

A business story from



Gem of a course gets design treatment to sparkle with new business value

THE CLIENT

EA Learning, an international provider of training services for IT professionals

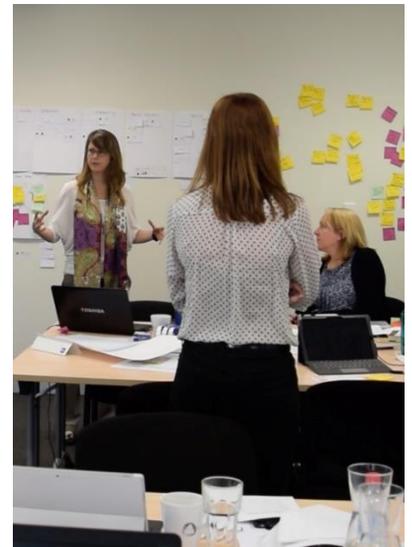
EA Learning is the corporate training division of Enterprise Architects, a recognised specialist and thought leader in business architecture. They provide a range of premium training services to clients in the disciplines of Architecture, IT Management and Design Thinking. Among these is the 4-day classroom-based Applied Business Architecture (ABA) course, one of only two professional development offerings in the industry. Delivered across Australia, the UK and the USA, the ABA course provides participants with the skills and knowledge they need to map the architecture of a business through lenses of strategy and business capabilities, and plan the effective execution of strategy.



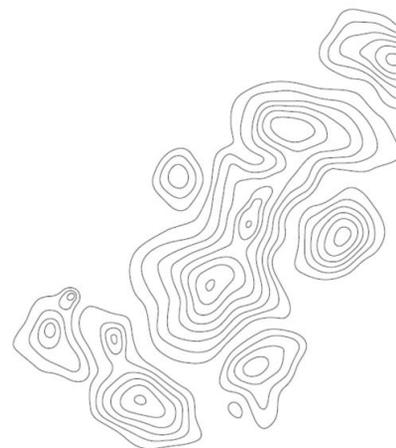
THE CHALLENGE

An inconsistent participant experience in the Applied Business Architecture course

The Applied Business Architecture course had evolved over a number of years, with minimal management of the course design or associated materials. Much of the courseware that did exist was outdated, duplicated and constructed without consideration of instructional design for adult learning. The course was taught by multiple instructors across the world, all who had strong industry expertise and public speaking skills, but were not trained teaching professionals. When delivering the course, they relied on a lengthy slide deck to function as a visual teaching aid, a prompt for talking points and a note set for participants. Compounding the situation was an excessive amount of course content. This meant that opportunities for applied learning during the course often suffered, with instructors focussing on content breadth rather than depth.



These factors resulted in a product that lacked consistency, with the participant experience varying with each instructor. “We recognised this inconsistency as a risk to participant satisfaction and therefore the business” comments Scott Comte, Director EA Learning. The absence of a robust course structure and documentation also meant that on-boarding new instructors was a costly and time consuming process. This limited the scalability of the course and made it difficult for EA Learning to explore and implement a blended learning model.



THE ENGAGEMENT

Re-design the Applied Business Architecture course and courseware to provide a consistent experience grounded in best practice teaching and learning

Questo was engaged to redesign the Applied Business Architecture course and associated courseware. The primary goals were an improved learning experience and a consistent and mature product that could be easily scaled to new instructors or delivery models. EA Learning wanted participant needs and preferences to drive the new course design. However, instructor satisfaction was also important, as the course can only deliver business value if there are motivated instructors to teach. Questo's holistic, human-centred Design Thinking approach was seen as an excellent match to these requirements. This, coupled with an existing working relationship and contextual knowledge, made Questo a unique and valuable partner in understanding and addressing the needs of participants, instructors and the business.

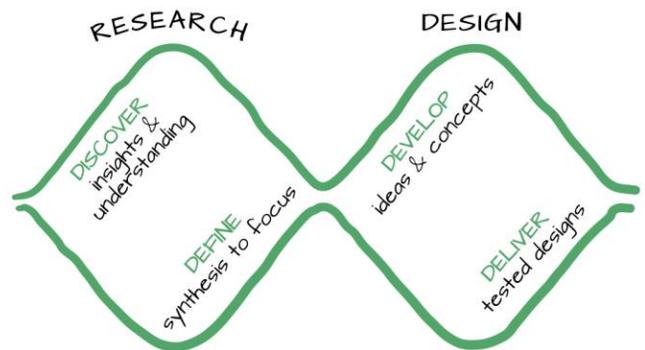
“I really appreciated that Questo drove this project in a very professional and respectful way that ensured it was delivered on time and on budget.”

