

Educational technology market development strategy

An innovative adaptive learning company gains a foothold in higher education

Abstract

A start-up educational technology company needed assistance launching its innovative adaptive learning platform to the higher education market. Despite the attention web-based technologies have received from the education community, the process for selecting and integrating those tools into academic curricula remains difficult to navigate. Using the Gilfus Education Group's expertise in the eLearning market and its extensive network of relationships to higher education institutions, the company was able to gain exposure to key decision makers in the learning technology review process.

The Challenge

Higher education institutions traditionally have been slow to adopt eLearning solutions. While some of the obstacles to acceptance are structural, such as budget constraints and complex approval processes, the major barriers are cultural. Most college professors, perhaps predisposed towards traditional teaching methods, are reluctant to investigate emerging instructional technologies. Gaining

attention in this market is a daunting challenge, especially for a small independent company.



The company's adaptive learning platform was designed by educators to combine superior eLearning content and technology with established pedagogical and motivational theories. Initial studies with college students demonstrated the platform's incredible potential to increase student engagement and improve course completion rates. However, the company needed to gain the attention of potential customers, and required assistance penetrating the higher education market. The company wanted insights into the pro-

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cess for selection and approval of course curriculum and technology, including the buyer profiles of key influencers and decision makers. It also wanted guidance on market positioning and effective communication of its value proposition to college faculty and administrators.

Solution

The Gilfus Education Group implemented a market development framework designed for emerging learning technologies. The project began by mapping the purchasing process for course content within higher education institutions and then segmenting the market to isolate early adopters of eLearning solutions. Institutions that frequently utilize adjunct faculty, for instance, tend to have dedicated curriculum specialists and more formal processes for evaluating and integrating innovative learning technologies.

With the selection of a refined target market, the Gilfus Education Group leveraged its extensive relationships within higher education to facilitate introductions to key institutional decision makers. The result was an institutional review program in which faculty, student groups, program chairs, and curriculum specialists collaborated to evaluate the adaptive learning platform's potential to achieve institutional objectives.

Results



The adaptive learning platform was introduced to over thirty colleges and universities within three months of the institutional review program. Feedback from institutional review committees not only generated demand for the platform but also gave the company crucial insights needed to further enhance its value propositions and product offerings for higher education institutions. To date, several colleges and universities have entered into formal agreements with the company while others continue to evaluate the platform's capabilities and develop relationships with its creators. The Gilfus Education Group is further helping the company align its positioning and product development to the needs of Higher Education Clients.

For more information, contact:

Gilfus Education Group

888.861.3375

gilfuseducation@gilfuseducationgroup.com