



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Engagement Date

December 5, 2022 - December 20, 2022

Introduction

The City of Fort Lauderdale (CFTL) is known for its rich, natural beauty of the beaches, waterways, and cultural offerings, as well as the variety of entertainment and educational opportunities. The city has numerous critical job functions and responsibilities to the community and to its citizens. Until recently, CFTL lacked a learning management system (LMS) to digitize many of its HR processes, including training and reporting. With the help of Meridian Knowledge Solutions, CFTL was able to bridge the gap between desk and deskless employees, increase training involvement, and create a more sustainable approach to training.

Challenges

Before utilizing the Meridian LMS, The CFTL tracked their training, course completions, and other metrics through physical paperwork and filing. According to recent research, 75% of organizations must meet several training record requirements. For CFTL, they wanted a more efficient way to keep training records and reduce the margin of error. Furthermore, this system did not give the city the reporting and insights that they would have desired. As a result of all these factors, the city saw the need to automate its workflows and digitize its records to reduce the amount of time Human Resources was spending on tracking and maintaining training records.

Desk vs. Deskless

In recent years, Fort Lauderdale has emphasized online learning and the ability to extend professional development opportunities to all employees, regardless of their job function. They identified a significant number of deskless employees, who may be classified as utility workers, in the field who are unable to complete their tasks. Given the nature of their job functions, these workers didn't have ample opportunities to take specific training courses to foster new skill sets to further their careers.

"Other people didn't see the value [in training] until COVID hit. There was a glaring disparity among deskless employees, who are entitled to not only professional development but to learn emotional intelligence and soft skills", said Patricia Palmer, Learning and Development Specialist for the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Even among desked workers, the city experienced a revolving door of employees. The high turnover among these employees was primarily due to the time required to complete in-person training. This roadblock made it much harder for them to acquire the skills and competencies to grow within their careers at CFTL. The city sought an LMS that would allow these workers the flexibility to complete training and ease of entry.

"One of the things was the user's ease of entry. With Meridian, it was as simple as one click, and they're in," said Palmer.

Increase Training Involvement:

Along with the need to close the gap between desked and deskless employees, the city urgently needed to increase training participation. In the past, employees had difficulty figuring out how to sign up for training, or they were able to sign up but would not attend. Through previous training efforts, ensuring that employees completed the required training was challenging because it required greater flexibility and time away from their workstations or locations to attend in-person training. Additionally, it would have been costly to have someone leave their workstation for the day to take dedicated time to complete training and have someone replace them or not have that position operable for the day. The city needed a cost-effective solution that would engage their employees and have the flexibility to complete training, whether they were in an office or working in the field.

Sustainable Training Approach:

Before the City of Fort Lauderdale leveraged the Meridian LMS, they tried other vendors for training content and reporting. However, they wanted more bandwidth within these services. The city sought a solution that could offer more robust reporting to provide insights on how to evolve its training program. Additionally, they needed a user-friendly platform that would resolve their challenges with computer proficiency among city employees. Through the guidance of the Meridian Support team, the CFTL were able to find a long-lasting solution that could help them foster the learning culture that they had been searching for.

“We saw the difficulty people had with identifying what to click on and how to access the training,” Palmer said. “The ease of use within the Meridian LMS was our goal to make it simple for all users.” The city wanted to encourage users to sign in for their own training within the LMS rather than having the department sign up for them. The system would be able to recognize them after only one sign-in, and this would also increase user proficiency and comfortability utilizing the learning platform.

Solution

Fort Lauderdale leveraged Meridian’s Single Sign On (SSO) authentication, access to OpenSesame content integration, and blended learning solutions to target its primary training program objectives. Given the user base had minimal computer proficiency, CFTL wanted to make it easy for their users to access and complete the training. SSO authentication allows users easy entry as the system recognizes them for future use after signing into the platform once. SSO streamlines the process and makes it easier for both administrators and users.

Along with the SSO authentication, CFTL leveraged the OpenSesame integration within the LMS. OpenSesame is a content authoring partner of Meridian, which integrates seamlessly into the Meridian LMS. The OpenSesame integration reduces the city’s need to create its own training modules by providing access to customized content for extended enterprise training programs.

This integration allows the city to have access to various professional and career development courses to increase user engagement and expand user proficiency within their roles.

