

LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Transcript #36 *Interview with Nicole Rollender, Editor for Advertising Specialty Institute Inc. (Transcript)*

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Announcer: SyberWorks podcast. Learn any time, any place.

Mary Kay Lofurno: Welcome to the next edition of the SyberWorks LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Series, where we look at real world learning management system implementations and e-learning program roll-outs. 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. I'm the Marketing Director at SyberWorks and your host today. Today, we're talking with Nicole Rollender, Editor for Advertising Specialty Institute Inc., about their use of the SyberWorks Hosted Learning Management System to track and manage member training.

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Mary Kay: Good afternoon, Nicole. Thanks for coming to talk with us today.

Nicole Rollender: Good afternoon, Mary Kay. It's great to be here.

Mary Kay: Nicole, tell us about yourself and what you do for Advertising Specialty Institute.

Nicole: I'm the editor of "Stitches Magazine" and also the Director of ASI Education.

Mary Kay: OK, can you tell us a little more about Advertising Specialty Institute, its products, its services?

Nicole: Sure. The Advertising Specialty Institute, or ASI, is the largest media and marketing organization that serves the advertising specialty industry. We have a membership of over 26,000 distributor firms, and supplier firms, of advertising specialties. The supplier firms use ASI print and electronic resources to market products to over 22,000 ASI distributor firms.

And distributor firms use ASI print and electronic resources, which contain nearly every product in the industry, for more than 3,500 suppliers, to locate supplier firms and to market services to buyers. And ASI also provides catalogs, information directories, newsletters, magazines, websites, and databases, and offers e-commerce marketing and selling tools.

Mary Kay: All right, that sounds good. Nicole, so when we say advertising specialties, we mean promotional products, right?

Nicole: Absolutely. Any type of promotional product, or wearable, that can be logo'd or have artwork put on it.

Mary Kay: OK, cups, pens, that kind of stuff.

Nicole: Absolutely.

Mary Kay: All right, Nicole. Can you describe the business factors that drove your company to investigate and ultimately purchase a Hosted Learning Management System as an e-learning solution for your organization?

Nicole: Yes. We're always focused on enhancing our member benefits. We found that, as business owners, our members are very interested in continuing education. So we offer free education to our members across many

platforms including live education at our national trade shows and online webinars. And we felt that giving the ability to take online self-paced courses would be an excellent addition to our education offerings.

Mary Kay: All right, so why did you select the SyberWorks Hosted LMS to create your training portal?

Nicole: Well, I actually personally reviewed about six vendors' products and tried out a few of them, as well. The very inexpensive systems didn't meet our needs at all. And the most expensive had a lot of bells and whistles but were very cost prohibitive. The SyberWorks Hosted LMS met all of e-learning needs and was set at a comfortable price point.

Mary Kay: OK, great. So can you give us an idea of who works with the SyberWorks Hosted LMS at your company?

Nicole: Sure. My team and I create and launch new courses each month and we track how our students are using the system. Then our member services staff uses the system to track the courses that our new members take so that they can follow up with them to see how we are meeting their needs.

Mary Kay: OK, great. Can you tell our audience a little more about the online training itself, the types of courses and reference material you provide, through your online training portal?

Nicole: Sure. We offer self-paced courses on a variety of topics, from sales and marketing strategies to business management and social networking techniques. All of the courses have various interactive learning techniques, including voice-over narration throughout the course, videos, and quizzes. And we also use the secondary window feature, quite often, to include supplemental material, and link to websites, videos, or other podcasts.

Mary Kay: OK, sounds good. I understand your course offering is based on content you develop. So, for our audience, it would be great if you could share some of the instructional design and planning processes you go through when you develop a course for your organization.

Nicole: Well, since our education and editorial departments are very closely joined, we have access to a lot of great editorial content, up-to-the-minute industry news, and sources. So we base our course roster on hot topics that people are telling us that they want to learn more about. So, through our editorial department, we also shoot and produce our own videos and podcasts, for the voice-over narration.

Mary Kay: OK, well, that sounds good. What types of course offering tools are you using to develop your training?

Nicole: I create the courses in the SyberWorks Web Author tool. We also create Flash movies and MP3 podcasts that we host on our server. We just take the HTML code into the Web Author documents to reference the files. My experience with Web Author has been really good. There's a learning curve, as there is with any new tool that you use, but I've gotten to the point where I can create tests and launch, say a five lesson course, in about 90 minutes.

Mary Kay: Wow, pretty cool. All right. Can you tell us about your customer experience at SyberWorks?

Nicole: Sure. It's been really positive. Working with SyberWorks personnel, from the point of view of learning about the system, to demo-ing it, and then purchasing it, and then through the learning curve, has been really helpful. Overall, we feel that we've had individual SyberWorks on our team, so to speak, that we could call when we needed some assistance, in the early days, when we were launching and creating our courses.

Mary Kay: All right, well, that sounds good. Is there anything else you'd like to share in terms of working with SyberWorks to deliver your training?

Nicole: Sure. I would just say that within about 10 months, since we launched our first course, which was about in early summer of last year, we've had 1,100 members join our online learning center as students.

Mary Kay: Wow.

Nicole: Overwhelmingly, they've told us that the system was easy to navigate. And the courses were very helpful to them in improving their sales and business management skills. So overall, I would say that the online campus, the courses, the way that we were able to create them, it's top-notch, and people respond well to that.

Mary Kay: Well, that sounds terrific. I know you're a busy woman, so I'm going to let you go. Thanks for joining us today.

Nicole: It was a pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Mary Kay: All right. This is Mary Kay Lofurno, Marketing Director at SyberWorks. Thanks for watching our interview with Nicole Rollender, of Advertising Specialty Institute, on the SyberWorks LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Series. Talk with you next month.

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