

Cultural Change through e-Learning

City of Tempe Police Department

In the spring of 2008, the City of Tempe Police Department embarked on a mission to revamp their training program by embracing e-Learning in a way that would transform training into a welcomed activity for the sworn officers and civilian staff. Their goal was to improve the quality, quantity and audience satisfaction for ongoing training and education, while at the same time reducing the production costs. The combination of tough economic times and the need for more and more training required a solution that would enable the existing internal staff to create highly interactive and engaging training content without using any expensive external resources. The solution would also have to allow them to deliver content through their secure Intranet site. After evaluating various online and e-Learning solutions, the Tempe PD chose Flypaper because of its ease of use, flexibility in repurposing content, online collaboration capabilities and cost effectiveness.



The Tempe PD officially began using Flypaper in June 2008 and the results have been revolutionary. Within the first year of adoption, the department built a very large training content library and produced and delivered more content in 12 months than they had in the preceding 4 years. The department attitude towards training changed dramatically. Training became perceived as a fun activity with a very high completion rate.

Content is available whenever and wherever an officer or staff member has time: offices, workstations in common areas—even on patrol car laptops in the field. Dedicated training days now are used only to teach and improve hands-on skills (such as proper handcuffing techniques). All other continuing education and training is delivered as Flypaper content through the Intranet. As a result, the Tempe Police Department now delivers 75% of its training topics through e-Learning—up from 10%.

Background

Because policies, procedures and laws change frequently the Tempe Police Department must conduct continuing education and training to keep the entire department (350 sworn officers and 184 civilians) abreast of the latest information. Training topics include Human Resources, Leadership, Risk Management, Defensive Driving, Legal Issues, Court Management software, and Search and Seizure, among others.

In the past, 90% of all training was delivered through Instructor-Led Training sessions. This approach removed officers and staff from their duties and work, required training sessions to be held during specific scheduled times, required a large number of trainers and limited the frequency and consistency of the content delivered. It was not uncommon for an instructor to conduct the same session 20 times in order to reach the entire department.

For years, we spent a lot of time and money having every employee sit in our auditorium for an hour or longer listening to mandated training. This new training is quick, interactive and is readily available to employees and supervisors as a resource.” Commander Dave Humble

Previously, as part of Advanced Officer Training sworn officers at all levels spent four days a year (40 hours) in mandated training, regardless of whether it was relevant to their current duties. The training was deployed in a one size fits all approach. For example, a Sergeant who was no longer in the field and a Patrol Officer would each sit through the same training on procedures for a traffic accident and how to properly complete a traffic accident report.

The small amount of online training (about 10%) available was not embraced by the department and reflected poorly upon e-Learning in general. The existing material was 'eReading' and did not engage the audience. One course was a 192 slide PowerPoint™ presentation in 10 point font that officers had to read. Officers procrastinated taking the course and the training personnel only achieved compliance through persistent and constant follow up and reminders. “We now have a vehicle to provide trainings that we did not have before. We had always used PowerPoint, but it was so flat and non interactive, that people tuned out.” Sgt Mike Pierce

Traditionally the civilian staff's training needs are underserved in law enforcement because limited resources must be focused on training and compliance for sworn officers. As part of the revised training mission, the Tempe Police Department made serving everyone's needs a goal.

Process

The Tempe Police Department Training Division began reinventing itself by reviewing its core mission and setting new goals, including initiatives for a blended learning model. They started by evaluating the entire department's needs, including sworn officers (from a new hire through ongoing field training) and civilian staff.

To ensure the training department setup the best e-Learning program possible, Tempe PD researched best practices, common mistakes and misconceptions about online training. The process the Tempe PD followed to establish an e-Learning program can be heeded by any company revamping their own training:

- First determine your needs and then your end goals, not the other way. Starting with goals can take the team off track and away from the actual needs. It can lead you down a path of developing training solutions that are excessive or unnecessary.
- From there, develop a strategy incorporating various means to accomplish your goals. For the Tempe PD, on-demand delivery of training content and internal collaboration on content development were both seen as integral to their needs.
- Simply publishing material that was originally presented face-to-face in an online format does not constitute true "online training." This is a very common misconception that has frequently led to failures in e-Learning. Material presented electronically and without a facilitator needs to be constructed and presented differently. For instance, when an instructor is not present to check for understanding self-assessment should be used to assist in retention. Electronic material must be constructed differently.