Since CFTL has a significant number of desked and deskless employees, it was vital for them to have the ability to extend training to both populations. In addition, several departments and different job functions require unique training content. Meridian’s blended learning solution allowed the city to design, configure, and deploy its training solution based on the most applicable content for its departments and roles. Furthermore, based on their activity, the LMS recommends relevant training offerings to each user by using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML). These recommendations further lead to increased engagement and participation amongst the city’s employees.

Implementation

There were many integrations accessible within the Meridian LMS that allowed Fort Lauderdale to meet their critical business and training goals. CFTL was pleased with the OpenSesame content integration, as it has various course offerings and authors. The city found these courses well-fitted and relevant to the city's various departments and job functions.

With their OpenSesame subscription, they can access content from TedTalks to Harvard Manage Mentor and shorter microlearning to appeal to their wide range of learners. CFTL experienced a challenge through the procurement process: other providers were archaic and too cumbersome. Fort Lauderdale also found other providers were too geared toward the desked employee, whereas the Meridian LMS gave them the ability to meet the needs of remote learners as well.

"We use the LMS not only [to leverage] OpenSesame content but also to conduct our live and virtual instructor-led courses," said Palmer. "The more hands-on the user is in going in the platform, the better off we are in the long run."

With the guidance and support of the Meridian team, the city had a smooth implementation process and was able to start promoting internal adoption. By December, they had the tools to launch their internal "Learn-a-Thon" to get employees to sign in and complete training courses. Palmer and her team created an organization-wide competition where trainees would get a raffle ticket for every course they completed. With the main objective of increasing LMS logins, the competition successfully built adoption and created a familiar learning environment. In doing so, learners felt more comfortable and confident using the platform and increased the likelihood of signing in to complete more courses on their own time.

Palmer explained that she, her team, and most city employees needed help with computer literacy and the ability for employees to get into the LMS with ease. "We don't know what we don't know. The LMS implementation could have gone south, but due to the professionalism of [Meridian's Customer Success team], it went smoothly," Palmer said.



Results

Impact on Better Training Employees and Customers:

According to a recent [study](#), 70% of organizations either have a digital transformation strategy or are working on one. The City of Fort Lauderdale needed to digitize its records as they were previously tracking training with physical paperwork and filing. Physical reporting and filing resulted in a high margin of human error and more time and effort spent by the HR department. The City of Fort Lauderdale felt it necessary to centralize its learning program, have legally defensible training records in one place, and reduce the amount of time spent among HR professionals.

Through implementing the Meridian LMS, CFTL took the first, and arguably most important, step in the digital transformation of its training and development programs. By leveraging the blended learning functionalities of the Meridian LMS, the city was able to offer more flexible and relevant training to its workers. They also saw a tremendous reduction in turnover among desked and deskless employees due to greater accessibility to learning materials that can assist them in further professional and career development. Supplying employees with relevant training at their fingertips gives them access to career growth and mobility. Better-trained employees and supervisors result in a higher-functioning team with less turnover, increasing the ROI and overall revenue for the city.

“When we looked at the users during the contest, I noticed their interest. Before the contests, several people never came to training,” said Palmer. “Our leaders were introduced to the tools needed to be a good supervisor and embraced it.”

The Meridian Single Sign-On feature expedited users’ access to the LMS. As a result of the ease of use and further course recommendations within the platform, Fort Lauderdale saw a high course completion and fostered employee buy-in.

Conclusion

While Fort Lauderdale is still implementing their new and improved training program, affectionately known as “LauderLearn,” they plan to utilize the multi-domain capabilities further. Multi-domain will allow the various departments to have their own domain for training to manage their learners within one interface of the LMS. The city is also eager to leverage the robust compliance reporting features to have legally defensible records. CFTL recognizes that digitally transforming an organization takes time, and they’re optimistic about the progress made thus far. The city credited Meridian’s Account Executive, Jake Martinez, for fostering the relationship and gave kudos to the

Customer Success team for their responsiveness and ongoing support.

The implementation of a customized and user-friendly LMS was made possible by Meridian’s ability to understand the city and its specific needs. By recognizing their unique circumstances, Meridian tailored a training solution to bridge the divide between the variety of city employees, resulting in a more personalized and sustainable approach to learning.