

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS CASE STUDY

CLIENT REQUIREMENTS

One of the strategic visions of NC Community College was to invest in workforce education and training to build in-demand skills. They wanted to fill the skill gap between education and business needs so that businesses can find the right talent who can be productive from the very first day on the job. At the same time, they wanted to enable jobseekers/graduates to find well-paying jobs and build careers. With these objectives in place, we were entrusted with the development of the following eight competency-based modules for the Employability Skills Alignment course. These modules covered eight of the most important and sought after skills for the workplace.

- 1 Critical and Analytical Thinking
- 2 Interpersonal Skills
- 3 Reliability & Dependability
- 4 Problem Solving & Decision Making
- 5 Communication (Oral, Written, Non-Verbal)
- 6 Team Work
- 7 Time & Resource Management
- 8 Cultural Sensitivity

The modules needed to align with the relevant competencies, and also were to be highly interactive and engaging. The College decided that each module should be presented in two formats: Essential Skills and Essential Skills Plus. The Essential Skills modules would be self-paced and self-graded with assessments of knowledge and comprehension levels. The Essential Skills Plus modules would have additional content along with assessments that required faculty intervention.

OUR ROLE

Our role in the development was to hire Subject Matter Experts, design the content engagement strategy, design the course outline based on the list of competencies provided by client, create storyboards, create the assessments, assignments, discussions, and finally develop the course output using Storyline and HTML.



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CONTENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

After analyzing the client's vision and expectations, going through the subject matter, and coordinating with Subject Matter Experts, we decided to add numerous scenarios, examples, animations, and scenario-based self-assessments to explain the subject matter. We also decided to add branching scenarios so that students can experience decision making in a virtual work-life setup. Additionally, to ensure high engagement and to appeal to the attention span of learners, we decided to limit the information presented on each screen of the module.

HERE IS A SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT PRESENTATION STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED IN THE MODULES:

- ▶ Create visually appealing layouts.
- ▶ Start the module with an animation that either demonstrates why students should go through the module or details what they can expect from the module.
- ▶ Restrict the amount of textual content on each slide and complement the content with visually appealing images.
- ▶ Present short, animated examples and scenarios of varying styles to illustrate concepts, theories, and guidelines within the content, wherever applicable.
- ▶ Add different types of interactivities to keep the content interesting.
- ▶ Include scenario-based self-assessments at regular intervals within the content for learners to practice the relevant competencies of the module and gradually, help them gain confidence in their abilities.
- ▶ For the premier version, develop at least two to three branching scenarios that help students practice their skills in an environment that mimics real work-life situations.
- ▶ Develop assessment instruments such as self-graded quizzes and instructor-assessed assignments and discussions aligned with the competencies.

CONCLUSION

For each module, we created a self-paced component containing the content, examples, scenarios, animations, interactivities, self-assessment questions, auto-graded assessment, and a conclusion.

We designed this part of the module creatively, limiting the amount of textual content on each page and complementing the content with relevant visuals, examples, and animations.

For the premier part, along with the self-paced component, we created two to three branching scenarios to help learners experience decision-making in a virtual work environment. We also created assessment instruments such as quizzes, assignments, and discussions. These assessments were aligned at higher blooms level, i.e., at analysis and evaluate levels.