The Tempe PD determined the following training areas would be suitable for e-Learning:

- **Skills Reinforcement:** Training to teach someone to do something. For example, the proper way to handcuff a suspect. The initial training is an in-person, instructor led session to teach the skill. This is followed by reinforcement through e-Learning.
- **Achieve Compliance:** Training to meet compliance mandates. For example, staff is required to be current on policies, issues, procedures and changes in the law. The majority of this training is well suited to e-Learning.
- **Safety:** Training to keep officers and civilian staff safe as they carry out their duties and work. Examples include Defensive Driving and Bloodborne Pathogens courses. Training with a hands-on component is delivered through instructor led sessions and all other content is delivered through e-Learning
- **Disseminate Information:** Training to staff for informational purposes such as a policy changes. For example, training on the Court Management System was created so staff could learn how to use a new software system. The majority of this training is well suited to e-Learning.



The Tempe PD also established specific goals and requirements for their entire e-Learning program—content creation, management and delivery. The training group determined the solution must meet the following requirements:

Creation	Delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to create interactive content • Ability to repurpose and reuse assets • Incorporate multimedia content • Delivery through a secure Intranet • Multiple output formats • Assessment capabilities • Provide metrics and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture audience attention • Require cognitive participation • Completed in under 30 minutes • Improve retention • Repository for future reference

The training group evaluated a number of e-Learning platforms and authoring solutions including screen capture software, PowerPoint to Adobe Flash™ and video converters, rapid e-Learning tools and various assessment packages. After exploring these options, the Tempe PD chose Flypaper because of its ease of use, flexibility in repurposing content, online collaboration capabilities and cost effectiveness.

Interactivity and ease of use was the key in the group's decision to use Flypaper. We wanted much more than just an online slide presentation.
Gina Pinch, Training Coordinator.

Solution

Creation

An internal training team of the Tempe PD used Flypaper to develop an online, on-demand training program consisting of over 25 online training modules. These interactive modules included the following elements:

- Multimedia—video, audio, narration, text, graphics, Flash and screen recording;
- Self-paced and self-directed navigation and branching;
- Supporting documentation with links to reference materials and embedded documents;
- Self assessments and interactivity.

The Tempe PD training department's internal staff created these modules without using expensive external resources for which they do not have budget. Self-reliance was essential for creating and revising content. They were able to make frequent updates, changes and other edits without assistance, allowing them to keep pace with the latest information. The department has become so efficient that they can build a new e-Learning course and deploy it in less than a week. Keeping pace with changes in law enforcement is not longer an issue. "In the first year, our department built and deployed 25 training courses, which was more than we were able to do in the preceding four years. Officers and staff began commenting, in a positive way, that we were slamming them with training," remarked Lieutenant Mike Horn.

Although the Tempe PD is a large organization, with different departments and needs requiring training certain common practices were followed to ensure a successful e-Learning program.

First, no single e-Learning module would take longer than 30 minutes to complete. Any topics requiring more than 30 minutes would be divided into multiple sessions. By providing smaller, more manageable courses, officers and staff are able to absorb the information and easy fit in training between assignments.

Second, e-Learning must embody a variety of communication elements such as audio, video, text and graphics to engage the audience. In the same way it is challenging to keep someone's attention during lengthy lecture-only face-to-face training, it is hard to retain a viewer's interest in an online course if only text is used. A variety of communication elements maintain interest and also help to account for students' different learning styles. Some students retain audio information better, while others learn best through video and others by reading. "Training is not just about someone checking a box. We need to make sure the information was received and understood," stated Lt. Horn.



Delivery

The training has been designed for delivery on the department's Intranet so that officers and staff can now view training at a time that fits their own schedules. For a governmental agency this alone puts the Tempe PD way ahead of the curve when it comes to scheduling training sessions.

