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Medical Science Education On-Demand

Custom Medical Training in a Day

The Power of Technology-Based Microlearning to Support Rapid, Cost-Effective Course Development

This case study examines how a newly appointed Medical Affairs Training Director at a large pharmaceutical company was able to build and deploy critical training to Medical Science Liaisons (MSLs), Field Medical Affairs (FMA) liaisons, and Medical Information (MI) employees, and how the use of technology-based microlearning allowed the Training Director to:

- Overcome the all-too-common problem in Learning & Development of having useful material in disparate places that cannot be leveraged and configured, as desired
- Assemble a fully customized training course in less than a day, which would normally have taken more than 4 months and \$35,000 to create
- Deploy foundational and continuous global training to hundreds of staff at multiple sites to support a high-profile product launch

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Situation & Background

Today's reality is that nearly every medical affairs organization is facing an ever-changing landscape filled with unprecedented challenges that impede the ultimate goal of enhancing patient-centric healthcare. With extreme increases in therapeutic complexities and heightened sensitivities to delivering value to health care practitioners, patients, and pharmaceutical companies alike, it's vital that medical affairs organizations fine-tune processes aimed at driving maximum impact and effectiveness. One such process is the need for targeted disease and therapeutic area training to support foundational and continuous learning for staff involved in multiple aspects of the drug development lifecycle.

But, how do you do assemble and deploy individualized, high-quality, and engaging cardiovascular education to hundreds of global medical affairs employees across multiple geographies in less than 2 weeks? This is the challenge a newly appointed Training Director at a prominent, top 5 global pharmaceutical company was tasked with—providing the educational support to launch a high-profile product.

The Training Director moved swiftly to create a plan of attack with a detailed training outline focused specifically on PCSK9 (a gene that provides instructions for making a protein that helps regulate the amount of cholesterol in the bloodstream), as well as, more generally, on acute coronary syndrome and hyperlipidemia. After painstakingly sifting through the organization's internal LMS, the Training Director identified thirty-three full cardiovascular-related courses that could potentially be used to support the eLearning intended to be implemented. However, all of the courses were excessive in length, and none of the material covered PCSK9 or the specific topics that the Training Director desired. Further, the short timeframe and limited budget eliminated the option of developing traditional custom learning content.

Realizing that the clock was ticking, the Training Director contacted a few of the organization's Learning & Development stakeholders to seek assistance for a strategy to meet the needs of the situation. At this point, the new-to-role Training Director was informed that the organization had access to SMi Source™.

Solution & Approach

SMi Source is an innovative, mobile, on-demand medical education library consisting of over 200+ full courses and 15,000+ microlearning topics covering a vast array of disease and therapeutic areas. The platform provides accurate, reliable, and fully referenced multimedia learning content presented in an engaging YouTube-like format that is designed to free resources from the time and cost burdens of building, updating, and maintaining custom learning content.

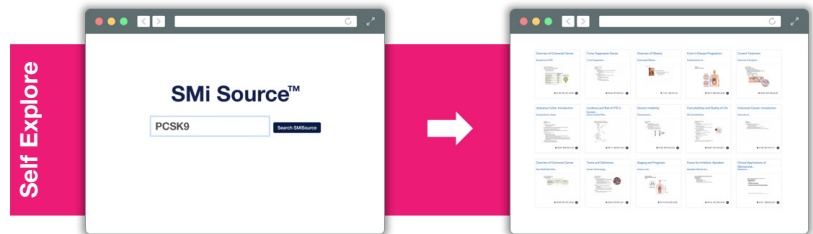
Through SMi Source's Google-like search capability, backed by extensive metadata built for each microlearning segment within the robust SMi platform, the Training Director was able to locate nearly 1,300 cardiovascular and, approximately, 10 PCSK9-specific microlearning topics (each about 1–5 minutes in length) for potential use in delivering the training. However, none of the PCSK9 microlearnings matched the unique flow and approach of the Training Director's outline. In addition, the PCSK9 content was buried in long, full courses stemming from hyperlipidemia content that was co-mingled with other lipid lowering agents, preventing the Training Director from using the specific PCSK9 segments without the full courses.

After contacting SMi Source Support, the Training Director learned that SMi Source provides the functionality to quickly and easily create custom courses by “mixing and matching” existing microlearning topics. Additionally, SMi Source provides the ability to create and insert user-generated content such as learning objectives, graphics, charts, tables, web links, and assessment questions within the custom courses.

Here are the steps the Training Director took to build the custom course in one day:

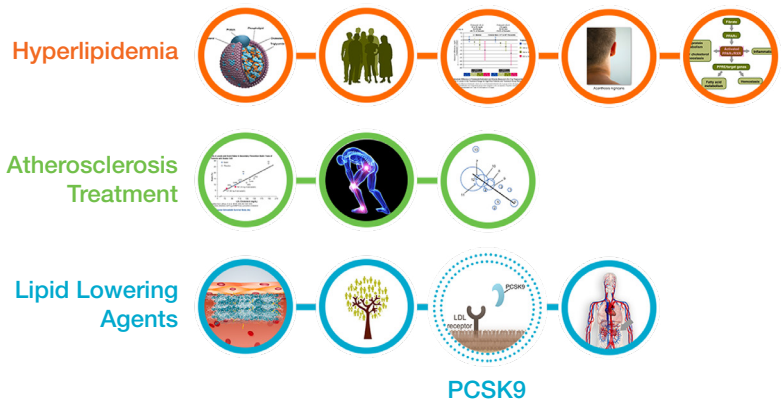
Step 1 – SEARCH

The Training Director used the search function within SMi Source to look for content that was already available within the “cardiovascular,” “hyperlipidemia,” “atherosclerosis,” “lipid lowering,” and “PCSK9” search criteria. Several courses of approximately 60-minutes in length were found, but the Training Director really wanted very specific sub topics within each course.



