

GIVING MEMBERS EASIER ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Story of AANA and Intelladon

When a professional association already has 90% of its target audience, the main job is membership retention. To do that, you'd better have a great answer to the question, "What have you done for me lately?"

With the overwhelming number of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) already members of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA), one way John Preston, DNSc, CRNA, answers that question is through exceptional professional development opportunities.

Preston is AANA's Senior Director for Education and Professional Development. He told Intelladon that AANA had conducted face-to-face education at annual conferences and programs around the country for many years. But until recently, they had never offered any online education. With 40 continuing education (CE) credits required every two years to maintain certification, CRNAs must constantly be on the lookout for certified courses that fit their budget, workload and other obligations. AANA knew it could provide a valuable member service by offering online CE courses that would be available anywhere, anytime.

Put Membership Interests First

Three main considerations drove AANA's project to implement a learning management system (LMS) for its members:

1. What do our members want in online education?
2. What product will do what we want?
3. Who is the right partner to help us achieve our goals?

First, Preston's group developed a survey of members' online education interests, inhibitions and issues. Education and Professional Development Specialist Marilyn Noettl, MS, RN, manages AANA's online education department. Working with Marketing and Public Relations organizations, Noettl conducted a focus group to ensure they understood concerns about cost and ease of use, and asking about the LMS name and design elements such as colors.

With a bevy of evaluation tools and matrices to support their search for potential products, AANA ultimately decided that NetDimensions' EKP platform best met their technical needs. In addition to its power, its reporting capabilities were a big draw. So was the limited customization they would need.

The search for the right solution integration partner was next. "Hands down, Intelladon met our needs best in all categories," Preston says. Intelladon had the deep expertise to help work through their atypical use of EKP as an external-facing LMS with purchased products. Intelladon could handle the IT end of things without burdening AANA's internal IT group, which was preparing for a major infrastructure revitalization and system upgrade.



Executive Summary

The Challenge

Maintain a reputation for stellar member service and professional development by offering online continuing education courses

The Solution

Intelladon Services

Solution Implementation and Integration

Learning Solutions

NetDimensions EKP, Articulate Rapid e-Learning Studio and MindLeaders

The Result

AANA*Learn*[®], launched in six months without disrupting internal IT operations and already exceeding first-year benchmarks

AANA LEARN[®]
Expanded CE Learning

Finally, Preston says, "Intelladon has a very well-developed customer support system in place, and that was an important deciding factor. We were clear up front that this was a new venture for us and we weren't ashamed to admit we would need some hand-holding. Intelladon told us they could provide that—and then they did provide that," Preston says. "The collegiality and the interest in helping us to maintain satisfaction of our customers has been a strong point."

Get from Planning to Launch in Six Months

In February 2009, Intelladon provided EKP training to three association staff members. Intelladon recommended Articulate Rapid E-Learning Studio as the authoring software and MindLeaders as one source for fully developed e-Learning content to augment AANA's initial offerings. Implementation began a month later. Within six months, *AANA Learn*® launched with 18 CE credits available. In less than 18 months, Noettl and two assistants have made more than 40 CE credit courses available.

Noettl and her staff handle the course production work. Most content comes from members with expertise in specific subjects. "The expert provides a PowerPoint presentation. We work with them to produce the audio, and sometimes streaming video," Noettl says. The CE program is then developed as an online course for EKP. Noettl's group ensures that courses incorporate principles of adult education, that content is manageable on the LMS and that the courses appeal to their audience.

Noettl says they were a little hesitant going into last year's recertification cycle, but it worked out smoothly. Despite a large spike in volume for course purchases and completion, they had no significant increase in tech support. "It was a great test of our system and our content that everything worked out well. EKP and Intelladon never let us down."

Continuing to Meet Member Needs

When a member completes a course on *AANA Learn*®, it is credited to their CE records in just one business day. In contrast, commercial training providers may take up to 30 days after a course is completed to submit records to the AANA. This adds to the burden of advance planning for CRNAs nearing recertification. A delay could result in a lapse of certification preventing them from working. In addition, there is a large penalty for lapse in certification. One-day turnaround sounds like a great response to "What have you done for me lately?"

AANA is testing another innovative approach: moving some content from regular conference sessions into online learning modules, and incorporating the price of the modules into the conference registration fee. "Two-and-a-half days for a face-to-face conference is not enough time to teach everything you want," says Preston. This new approach can cut down on the face time needed at a traditional meeting, plus members can work on content both before and after the meeting.

About AANA

The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) is the leading professional association for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) who specialize in anesthetic care and administer approximately 32 million anesthetics in the United States each year. Ninety percent of CRNAs belong to AANA, unheard of among other professional associations. Unlike other areas in the nursing profession, more than 40% of AANA's members are men.

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John Preston, DNSc, CRNA

Senior Director for Education and Professional Development

Learning Insights: Marketing the LMS to Members

Preston encourages other associations contemplating an external LMS to develop a marketing plan to promote the e-Learning launch to members. "Intelladon experts helped develop our initial marketing campaigns. Plan to include external marketing help as one of your initial system expenses," he says.

Finally, an external LMS such as *AANA Learn*® "touches every part of our association. Don't just think you're delivering education. You are marketing for the association. You want it to be the most positive experience every time members come out here for online education. We are willing to do whatever it takes to give them a positive experience every time." That's why AANA membership stays at 90%.