

## **CASE STUDY - NEXT DIRECTORY**



### **Executive summary**

This case study gives an overview of how Mail Order retailer NEXT Directory have benefited from implementing a radical new e-learning solution from Atlantic Link Limited.

### **The challenge**

In 2003, NEXT Directory were faced with a major challenge in their call centres – how to cost effectively train hundreds of new users and equip them to work on their complex IT systems. New starters had to learn a series of complex IT systems and procedures as quickly as possible so that they could start taking orders and producing revenue in the call centre.

### **The solution**

NEXT turned to Atlantic Link to develop a fully interactive simulation of their call centre IT systems, allowing staff to be trained at any time on a brand new training simulator. The initial system comprised around 3,000 screens of software simulation.

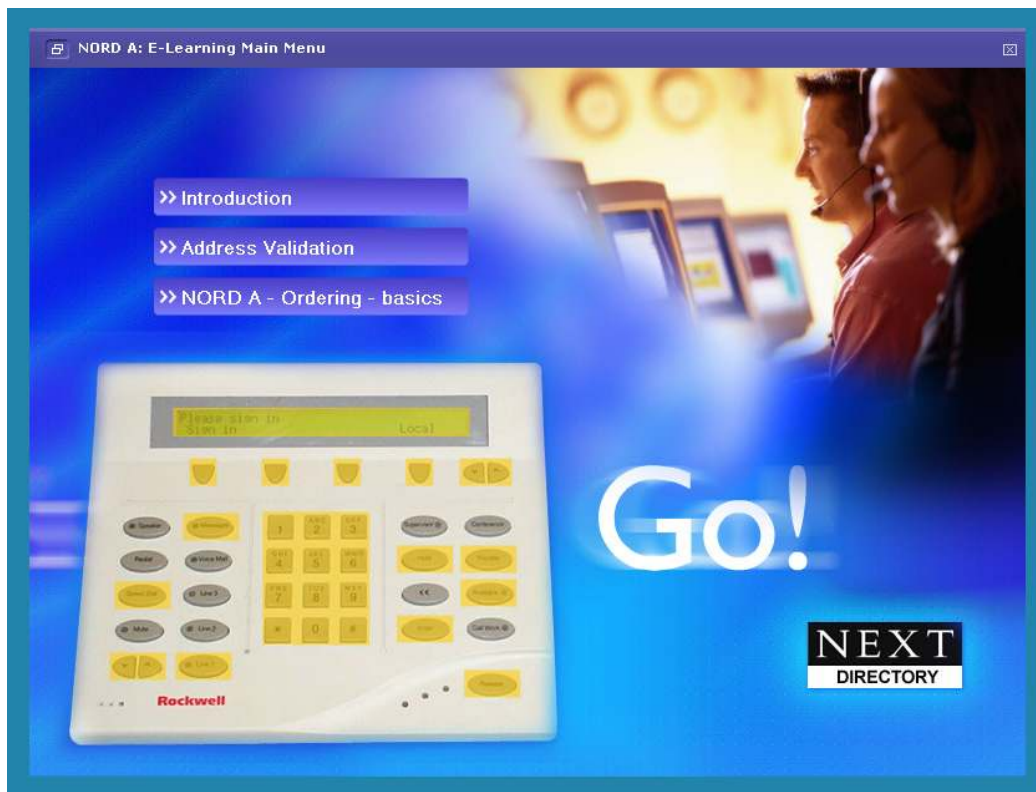
The e-learning solution combines highly interactive software simulations and role-play scenarios to ensure that all call centre staff are equipped to deliver the best possible customer service to NEXT Directory customers.

The system developed by Atlantic Link is an exact simulation of the IT systems in use in the call centre, backed up with additional help and instructions to allow users and trainers to navigate confidently through the screens and processes.

### **How were the challenges addressed?**

The solution allows trainers to deliver courses on a 'safe' simulation of the live system.





It solves all of the data protection issues by allowing users to learn on dummy data rather than on live accounts.

The highly flexible e-learning package also accommodates both classroom and stand-alone training, as requested by the customer. A special 'trainer mode' can be used for classroom training, with enhanced help being provided in 'stand-alone' mode.

In classroom mode, the simulation is almost indistinguishable from the live system, giving learners the most realistic experience possible.

The e-learning solution combines highly interactive software simulations and scenarios to ensure that all call centre staff are equipped to deliver the best possible customer service to NEXT Directory customers.

### **The benefits**

The system has already saved thousands of hours of trainer preparation time, and has provided NEXT Directory with cost savings running into six figures. As well as the savings in trainer time, NEXT have been able to



switch off their expensive training servers and reduce the length of their delivered courses.

Other benefits include improved reliability (the new system does not 'crash' when all the trainees press the same key at once) and the ability for users to take refresher courses at any time - even if the required classroom course is not running.

The integrated learning management system allows NEXT to track and monitor course usage and also automatically monitors keyboard accuracy. This allows NEXT to identify those trainees who are not yet ready to be unleashed on the public because of a lack of typing skills.

### **Future plans**

Since purchasing Atlantic Link's rapid production tools (Content Point and Capture Point), NEXT trainers have been able to add over 6,000 screens of learning to the 3,000 originally created by Atlantic Link. This has been achieved in less than 6 months, and by staff without any programming skills.

Commenting on the numbers, Mike Alcock, Operations Director of Atlantic Link stated: "These amazing figures prove that our tools are incredibly efficient at creating bespoke IT training courses. With our rapid production tools, course creation wizards and automatic annotation, it is now possible for organisations to create their own courses in record time. Most e-learning vendors would be quoting over 12 months, and massive production costs, for this volume of screens using traditional e-learning toolkits".

Since installing the Atlantic Link solution, NEXT Directory have trained over 4,500 students on 30 different courses. They are now looking at rolling the solution out into other areas such as soft skills training.





### About Atlantic Link

A UK private limited company, based in Nottingham and founded by Directors Tony Reddington and Mike Alcock in October 2002, Atlantic Link Limited develops and markets software tools to enable enterprises to create and deliver flexible, cost-effective and manageable multimedia **e-learning solutions** to their internal and external communities, and also uses these tools to provide services to assist these enterprises in developing such e-learning programmes.

Using its high-quality, cost-effective development subsidiary in Ukraine, Atlantic Link has produced leading applications software tools, using state-of-the-art software technology and high performance server-centric architecture, to locally or remotely capture and create multimedia e-learning content, generate e-learning packages from this content, and manage the implementation of the e-learning process. This can be performed locally via a PC-based client or via a web-interface, and allows



---

the enterprise managers to monitor, update and manage the solution from central servers.

With a highly skilled and experienced management team, including e-learning and education specialists, Atlantic Link has built up an impressive blue-chip customer base in the UK and overseas, providing both the software tools and programme development services, including world-leading brands from the automotive, finance, retail and government sectors. It is also developing an extensive channel partnership network for the provision of e-learning solutions internationally.

Atlantic Link's software solutions – Capture Point™, Content Point™, ICMS™ and LMS – are world leaders in their application and technology approach, and the company has a significant lead over its competition in this field. Product development for the current range of products has been completed, and the products are highly marketable, with ongoing developments targeted at feature addition and enhancement to capture customer and future market needs.

Atlantic Link's suite of software programmes gives it a significant advantage over traditional e-learning tools. The directors believe that this will lead to rapid sales development as companies and academic institutions realise there is an alternative to protracted and expensive e-learning development techniques.