~ Scott Comte, Director, EA Learning

THE APPROACH

Design Thinking infused with instructional design principles

Questo's Design Thinking approach provided a deep business and learning need analysis that explored Desirability - what was desirable to people involved, Feasibility - what the business was capable of operating, and Viability - what made commercial sense to adopt. The interaction between instructor and participant was placed at the centre, with an initial focus on developing the learning experience. The Double Diamond Design Process provided structure for design activities, while instructional design principles informed and justified how the course and courseware were constructed.



Double Diamond Construct from UK Design Council

Discover

The design process began with understanding and exploring the problem space. At the forefront was the recognition and understanding of the human factors involved in the course - the participants, the instructors and operational staff supporting course delivery. Questo used face-to-face conversations, observations and a review of course feedback to explore what aspects of the professional development experience were desirable to these stakeholders. During in-person interactions, Questo listened to what participants and instructors said to be desirable and discerned deeper insights that were not readily exposed.



Define

Questo collaborated with the EA Learning Director to establish a set of Learning Design and Delivery Principles. These principles, coupled with six ‘How Might We Questions’ (HMWQ) that emerged from the research findings in the Discover Phase, created a strong basis for next-stage design activities.

Develop

The HMWQ were each translated into a high-level course design and expressed using Questo’s Learning Event Canvas (LEC). The use of the LEC provided a succinct yet holistic snapshot of each option. Each course design was then systematically evaluated and scored against the Learning Design and Delivery Principles. In line with Questo’s human-centred approach, all six LECs were presented to a representative stakeholder group for feedback, discussion and final selection. This ensured varying perspectives were heard and considered, and that instructor buy-in was obtained for the new design. One design was selected by the group to develop into a working pilot course.

Deliver

The selected design was expanded into a detailed Course Plan which outlined learning outcomes, activities, content and sequence. Instructors were engaged in the creation process, giving them the opportunity to shape the course they would be delivering. After the Course Plan had been validated, Questo developed a full-range of courseware, encompassing a:

- New instructor slide deck designed to reduce text on slides and thus the cognitive load on participants; be visually appealing; and provide essential communication support for guiding classroom activities.
- Separate set of participant notes that included a Table of Contents.
- Set of four videos to expedite the on-boarding of new instructors. These featured an in-sequence walk-through of the content and teaching method, explanation of key areas and tips for effective delivery.

Instructors were inducted into the refreshed course during a briefing session in which Questo presented and explained the new teaching plan and courseware.

“The process was highly collaborative, ensuring that all affected stakeholders were heard and their feedback incorporated into the new design.”

~ Scott Comte, Director, EA Learning



THE OUTCOME

A consistent, high-quality course that provides new opportunities for growth

After the first run of the new Applied Business Architecture course, the design was updated based on lessons learnt during the pilot. It has now been fully implemented at EA Learning.

The new course has been embraced by both instructors and participants. “The feedback on the new course has been overwhelmingly positive both in terms of the design of the learning experience and also the quality of the supporting course collateral” comments Scott Comte, Director EA Learning. An increase in the number and style of applied learning activities has allowed participants to engage more deeply in high-value topics.

With a robust course structure and fresh supporting materials now in place, EA Learning can begin a new phase of product management and growth. The ability to quickly induct new facilitators provides greater scope for increasing course frequency.

The new course design is easily adaptable to other delivery modes, allowing EA Learning to address the market’s desire for blended learning courses. Having now established a consistent product offering, they can be confident that their marketing accurately reflects the actual learning experience. It has also provided a benchmark upon which instructor performance can be evaluated.

“The quality of the work is truly appreciated. The guidance video and notes were invaluable in preparing me to teach the course.”

~ Pieter Steyn, Instructor



“The new ABA course provides a much more polished experience for instructors and participants.”

~ Scott Comte, Director, EA Learning



Talk to us about how Questo can partner with you to design unique learning events!

Contact Helen on +61-416-246-816

Questo
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