NETCOACH

Internet Based Business Coach for SME Managers

Evaluation report of Second test phase results

Project Title	Internet based Business Coach for SME Managers
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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

1.1 Introduction

The main aim of this WP is to ensure maximum **efficiency**, **reliability, relevancy** and **user-ability** of the NETCOACH e-learning platform prior to official launch and open access. This can be subdivided into components as follows,

- To ensure functionality of the website and e-learning modules,
- To ensure relevance of the content,
- To maximise the user friendliness of NETCOACH,
- Perform on-site training with the project partners and SME volunteers,
- Evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and applicability of the curriculum to the target group's needs.

1.2 Pilot Testing Methodology

1. The partners contacted the potential participants, including those who participated in the Needs Analysis Survey as well as in their own wider network of companies, in order to identify those who would assist in pilot actions
2. The local partner introduced to the NETCOACH concept and the purpose of the pilot testing to the pilot testers. How this is achieved is up to the partner e.g. meeting, conference call, via e-mail, telephone etc.
3. Participants were given one week in order get familiar with, and evaluate, the e-learning platform www.netcoach.eu.com
4. Participants were asked to complete the evaluation questionnaire, providing as much feedback as possible http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6B2JW3W
5. Work package leader evaluated and assessed the feedback and produced a report of findings, recommendations, suggestions etc.
6. Pilot testing report is presented to the project team and response actions agreed.

2.1 Pilot Testing Results

The following is a summary of the responses to each of the survey questions.

1. Do you use e-learning tools as part of your role?

Yes	No
73.30%	26.70%

- *I use lynda.com for online software classes and tutorials. Other than this, miscellaneous tutorials/articles as picked up with Google searches.*

- *I am familiar with e-learning tools and didactical theory of e-learning, production of learning material, setup of e-learning systems*

- *We are using several moodle systems for our classes. we are a vocational training unit and a consulting company*

- *I work from different locations and venues, use e-learning tools like moodle*

- *Partly, when attending courses (foreign languages), not in daily business processes*

- *I've used different forms of e-learning in trainings I have participated in.*

- *Yes, I use e-learning tools as part of internal company trainings for staff development.*

- *E-learning updates to IFRS and IAS standards.*

- *I use them as a part of my daily learning process. A great way to access to useful information without having to go through a bunch of pointless sites.*

- *In university some of our professors use it to give us information*

- *I carry out research on a topic and learn a lot from instructional websites, blogs and newsletters*

- *As an entrepreneur I`m always looking for new information and knowledge.*

- *I would like to use more than I do. I try to gather as much information on the internet as possible, since I can adapt it to my necessities, schedules and rhythm, but I don't use as much as I would like because I find it difficult to access the information I am looking for. Did not know about NETCOACH until I was asked to fill in this survey.*

- *I develop online quizzes with MC, Cloze, Match-ups and Picture based question types. Another product is a flash based tutorial with slides, videos, text and audio- generated with Adobe Articulate. I lecture Business and IT topics in addition to Creativity.*

- *I use it as part of my work and training work - it is essential to me*

- *I deliver classes via live online tutoring*

2. How easy is to navigate the NETCOACH website and find the information you are

Extremely easy	16.70%
Very easy	63.30%
Moderately easy	16.70%
Slightly easy	3.30%
Not at all easy	0.00%

3. Please indicate your level of engagement with the following NETCOACH content.

	Excellent	Good	Average	poor	Very Poor
C&I Module	26.7%	**56.7%**	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%
KM Module	7.1%	**67.9%**	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
E-Business Module	20.0%	**43.3%**	30.0%	3.3%	3.3%
IMS Module	10.3%	**55.2%**	24.1%	10.3%	0.0%
Tools	13.3%	36.7%	**43.3%**	6.7%	0.0%
Links and references	6.9%	37.9%	**41.4%**	13.8%	0.0%

4. How useful is the information available in the "Creativity & Innovation" Module?

Extremely useful	23.30%
Very useful	60.00%
Moderately useful	16.70%
Slightly useful	0.00%
Not at all useful	0.00%

- *Very useful, more links to other sources in the web requested, there are lots of pages also networks dealing with innovation management*

- *Extremely useful, the cross linking to Innosupport content is useful*

- *Extremely useful, good examples, successful short overview about a broad topic, liked especially the check lists*

- *The module gives a good general overview. The toolbox seems very useful.*

- *Very useful. The tools for encouraging creativity are quite interesting, I will test some of them out.*

