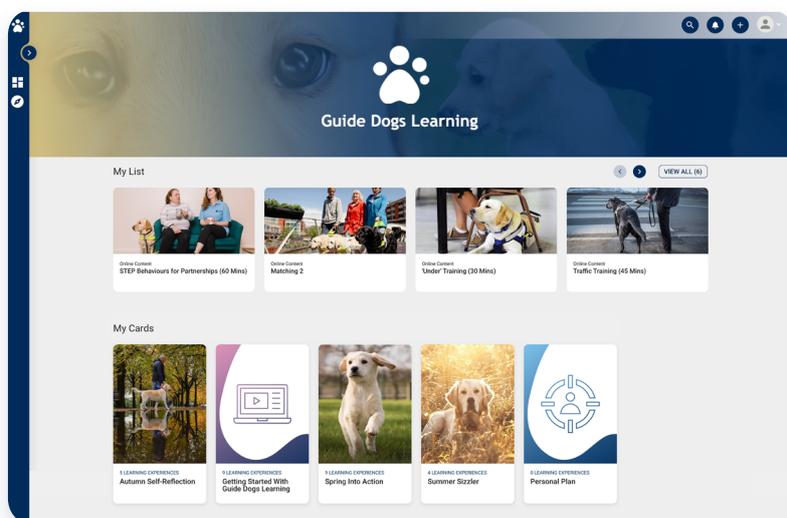


Guide Dogs

Background

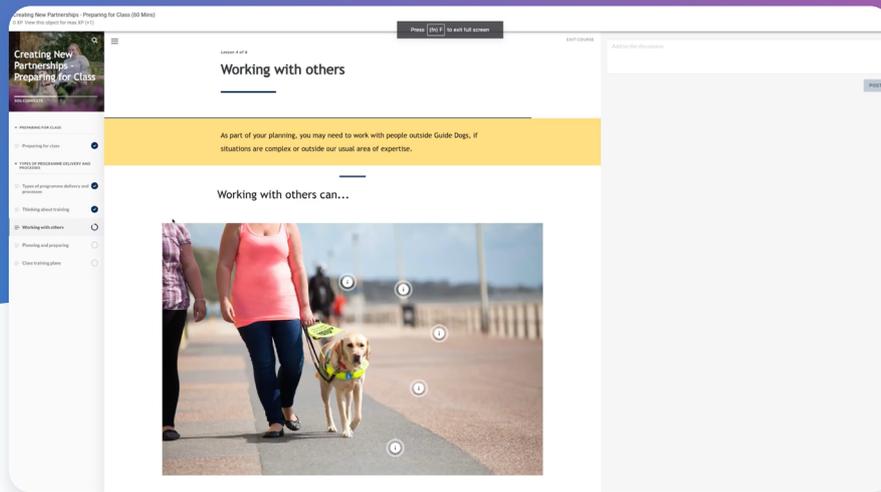
Guide Dogs exists to provide life-changing services to the 360,000 people who are registered blind or partially sighted, and the two million people in the UK living with sight loss.



Challenge

Historically, Guide Dogs' technical staff (Guide Dog Trainers and Guide Dog Mobility Specialists) have been trained in the traditional methods of one-on-one and in-person. Due to an increase in demand for its services, the charity recognized that this method of training was no longer fit for purpose and looked to adopt a more modern approach.

To meet this demand, Guide Dogs aimed to double its technical workforce as part of its 5-year strategic growth plan - a challenging goal whilst recovering from the impact of the pandemic.



Solution

Guide Dogs Academy

In 2022, the Guide Dogs Academy was created to revolutionize the way Guide Dogs recruits, trains, retains and supports its next generation of technical employees. By utilizing a ratio of three learners to one Technical Learning Specialist (TLS) in a dedicated local learning environment, Guide Dogs is now able to reach more people where they live. However, with multiple teams training across the UK, the charity also needed to establish a unified approach to training that would be consistent, engaging and supportive of a culture of continued professional development.

A blended learning approach

A critical component of this new approach for Guide Dogs was the introduction of Learning Pool Platform to embrace a digital-first blending learning approach with the launch of the Guide Dog Learning (GDL) online learning platform.

The vision was to utilize core capabilities across Learning Pool Platform to sustainably increase the volume of staff being trained, decrease overall training time, and specifically increase speed to competency within the role. Before launching Learning Pool Platform, Guide Dogs outlined the following objectives:

- Increase the volume of staff being trained.
- Reduce overall training time by 10% against the previous training pathway, achieved through dedicated coaching, blended learning and improvements in the learning content and delivery.
- Increase speed to competency within the role.
- Implement a new competency-tracking system that would allow learners to track evidence and progress in real time by being signed off as they move through levels.
- Track learners' progress and competency development and use that data to improve and develop.
- Enable 75% of learners to access content through mobile devices.
- Encourage learners to be active and engaged with a target for 80% of all learners to visit the platform weekly.

