SUCCESS STORY

meridian® | HAI Group

HAI Group is a family of companies that serves the public and affordable housing community with special, niche insurance programs as well as other value-added products and services. Founded in 1987, the company insures 60-65% of the public and affordable housing market, serving more than 1,400 stakeholders across the U.S. The company is dedicated to providing reliable insurance, training, and software solutions in a manner that exceeds expectations.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES
- Existing learning management system (LMS) lacked key functionality to manage and deliver training to an external audience of individuals from more than 500 organizations
- Large video files made it difficult to quickly upload and stream courses
- Ecommerce and reporting functionalities were inefficient and undependable

SOLUTION
- Meridian Global LMS® with ecommerce

RESULTS
- Deployed HTVN.org, an online learning storefront delivering more than 100 training and certification courses throughout the U.S.
- Since HTVN.org launched in early 2014, nearly 5,000 individual learners have accessed courses from approximately 500 different housing agencies and other organizations

EXTENDING TRAINING TO PARTNERS

During the early 1990s, HAI Group experienced rapid growth and began expanding its product portfolio to offer a wider-variety of solutions, including public and affordable housing insurance, claims management solutions, and risk control services.

"As the company began to grow we realized that creating and providing industry training and accredited certification programs was an area of untapped potential for HAI Group," said Brian Altshuler, web and instructional technologist for HAI Group. "Providing industry-specific training courses allows us to increase business and ensure our Members have the resources they need to understand the unique topics impacting our industry."

With the needs of their Members at the forefront of the company's mind, HAI Group founded Housing Telecommunications Inc. (HTI), which offered a variety of industry-specific training courses broadcasted live on a closed-circuit satellite channel directly from their studio.

Each month, HTI brought in dozens of industry

experts and thought leaders to provide live sessions on topics specific to the insurance-and financial-related needs of its Members in the public and affordable housing community. At that point, HTI began offering various industry certifications, including the widely recognized Public Housing Management (PHM) Certification, which is often required for employment within this niche industry.

MOVING FROM BROADCASTING TO E-LEARNING

Around 2005, HAI Group realized that broadcasting live training was no longer meeting its growing business needs.

"Exploring the idea of moving from broadcasting training to online training was a huge shift in our business model," said Altshuler. "The transition didn't just require a learning management system strategy, it required a course content strategy, as well."

> **"Simply put, we needed a more robust, scalable learning solution to support our expanding business model and goals."**
>
> *Brian Altshuler*
> *Web and Instructional Technologist for HAI Group*

In 2006, the company selected a propriety off-the-shelf LMS to deliver its video courses, but as the years went on and the content library expanded, the company outgrew the solution. They soon realized they needed a more robust, comprehensive LMS to ensure all audiences would be able to gain access to the plethora of content available in its content library.

"It became noticeable that we were limited in where we could go or what we could do," said Altshuler. "Simply put, we needed a more robust, scalable learning solution to support our expanding business model and goals."

After evaluating several LMS vendors, HAI Group selected Meridian Global LMS®.

"We had three selection requirements our learning vendor needed to meet in order to be considered," said Altshuler. "First, the LMS serves as the storefront of HTVN, so we needed strong ecommerce and search catalog capabilities to meet those goals. Secondly, we produce a lot of large, video content courses, and we needed the server speed to support and manage our content library of more than 100 video-centric courses. And, finally, we wanted a customer community where we could connect with other users and contribute to the product roadmap. After evaluating several LMS providers, we felt Meridian was the only vendor that truly met each of those needs."

REVAMPING TRAINING DELIVERY

The company didn't just want a new learning solution, they wanted to change the way they approached training.

In the past, video content wouldn't load properly or it would take too long to load, and users were becoming increasingly frustrated. One of the major goals of the new solution was to change the way the video courses looked and functioned, and part of that initiative involved the company revamping its production process by shortening its video content to more bite-sized pieces and introducing other methods of training, such as voice-over and engagement objects.

"We were able to completely reconfigure our course layout," said Altshuler. "Now, courses are laid out in a simple, straightforward manner. Once users complete a course, a list of remaining, relevant courses is populated in the system."

Besides revamping their production process, HAI Group worked with Meridian's professional service organization to move and store their nearly 100 legacy courses onto Meridian's servers.

BECOMING AN ONLINE TRAINING STOREFRONT

HAI Group implemented Meridian Global LMS® with the ecommerce add-on as the foundation of HTVN. The newly revamped HTVN launched within six months of selecting Meridian, and the platform supports well over 5,000 learners from more than 500 organizations across the U.S. HTVN has been embraced by end users who say the solution is part of their daily workflow and makes them more effective in their job.

Security and ease of use was a top priority for the company, and Meridian's ecommerce and shopping cart capabilities make distributing and selling product training and industry certifications simple. External learners are able to easily and securely shop and purchase more than 100 available courses available on the platform.

"The shopping cart solution eliminated a lot of confusion for people when purchasing courses, it's a one-stop shop for employees to access learning courses and certifications," said Altshuler.

"Tracking and managing the sale couldn't be easier with real-time reports. We can identify the most popular courses, discover areas where we can offer new classes, and determine how to expand on our success."

THE FUTURE OF HTVN

Since the launch of HTVN, HAI Group is better equipped to serve the public and affordable housing industry by offering relevant courses in an easy to operate system. The company is looking forward to continuing to improve and innovate in this constantly evolving world of learning technology.

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"Moving forward, we're planning on expanding the catalog to offer better, more direct, and concise courses aimed at increasing usage and expanding knowledge," said Altshuler. "We're always looking to continuously improve HTVN.org, and we hope to make it even easier and faster for learners to find, take and complete training."