currently have an [e-commerce](#) situation where I have to charge extra fees in different states — not all states, but some. So in working with SyberWorks and the customer support teams, we have come up with a module that will allow us to do that. So as far as I'm concerned, the customer support, the customer service, everybody at SyberWorks so far has been great.

Mary Kay: Is there anything more you would like to share in terms of working with SyberWorks and our systems to deliver your online training?

Victor: Yes, I would, as a matter of fact. And I would just like to say that B.E.S.T. had tried to implement a [Web-based learning system](#) for several years. We started out with a small company, but found that their solution just was not going to fit our growing needs. So after sitting down and going through the three companies that we looked at and were deciding on, after several discussions and several [test drives](#), a couple of demos, we were talking with SyberWorks and they happened to mention a very unique fact that I haven't found in any of the other companies. And that was that they offered a development license. They also offered the production license. And when they mentioned that, I kind of thought in my head, "This is kind of cool. Could you describe it a little bit better to me?" And they said, "Sure. What we do is we give you the development license. You can put all your content over there. You basically can go through, do all the upgrades, make sure that everything is going to work before you do it in your production." And I said, "Well, that's kind of the selling factor for me, in the fact that I don't want to put in an upgrade and all the sudden I'm down for two or three days."

Mary Kay: Right.

Victor: So that was a very decisive point in my aspect — that I didn't want to be down. I want to keep this thing running as many hours as I can in a row. So [SyberWorks](#) was the vendor that fit our needs. And they'll continue to do so, especially with all (again) the great personnel at the [company](#). They've been a tremendous company, and they're one of our best vendors.

Mary Kay: Well, thank you, Victor. That all sounds great. I know you're busy, and I know you have to run. You've always got [courses](#) to put up. So thanks for joining us today.

Victor: You're welcome, and call me any time you'd like to.

Mary Kay: OK, great.

Victor: All right.

Mary Kay: This is Mary Kay Lofurno, Marketing Director at [SyberWorks](#). Thank you for listening to our [interview with Victor Dacey](#) of Broker Educational Sales & Training, Inc. on the [SyberWorks LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Series](#). Talk with you next month.

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