

## Commercial endorsement course developed for the Royal Yachting Associations



### *An e-learning case study*

As the national body for all forms of boating, the Royal Yachting Association provides a wide range of training courses and professional qualifications. Working alongside governing departments, the RYA sets standards for statutory certification of commercial yacht skippers, and issues certificates on behalf the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (part of the Department of Transport).

Individuals wishing to work on commercial vessels are currently required to obtain a Commercial Endorsement printed on their RYA certificate of competence to demonstrate they have undergone additional training and a medical fitness test.

In order to emphasise the transition from leisure to professional boat user, and to embed a culture of good practice in the day to day operation of commercial boats, the RYA chose to introduce a further assessment that would be required in order to gain a Commercial Endorsement.

It was this assessment, the Professional Practice and Responsibilities (PPR) course, which Mind Click was to develop.

### **The learning need**

Alongside the training they already deliver through face-to-face teaching and the wide range of handbooks they produce, the RYA was keen to develop new courses and offer existing training in an eLearning format. As the PPR course itself was to become a mandatory requirement of achieving commercial endorsement, the initial challenge was to make this course as widely accessible as possible.

As a result, face-to-face training would have been impossible to provide due to geographical and financial constraints. An eLearning course was the perfect solution, allowing the organisation to reach a much wider audience and encourage the best possible practice amongst commercial boat skippers, where ever they might be.

Another consideration was that of engagement. As the PPR course itself was compulsory, the users learning experience needed to be interesting, whilst conveying serious matters on the subject of legal compliance and safety appropriately. In order to ensure this course was as relevant as possible to users we worked with a range of SMEs with differing experience within the commercial maritime world. We also consulted national bodies such as the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Marine Accident Investigation Branch, National Workboat Association, Professional Yachting Association and

Marine Leisure Association to get the broadest possible understanding of the learners needs and working environment.

## The learning strategy

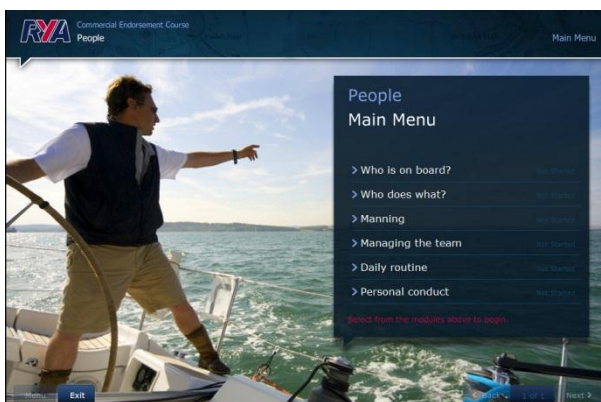
As this would become a compulsory course, it was important that students understood the benefit of completing it, rather than just jumping through hoops. It needed to be easily accessible, realistic in the way students must research information and capable of being completed in about 6 to 8 hours.

Our approach centred on using genuine scenarios and case studies where ever possible to emulate the real-life approach that professional boat users would take, appealing to the experiences learners have had in the past and keeping the material varied and interesting. Directing learners to external resources such as government reports and regulatory documentation where ever possible will encourage the learner to find out for themselves about certifications, legislations and requirements relevant to each scenario. This method will transfer into their professional lives and help them observe their duty of care as they will know where to find the information they need, when they need it.

Working in close partnership with experts from RYA, it was possible to identify four key behaviours, vital to the on-going good practice of commercial skippers, which was outlined by the CARE acronym (Check status and certification of vessel & crew, Active risk assessment, Record keeping and Evaluation). To assist learners in using and remembering these behaviours, we also identified 6 key questions, or the 6W's, used throughout the course as a reminder of the CARE requirements.

CARE, the PPR and the 6 W's were the key themes that were used throughout the course as narrative devices to bring together the complex aspects of the context within which individuals operate, and the practical considerations that need to be made as part of managing a commercial vessel.

## Design of the course



To reflect and enhance the real-life messages we were highlighting in the course content, and through our work with the SME's, our design treatment of the PPR course reflected this, using "eyeball" images at deck level that the skipper / crew would actually see in the cockpit. On board photography sourced by the RYA allowed us to give the learner a first-hand insight into the scenarios and potential problems they may face.

### **The learner view**

Following the delivery of the course, Mind Click experienced some very positive feedback from the widest range of users.

*'This is a great course. I thought I knew the details from coding my own boat and an interest in doing things correctly. However, this was quite a step up'.*

*'This is a step in the right direction and a very worthwhile course that certainly increases knowledge and perspective'.*

### **Impact of the course**

Initial results from the course were extremely positive.

*'For RYA Interactive generally we have nearly 7000 users now. For PPR we expect it to build to about 4000 per year.'*

*'We liked Mind Click's approach to structuring the course and removing the need to learn information by rote. Their mind mapping method of changing behavior was exactly what we needed to instill in students the need to check what they are doing in the day to day work, ask the right questions, check the right documents and make the right decisions'.*

*'It's really good for the RYA to be seen to be moving with the times in the way it can deliver courses and to enable our training centres to offer this method of training in an affordable and efficient way.'*

### **About the RYA**

The RYA is committed to promoting all forms of boating and making them accessible to everyone.

The RYA is the national body for all forms of recreational, competitive and professional boating. It represents dinghy and yacht racing, motor and sail cruising, RIBs and sports boats, powerboat racing, windsurfing, inland cruising and personal watercraft.

The RYA is recognised by all government offices as being the negotiating body for the activities it represents. It continually fights for the rights and freedoms of its 102,000 personal members. There are an estimated further 500,000 boat owners nationally who are members of RYA affiliated clubs and class associations.

The RYA also sets and maintains a recognised standard for recreational boat training through a network of 2,340 RYA Recognised Training Centres in over 43 countries. On average 155,000 people per year complete RYA training courses in their various forms.

## About Mind Click

Mind Click are a group of experienced e-learning professionals who share a consultative and creative approach that allows us to embrace our customers' challenges and deliver effective solutions.

We offer a full range of e-learning development services to help organisations exploit the best that e-learning has to offer. Creative e-learning development is our core offering but we also offer a range of specialist services, training and consultancy.

We are specialists in the three essential components of e-learning design; learning design, creative design and learning technology.

We approach every project with innovation in mind and are proud to have won a silver award in the 2011 e-learning awards.

We have over 20 years' experience of working with high profile customers such as BT, Virgin Active, Goodrich Aerospace, Asda, HSBC, Boots and the MoD.