CASE STUDIES

Training Insurance agents across the length and breath of India

The Company

With the opening up of the Indian insurance sector, many global companies entered the insurance market in India by forming Joint Ventures with Indian partners. These companies have since been recruiting, training and employing life insurance agents to market their insurance products. The agents are spread across the country.

The Need

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) in India mandates aspiring life insurance agents to undergo a 100 hour training before they qualify to become an agent. Conventionally, this training involved a typical classroom set-up. But today, the traditional methods of training are unable to meet the emerging needs.

To begin with, for most insurance agents, the job is an alternate source of income alongside their regular 9am –5 pm jobs. They find it difficult to spare 15 to 20 days of their time to attend eight-hour classroom sessions. Thus Insurance companies are finding it difficult to recruit agents.

Secondly, life insurance is a complex subject involving premium calculations and legal knowledge. Most aspiring agents however have not gone beyond their high school. Thus teaching the target audience effectively was a challenge.

Thirdly, insurance companies needed a cost effective training solution. Companies have to spend heavily on infrastructure and faculty resources in multiple locations for in-house training. This takes care of effective training but is a costly proposition. Outsourcing training needs to offline training institutes could bring down capital cost. Quality was however a concern here.

There is a need for training that is convenient, provides 'any time, any place' flexibility and is cost effective.

The Solution

I Guru is an IRDA approved online agents' training solution. The objective of I Guru is to deliver highest quality content over a stable, robust, and secure network using the latest in learning technology.

In addition, I Guru aims to equip future agents with in-depth knowledge and understanding of the life insurance fundamentals, laws and procedures. The course is designed not only to enable the learner to understand the key concepts and principles well, but also, to help develop one into a " SMART Agent ".

Development and Implementation

Experts from the field of insurance have written the content for I Guru following "Instructionally Sound" methods. The content primarily aims to ensure that the learners easily grasp Life Insurance concepts irrespective of their academic background.

The content has been re-written (within IRDA Guidelines on Syllabus) in a lucid and simple manner.

Learner Centric Courseware:

We followed the 'Step Up' learning model to keep the content concise and coherent with apt examples illustrating the principles of life insurance. According to this approach, the learner gets just the right information at the right level in the right amount.

One can access the I Guru online course from anywhere be it one's home, a cyber café, a company or through the Intranet. The solution has been designed considering various aspects like learner access environment, available browser versions, download speeds, and security concerns.

The learning environment is rich and provides the learner the access to content and other features like email, quizzes, collaboration tools etc. The environment also provides an easy navigation through the content while allowing timed assessment.

Results

I Guru is the first online course provider in South India to receive certification from IRDA. Today, Insurance companies wanting to train their agents are making I Guru their preferred option. Up to now, close to 7000 people from across the length and breadth of India have been trained as life insurance agents. The success of the I Guru course is evident from the fact that 90% agents have passed the IRDA certification exam after completing the course. Importantly, user feedback has revealed that the course is easy to learn and navigate.

The main features of the I Guru delivery environment include:

- A unified and easy to use Content Creation / Delivery Mechanism
- Versatile Evaluation Module that provides all types of tests and Questions compliant with IMS-QTI standards achieved by very few world over.
- Unique reports mechanism to track total trainee progress/establish ROI
- Highly modularised extensible collaboration tools
- Excellent Inter-operability features with other learning content
- Efficient Enterprise Data Maintenance
- Secure and self-paced content delivery

The 'Step Up' Model

The ' Step Up' Model essentially introduces the concepts, facts, principles, and procedures in a phased manner. In other words, the subject of Life Insurance is introduced at the appropriate levels of familiarity. The learning steps include:

1.**Initial Learning:** Basic concepts sequenced in the order of learning
2.**Continued Learning:** Interrelationship between concepts
3.**Refresh Learning:** Reiteration through "Recap" and Test
4.**Upgrade Learning:** Application of concepts in actual situations