An all-encompassing approach

Learning Pool Platform offers Guide Dogs everything it needs to design and deliver personalized and engaging learning experiences through a social and smart user interface.

Learning Pool Automation has enhanced the learner experience by delivering emails to confirm that learners have achieved certain badges throughout their learning journey. Guide Dog also uses the automation tool to:

- Deliver campaign content cards and confirm completion, badge awarding and praise with learners and their manager.
- Recognize when learners complete a certain amount of non-assigned content to praise their discretionary effort.
- Recognize when a learner progresses to the next level in their competencies.
- Confirm the issue of certificate and digital badge when a learner graduates from Guide Dogs Academy - within the email, they also receive information on how to share their badge on LinkedIn and add it to their email signature.

The data available to Guide Dogs through Learning Pool Learning Record Store (LRS) has been groundbreaking. By reviewing and understanding their learners' unique pacing differences and the way they consume content has enabled Guide Dogs to adjust from a weekly prescribed path to a sectioned approach with guidance time frames.

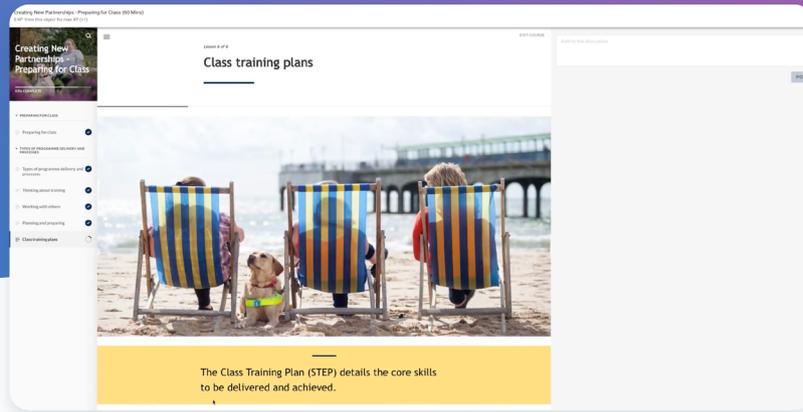
By utilizing both Learning Pool Analytics and Google Analytics combined, Guide Dogs is gaining deep insight into its learners' behaviors away from the literal completion data that was looked at previously. This is critical to enable them to make strategic developments, which move the dial towards real culture change and initiatives with meaningful results.

Response



“We have worked closely with the fantastic team at Learning Pool to understand and implement all the latest improvements and updates. We have also taken time to fully explore and understand all available features at our fingertips and share our own thoughts on improvements and potential adjustments with respect to Learning Pool’s own development process. We continue to use Learning Pool Platform to creatively deliver the perfect learning environment for both coach and learner and align our approach to strategically deliver our objectives.”

Craig Mills
Digital Learning Specialist



Outcomes

Outstanding impact

Guide Dogs' approach to measuring success was to be data-driven whilst remaining holistic in its approach, believing that user feedback is vital in order to continually improve. Overall, the prevailing aim was to not only increase its ongoing volume of learners but to produce technical employees who are empowered to excel in their roles and who understand the value of continuing professional development and an embedded learning culture and will support this as the norm at Guide Dogs.

Now one year on from its launch of Guide Dogs Learning, Guide Dogs has accomplished a great deal and had some exceptional successes - both as an overall initiative and in individual learners' engagement and development.



Since its launch, GDL has achieved a peak result of **96.16%** of learners accessing the platform across both desktop and mobile devices.



A 2023 survey asking learners about their overall experience with GDL scored an average of **9 out of 10**.



Guide Dogs has calculated an overall **30%** reduction in training time compared to its previous training pathway.



Guide Dogs has identified an attrition rate of **3%** in the rolling year against its target of no more than **10%**.



Engagement results for Guide Dogs Academy learners sat an eNPS score of **+77**. Previous learning methods achieved a score of **-31**.

Continually engaging leaders



“Despite joining a traditionally technology-averse organization, our learners have embraced the digital-first blended learning approach and now utilize GDL as a daily tool to support their learning journey, adding theory to their practice, sharing knowledge via comments and learning from different groups across the UK.”

Craig Mills
Digital Learning Specialist

Guide Dogs’ learners and coaches have embraced Learning Pool Platform through online and face-to-face training sessions at differing access levels. Guide Dogs also created a suite of learning materials - podcasts, videos and e-learning resources - which helped to upskill users on how to get the most from the platform.

Looking to the future

Guide Dogs has made great strides in its own understanding of Learning Pool technology in the last year; they have utilized it in creative and impactful ways that have moved the organization towards its goals and seen it succeed in delivering successful new initiatives. Continuing this approach, Guide Dogs has built a full strategy and development board to ensure it stays laser-focused on its goals.

Skills Builder

The Guide Dogs Learning and Development team plans to include a skills matrix and skills gap analysis as part of its wider strategy. Skills Builder will be an integral part of this offer in 2024.

