

LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Transcript #28 SyberWorks LMS *e-Learning Implementation Podcast Interview with Bob Brugger*

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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 actual learning management system-LMS-implementations, and e-learning program rollouts.

SyberWorks specializes in custom e-learning solutions, learning management systems, and custom online training development for corporations, governments, and nonprofits. My name is Mary Kay Lofurno, and I am the Marketing Director here at SyberWorks, and your host today.

In this edition, we're talking with Bob Brugger, Director of e-Learning for True Blue, Inc., about their use of the SyberWorks learning management system to provide employee training.

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Mary Kay: And now we will begin our interview with Bob Brugger, of True Blue, Inc.. Good afternoon. Thanks for coming to talk with us today, Bob.

Bob Brugger: Good afternoon, Mary Kay. It's great to be here.

Mary Kay: Thanks. I was wondering if you could tell us about yourself, and tell us what you do for True Blue.

Bob: I am the director of e-Learning here at True Blue. I've been here since 2007, about the same time that SyberWorks and True Blue came together as business partners. My job is a combination of coordinating training development projects. I work with the SMEs, stakeholders, our IT staff. I get everything together there. I also manage the LMS, the management of all the records, training[?] delivery. I also do development of actual online coursework.

Mary Kay: OK. So you do a lot in the e-learning function that you provide. OK.

Bob: Yes, I do, and it's in a challenging environment. We all know our current economic conditions, so everything I do is with limited staff and with small budgets.

Mary Kay: We understand that. All right, so tell our audience a little bit about True Blue.

Bob: Actually, we were founded as Labor Ready, I think it was back in 1989, in Kent, WA, that's not far from our current corporate headquarters here in Tacoma, WA.

In 2007, our parent corporation was renamed to True Blue. Basically, that's because of acquisitions of numerous blue collar staffing companies in different lines of work. We have on demand, light industrial skilled construction jobs, so we developed the parent corporation, which is now True Blue.

We have branches throughout the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, U.K. Basically, what we do is we connect people to work. I think we staff approximately 500,000 temporary workers a year. 300,000 customers with all the brands, all told. Everything from construction, transportation, warehousing, landscaping, hospitality, light manufacturing, distribution, sanitation... everything pretty much with a blue collar feel to it. That's why we're True Blue.

Mary Kay: So basically you're a global blue collar staffing firm.

Bob: That's pretty much it.

Mary Kay: Can you give us an overview of who is using the system at True Blue?

Bob: The majority of our users are employees at the branch level. We do senior management and corporate support staff, also, but I would say that the majority of the usage in training that we push down is operations focused, and it's for the branch level.

Mary Kay: And what were some of the key business and system requirements that were important for your company's online training program? Back then, it was Labor Ready, but now it's True Blue, and you actually went out to look at various learning management systems?

Bob: There were a lot of requirements, but the biggest thing we needed was an easy user interface, a tool that was able to produce numerous customized reports. We really like that feature. That's pretty important.

When you're talking system requirements, one of the biggest challenges we have here is our bandwidth issues. The ability to push out training with limited bandwidth, I guess that's a system requirement that I'm thinking of right now. Probably a challenge that is shared by many companies that do web-based training.

That's actually one of the reasons why we're exploring your mobile learning tool, to help us get the capability to deliver some multimedia or rich multimedia content.

Mary Kay: Yes, the mobile learning module is great for that, when you have users that have very limited bandwidth situations like that. So you're correct. A mobile learning module is something a lot of companies use in situations like that.

Can you tell me just about the training in some of the online courses that you are offering for your temporary employees through the hosted learning management system?

Bob: Well, just to make sure, there is a distinction in our business between permanent and temporary employees. Temporary employees are actually the temporary workers that we dispatch out to the different customers. Now the training that I do here is in support of our permanent employees, branch staff, and that type of workers.

The online training that we do is pretty much asynchronous type online self-paced, that's the majority. We do pretty much five, I think six basic categories of training with operations being our major function. We also have the legal compliance component, our safety training, OSHA regulations, sales support training. And also very important piece of True Blue's vision is to push out some good leadership skills to our management team. So, some leadership training also.

We do some classroom academy based courses here in Tacoma. We also do some at a facility out in Chicago and that's managed through the LMS. And we are exploring some synchronous type of online training. We haven't really done that yet, but we are looking into it and that could easily be supported by SyberWorks' LMS.

Mary Kay: But I am sure the system as well too. That's great. What course development tools do you use to construct in your training?

Bob: Well, our primary tool is Lectora. Lectora is a course authoring tool. Trivantis I believe is the corporation that pushes that one out. It is a really versatile tool. It allows for efficient content development, quick, it is easy to use. It has a good user interface.

It can integrate Flash-based files. It can work with other files such as Captivate, those type of things can be plugged in and it publishes easy and a variety of modes, both AICC and SCORM compliance and we really have not had any problems publishing any courses. And that is our favorite. That is the one we like to use.

Mary Kay: Yes, Lectora works with our system as well. We have lots of course authoring tools that do show[?]. That's great. Why don't we talk a little bit about some of the elements of your configuration process? Now I am told you are using the SyberWorks competency management, managed skills training, can you tell us just a little bit more about that?

Bob: Through the broad spectrum of skillsets that we have out there, I mean we have employees that are working everything from general labor staffing all the way up to aviation technicians, avionics technician staffing, so the skillset is just one end to the other.

And in order to try and organize curriculums and track training and competency management, we had to come up with a way to be able to do that. And SyberWorks LMS helps us tremendously there where we developed, we laid it all out in the table. We broke it down into the job roles, what job titles fall under the job roles.

And then based on that job rule, what competencies are required to be certified for that job role. And of course populate the competency with different learning events, be it online self-paced course, be it a classroom course or a certification out in the field where safety special skills out and make sure they have done their OSHA training and they sign off on that.

So, the flexibility of the tool with SyberWorks is pretty impressive and we have worked well with it so far.

Mary Kay: OK. So Bob, why did you choose SyberWorks as your learning management system when it gets out to it really?

Bob: We have had the SyberWorks LMS since 2007 and to be honest, that's when I came on board. The contract in actuality was already signed and when I came in, it was my responsibility to do the integration.

Now, Matt McCollins [sp], who is our Director of Training and Organizational Development, he went out and he looked at a lot of LMSes and he was pretty excited when he brought me into the team. He was impressed with all the tools that SyberWorks brought to the table, especially the reporting and all that.

My experience at that point was to implement and the process of implementation to this company was pretty seamless, got a lot of support from your team, things went pretty smooth, made my job a lot easier, specially as I was coming on as a new employee to the company myself. So, I guess that's my answer for you.

Mary Kay: Hey that sounds great Bob. I am going to let you go because you are a really busy guy. Thanks for joining us today.

Bob: Well, thanks for having me Mary Kay.

Mary Kay: This is Mary Kay Lofurno, Marketing Director here at SyberWorks. I wish to thank you for listening to our interview with Bob Brugger, Director of e-Learning for True Blue, Inc. and their True Blue University on the SyberWorks LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast series. Talk with you next month.

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