



Case Study on National Pharmacies



Training Administration and Management System

Case Study: National Pharmacies

Company profile

National Pharmacies is the trading name of the Friendly Society Medical Association Limited. The Company is a Mutual Organisation and an Enterprise Registered Organisation (ERTO). National Pharmacies business profile includes Community Pharmacy/Retail, Optical, Wholesaling, Warehousing, Logistics and Transport.

EXAMPLE:

- National Pharmacies has been an integral part of the South Australian Community since 1911
- Revenues in 2009: \$300 million
- National Pharmacies has grown from a single dispensary in 1914 to more than 80 stores in 2009 across metropolitan and regional South Australia, metropolitan NSW and Victoria with approximately 1300 staff

The organisation recognises that the future of Community Pharmacy lies in providing high quality advice and service, not simply the dispensing of medication. Consumers have a right to expect that the standard of advice and service offered will not vary greatly between pharmacies, and will never fall below an acceptable level.

National Pharmacies is accreditation under the Quality Care Pharmacy Program, or QCPP. This means the independent peak industry body has assessed National Pharmacies and awarded the organisation their world-class quality assurance. This quality assurance standard is specific to pharmacies. The purpose of the QCPP is simple: to encourage an ongoing commitment to develop first-rate community-care pharmacy services. National Pharmacies are the first pharmacy chain in Australia to receive QCCP accreditation.

National Pharmacies Learning and Development systems have been showcased for best practice recognition of prior learning (RPL) processes in a number of case studies in NSW, VIC and SA, sponsored through COAG RPL Projects. National Pharmacies organisational learning and development strategies have been the focus of industry & VET conferences:

- “Assess First Train Later” Service Skills Conference 2008, presented by Rob Conwell Learning and Development Manager, National Pharmacies
- “This is what business wants, skills based training aligned to business goals and needs”, South Australian Forum 2008, presented by Rob Conwell, L&D Manager, National Pharmacies
- “Employment based training and the national training framework”, presented by Lina Robinson, Service Skills Australia and John Pardy, Monash University

1. Business situation

National Pharmacies realise that business growth does not come without the support and development of its people, which is why Learning and Development is such a key component of its organisational strategic planning. Due to the success of this organisational approach an increased need for capability was identified to capture and report on organisational training activities as an Enterprise Registered Training Organisation (ERTO). This exponential growth exposed the critical need for a Training Administration System (TAS) capable of meeting National Pharmacies' unique organisational requirements and RTO reporting.

In the search for a suitable system, the requirements were quite clear; having defined National Pharmacies organisational L&D needs and their reporting obligations to Government as an ERTO, it became increasingly evident that the need to implement a Training Administration and Management System (TAMS) that integrates with a Learning Management System (LMS) to provide a complete Training Management solution capable of meeting all these requirements was essential to the ongoing growth and responsibilities of National Pharmacies as an ERTO.

For example the successful system needed to provide the following;

- It had to be able to deal with all current and projected future client needs
- It had to be technology that was capable of full integration into current organisational business systems
- It had to have the capability to grow with innovations in Information Technology
- It had to be more than an administrative tool, it had to have the capacity to grow as a learning management system with organisational innovations such as e-learning and be totally interactive with the other systems within the LMS and the other business data bases within the organisation
- It had to be user friendly for all users including occasional users and administrators
- It had to cope with enterprise based training, which may not be unit based
- It had to still be able to track units of competency

2. Issues encountered in the search for a system

In their research National Pharmacies found most available systems were designed for Institutional and Private RTO's rather than integrated Enterprise RTO's. Enterprise RTO's have very different needs, within ERTO's, L&D occurs at every level of the organisation both strategically and operationally. National Pharmacies use Training Packages as a framework in which the job role and position within the organisation is analysed to identify areas of competency. These areas of competency are then mapped to workplace skill sets. These workplace skill sets are then used to design training and assessment materials specific to National Pharmacies organisational requirements. *"I needed a system with which I could track the mapping of job role to competency, align competencies to qualifications and then map those competencies back to the workplace skill set. I then design the training materials to these identified workplace skill sets along with assessment tools, all within a training program designed around diverse job role requirements, but underpinned by the units of competency"*, said Rob Conwell, Learning and Development Manager for National Pharmacies. *"An ERTO provides greater flexibility and control in the delivery of training and assessment to its employees this is the vital difference between other RTOs and ERTO's"*, said Rob.

3. The Vision

National Pharmacies Learning and Development's vision was for an holistic workplace skills based training and assessment system, which could align learning and development with strategic goals and business outcomes. To track, administer and report, the chosen system had to be able to cope with mapping this process and then tracking individual training performance and assessment. In a workplace training context, training is on an individual basis, rarely in group training or a classroom situation. Although the system needed to function as a traditional training administration system (TAS) for training courses and sessions, it also had to have the additional functional ability to administer training programs, which are made up of complex workplace skill sets, with most training and assessment in the workplace. All these skill sets, programs and courses are underpinned by the units of competency and the system needed to have the capacity to track these as well.

"All other systems we looked at were incapable of performing these tasks. They were inflexible in their functional capabilities and unwilling to consider developing the functions we needed..... until we found Manta-TAS".

"It was like a breath of fresh air", said Rob, "we told them (Prodata Solutions) what we needed and they said", "Tell us exactly what you want and we'll build it for you".

Capabilities we needed

- Capability of reporting on external clients, employees and contractors
- Scenario planning
- capability and competency mapping
- A system with an inbuilt capability for growth to suit organisational needs now and into the future
- A system which is not externally hosted
- Capable of delivering and managing e-learning
- Capable of full integration with existing organisational IT systems
- Capable of collecting, storing and reporting other non-accredited learning and development data within the organisation
- Capable of recording and reporting learning and development costs
- Capable of recording and reporting assessment processes & outcomes
- Capable of recording and reporting learning and development return on investment
- Capable of supporting learning and development evaluation processes

4. What we got

We got all of this, with the added advantage of ongoing support and assistance from Prodata Solutions personnel whenever we need it. *“The system is forever evolving; often they see better ways of doing things and are more than willing to implement those changes into National Pharmacies unique Manta-TAS”*. National Pharmacies have been using Manta-TAS for the past two years, *“The relationship we have with Prodata Solutions is more like a collaborative partnership, than a client to provider relationship”*, said Rob, *“We know the system starts from a platform big enough to implement any number of innovations if and when they are required, which makes Manta-TAS the most dynamic system on the market, in my opinion”*, said Rob, *“the flexibility and creativeness of Manta-TAS personnel coupled with the attention to detail and customer service offered by Prodata Solutions makes a most successful partnership”*. *“I could not recommend Manta-TAS too highly to any Enterprise RTO looking for a solution to both integrated learning and development strategic and administrative needs and the substantial and often difficult requirements of an RTO with Government reporting requirements”*.

Rob Conwell: *National Learning and Development Manager, National Pharmacies.*