- *Some good ideas in here but overall I'm not sure how relevant it is to me*

- *Very useful. I`m highly interested in this module, that`s why I was extremely pleased to know there is one in your site. It surely gives a way to organize all your ideas and thoughts about certain innovations.*

- *Very useful. It can be helpful for people who have no information about innovation*

- *Extremely useful. Easy to navigate, none of the tools are over-complex, KISS.*

- *Very useful. Makes participants think outside th box*

- *Very useful. Overall the module is very comprehensive. There are some good components in this module.*

5. How useful is the information available in the "Knowledge Management" Module?

Extremely useful	7.10%
Very useful	67.90%
Moderately useful	21.40%
Slightly useful	3.60%
Not at all useful	0.00%

- *Overall impression good but too much text, too detailed and not that appropriate for small businesses as expected.*

- *Too much material to read, preparation of more tools out of the main content possible? more further links and references (books, websites).*

- *Again good overview. Examples could be addressing small companies in more details.*

- *Knowledge management is a topic that is usually overlooked in SME's, but is of prime importance.*

- *Some good ideas in here but overall I'm not sure how relevant it is to me*

- *Quite in-depth, found it very good.*

- *If possible, there could be more diagrams in the text*

- *I did find the module quite interesting but KM is not a major focus for our organisation at the moment.*

6. How useful is the information available in the "E-Business" Module?

Extremely useful	17.20%
Very useful	51.70%
Moderately useful	24.10%
Slightly useful	6.90%

Not at all useful	0.00%

- *Good overview about the topic. e-tendering is explained very detailed...I think too much in comparison to the general e-business content.*

- *Part 1 perfect, part two needs more practical examples but apart from this I found it useful too.*

- *Extreme broad topic managed in very short articles (not all but some).*

- *especially the first part about e-tendering is very good, although the information is very special for me because I have never used e-tendering, interesting to read*

- *Module content for my business not so interesting.*

- *The current content might be more relevant to larger-scale enterprises. Users from smaller enterprises might benefit more from more trivial and practical applications of e-business.*

- *Everybody in business needs to know about E-Business*

- *Very basic/generic information on e-commerce and e-tendering.*

- *Presently I do not need this module, although I might read it.*

- *Swap around 3.1 and 3.2?*

- *Some excellent information in here. Relevant to all business I think as the internet is a vital tool for everyone. I think the module is missing a guide to developing an internet marketing strategy.*

7. How useful is the information available in the "Integrated Management Systems" Module?

Extremely useful	6.90%
Very useful	44.80%
Moderately useful	41.40%
Slightly useful	6.90%
Not at all useful	0.00%

8. How easy is it to download files from our website?

Extremely easy	56.70%
Very easy	40.00%
Moderately easy	3.30%
Slightly easy	0.00%
Not at all easy	0.00%

9. Overall, how satisfied are you with the NETCOACH website?

Extremely satisfied	33.30%
Moderately satisfied	56.70%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10.00%
Moderately dissatisfied	0.00%
Extremely dissatisfied	0.00%

- *Toolbox is very useful! a offline version should be provided (USB stick?) - I could use it for dissemination within the network. in general: more illustrated content could motivate users to use the materials; provide links to other sources*

- *Time permitting, am interested in delving further into content in the various modules, particularly the E-Business module.*

- *Content should be improved concerning e-learning. it is too much text to read on one page, some articles are too long and contain too much written information. in further projects the material should be brushed up by multimedia elements and tests (it is expensive but worth doing it), there are other websites presenting this topics (C and I, knowledge management), may be you can make more cross links?*

- *Could not say something about online assessment (see question3) because did not find any kind of assessment on NETCOACH? The website ist quite well structured and easy to navigate. Some additional offers would be desirable (assessment, blog). Some modules are quite long...that leads to long navigation tree. This is not a real point of criticism but should be considered in the further development of the platform.*

- *I will watch the growing of the website and would like to use some content for consulting purposes.*

- *The website is very well arranged. until now the material stands a bit "on its own". will there appear some accompanying tools like assessment? is it planned to hav a communication board? I would return to the website to see some advantages and maybe new content. I plan to use it for consulting activities.*

- *Very clear structure and easy to navigate within the Modules. The space for the actual text is rather limited and thus it may be more user-friendly or easier for the reader, if the text is displayed on/in a bigger scale/frame. The tag cloud on the right is slightly irritating while reading the full text in the middle.*

- *Very nice and easy to navigate site with lots of information.*

- *Things that are important are cash-flow management, how to get paid, managing contracts / contract law, project management, advertising (how to get a bang for your buck) etc..*

- *Provide more specific information, for example - detailed steps to apply for a patent in the EU, etc.*