One of the most creative things the Tempe PD did was enable officers to access training modules directly from the laptops in their squad cars. The department worked for years to provide wireless access inside police vehicles. When the system went live in 2008 it provided a great opportunity to more effectively and efficiently deliver training because many officers spend very little time in the police station. Officers now can use their laptops to access resources normally kept in stations, which saves the Tempe PD time and money.



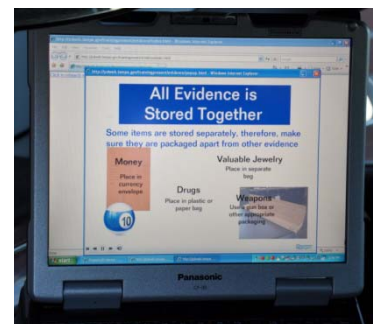
Perhaps more importantly, this approach enables officers to spend more time in the field. Officers are no longer confined to the station for training because they all have access to the Intranet site from their vehicles. According to Lt. Horn of the Tempe PD, "We are able to take training to our employees efficiently and effectively allowing our officers to maximize their time where it should be focused; on the road fighting crime and keeping our community safe."



Another benefit is that it enables officers and staff to determine the training that is relevant to them. For example, the training for changes to the court system is usually most important for officers that go to court—generally those officers issuing traffic citations. In the past, all 350 sworn officers would sit through a training session on the topic during one of the training days. Now officers themselves determine, based on their duties, whether this training is relevant for them. If at a point in the future they decide they need the training or

a refresher because they are about to go to court they can access it without any advance notice or schedule. Training is no longer simply a transitory event, but is now also an online reference resource that is easily updated and maintained.

Gina Pinch, Training Coordinator said, "We now have the ability to be both creative and effective in the development and delivery of content."



Results

The Tempe PD has seen several major advantages in building their e-Learning program on the Flypaper platform:

- **Time and Cost Saving:** Online training created with Flypaper allows the Tempe PD to deliver training without pulling officers from the field and staff from their assignments. The days of one-size-fits-all training are gone. Training dictating a face-to-face format (i.e. firearms, defensive tactics, etc) is conducted in an instructor-led session and all other training is delivered as e-Learning. This alone reduced the number of required face-to-face training days by half, which allows employees to focus more on serving the community.
- **Annual Budgets:** “We are now in a position to make an educated decision for training production and deployment based on the available staff,” said Lieutenant Mike Horn.
- **Interactivity:** Staff is more engaged when they directly interact with the training as opposed to a presentation-style classroom environment. Training has moved from passive activity to edutainment that encourages participation and improves retention.
- **Instructor Led Training Sessions:** The instructors in the face-to-face training sessions report more engagement. Officers attending these sessions know they are going to “get dirty” and learn things to be more effective and are asking more questions.
- **Customized, Personal Experience:** Flypaper allows the Tempe PD to create “non-linear” training that allows anyone to access the right information based on how they answer questions. Tempe PD now creates one storyboard for both experienced and new staff training that is highly focused and targeted and personalized for Tempe. “Instead of canned “out-of-the-box” training, we are able to completely personalize it. A recent training on graffiti included photographs and statistics from Tempe, instead of generic information.” Gina Pinch
- **Measurement and Increased Retention:** Using an interactive training tool empowered the Tempe PD to build self-assessment and other testing elements into the training, which has resulted in increased learning retention. The department will also use the tracking and analytic capabilities in the future to help determine which types of training are most effective for their department.
- **Reference Knowledgebase:** Training content is now a reference resource beyond the initial session because it is available anywhere and at anytime. Officers access information 24x7 through their in-vehicle laptops. A field training officer can leverage e-Learning to teach a new officer something, fill in a gap and then assist the new officer to directly apply that knowledge all while in the field. Also staff members returning from leave or military duty now have full access to the training when they return to duty.
- **Efficient, Easy Implementation:** The ability to publish Flypaper content in html web format allows the Tempe PD to embed training programs directly into their Intranet site. The department’s IT staff appreciates this functionality because deploying online training programs has not burdened IT with additional management tasks.

The Tempe Police Department training group believes they are succeeding in their mission. They believe they have changed the culture and attitude towards training because other departments are now asking the training group to create a “Flypaper.” As one officer put it, “I appreciate the fact that I don’t need to sit in a classroom.”