- *I found the site helpful and for now I have no complaints*

- *Already, I want to go more in-depth into the available subjects Haven't any negative feedback*

- *I just heard about this website when I was asked to fill-in this form, so I only took some time to give a look around. In this sense, my answers might no be the best to take into account as I only took a couple of hours to read some parts of it. Thank you for your effort. I think that it has a very good potential and that will be a tool to use in the future. Should I have further comments or suggestions I will inform you.*

- *Videos always add to the learning experience- case studies are also more "alive" when in video format. Would it make sense to have a forum discussion area as well? for people to post questions... What about a sign-up registry, to create a group of interested parties offering advice and exchanging ideas?*

- *Important to continue to pilot and test the site to improve navigation of the site and use of applications*

- *For me, the favourite aspect is information's, which are difficult to get, like an overview about creativity tools and innovation systems. I would like to get information (e.g. every six month) about new tools on the website of netcoach.*

- *There could be more self assessment tools and exercises*

- *Are their plans to add further modules? The more comprehensive the information on here, the more likely I am to remember the site when I need to inform myself about something relevant.*

- *It would be good to more explicitly reference the sources of information/theories. As a professional, I would be interested to know why I need to pay attention to what I am reading - does it come from a reliable source, is this best practice in the field confirmed over the years, or are these new trends in business administration topics. True, there are references under the chapter texts, but there is no background on the authors given. I would expect them to be introduced and referenced within the text itself. It would be good to define the exact target audience of this website right on the homepage. It is targeted to SME's, but which ones more specifically? Those in EU countries, in developed/developing countries or maybe the e-business model now is putting pressure on all to function in a global marketplace where each and every SME can benefit from this tool and improve its operations and reach. It would be good to state that in the very beginning so as to engage the user's attention right away. The location of the cloud tag on the home page is confusing, at first I thought this is the main content. I would swap the location of the cloud tag with the one of the Business Coach start button on the left. Intuitively information placed on the right or left side of the screen is perceived as advertisements and users might overlook. I would in fact return to this website. I hope over time you enrich the content and keep it contemporary. Some case studies would also be very interesting and useful. A forum for ideas exchange would be good for users to connect and would serve as a feedback and a hint for topic development for you in the future.*

3.1   Actions Arising out of Pre-Pilot Testing

The following are the main actions arising out of the pilot test phase 2. These actions are to be put in place prior to translation and 3rd pilot test phase.

- Explicitly reference the main sources of information/theories in the Introduction chapter of each Module
- Provide, where possible, more links to other sources (books, websites, etc.). This could be included in a separate document included in the toolbox of the

Introduction chapter of each module

- In general material should be brushed up by multimedia elements, self assessments and exercises where possible
- Review Knowledge Management Module based on the following comments is required. 'too much text', 'too detailed', 'Too much material to read', 'preparation of more tools out of the main content possible' 'If possible, there could be more diagrams', 'provide links to external sources, books, websites etc'
- Review E-Business module to consider 'Users from smaller enterprises might benefit more from more trivial and practical applications of e-business', 'The current content might be more relevant to larger-scale enterprises', 'Swap around 3.1 and 3.2', 'I think the module is missing a guide to developing an internet marketing strategy'
- Produce an offline version of the toolbox (USB/CD)
- Some additional offers would be desirable, e.g. blog, users forum and/or notice board
- The space for the actual text is rather limited and thus it may be more user-friendly or easier for the reader if the text is displayed on/in a bigger scale/frame
- The location of the cloud tag on the home page is confusing. The tag cloud on the right of learning content is also reported as 'slightly irritating while reading the full text in the middle'. Move the tag cloud to a more desirable location if possible.

Other points to be considered *and balanced with budget constraints*

- Things that are important are cash-flow management, how to get paid, managing contracts / contract law, project management, advertising (how to get a bang for your buck) etc.
- Provide more specific information, for example - detailed steps to apply for a patent in the EU, etc.
- Videos always add to the learning experience- case studies are also more "alive" when in video format. Would it make sense to have a forum discussion area as well? for people to post questions...
- For me, the favourite aspect is information's, which are difficult to get, like an overview about creativity tools and innovation systems. I would like to get information (e.g. every six month) about new tools on the website of netcoach.
- Are their plans to add further modules? The more comprehensive the information on here, the more likely I am to remember the site when I need to inform myself about something relevant.
- Consider a sign-up registry, to create a group of interested parties offering advice and exchanging ideas?
- IMS module to be reviewed to specifically tailor to the purposes/needs of small companies'