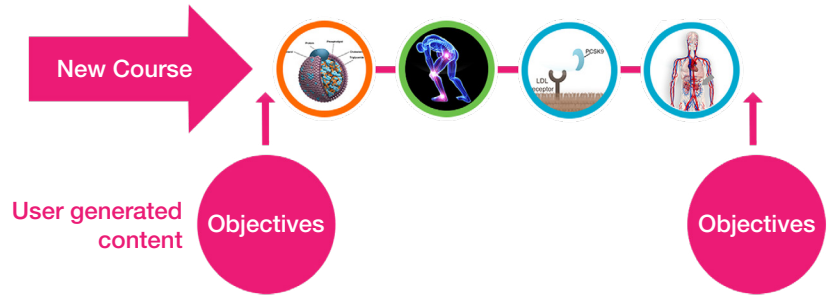
Step 2 – BUILD

The Training Director began to build a custom course by assembling existing microlearning topics in SMi Source that matched the training outline. As a topic was found that best addressed the corresponding areas of the outline, the Training Director simply added that topic to the newly created custom course in the SMi platform. This involved several hours of content review, but the Training Director quickly had most of the aspects of the desired course created without the time, cost, and effort of involving an instructional designer, medical writer, professional narrator, graphic artist, or animator.



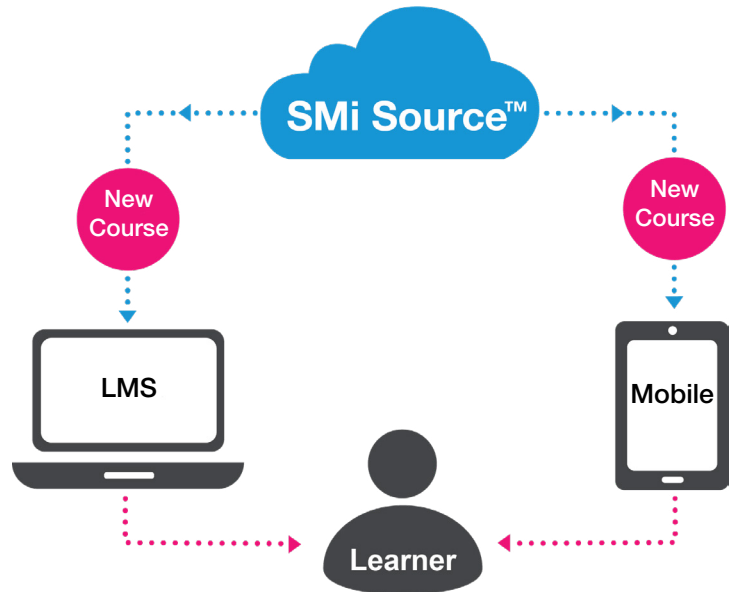
Step 3 – CUSTOMIZE

To tailor the content, the Training Director then changed the microlearning topic names, reordered the topics to match the training outline, and added notes to assist in the learners' understanding of the key takeaways from the content. Additionally, the Training Director easily inserted a custom course introduction, learning objectives, and a course summary by utilizing the user-friendly functionality within SMi Source.



Step 4 – DEPLOY

Finally, after the course was fully created, the Training Director utilized the Share functionality within SMi Source, which allowed the Training Director to email a link of the newly created course to the Learning & Development team, who then published the course immediately in the organization's LMS for global employee accessibility.



Results

Through the use of SMi Source, this Training Director was able to quickly deliver custom, global training. Highlights included:

- Successful delivery of custom, needs-based training tailored to over 500 employees across the global medical affairs workforce
- Produced training without any additional costs (beyond the license fee), without which, the Training Director would have spent days building a PPT or the training would have been outsourced (@ \$35k) and the deadline would have been missed
- Approximately, 120x reduction in the time-to-deployment by leveraging off-the-shelf content compared to custom developed content (1 day vs. 4 months), which allowed the Training Director to meet her goal
- Global consistency in driving foundational and continuous learning content and curricula
- Over 750 course views within the first 2 months of deployment
- Over 950 microlearning topic views, on average, monthly by learners across the global organization
- Access to trusted, on-demand, “bite-sized” microlearning anytime, anywhere, on any device using today’s technology
- Reporting and analytics on critical learning metrics to support strategic organizational and training decisions
- Exceptional course feedback reported by the Training Director and the company’s Learning & Development department—“Employees and sites were well-equipped and well-trained on disease and therapeutic areas relating to the study.”

Looking for Learning Innovation for
Today's Life Sciences Professionals?

Learn more about
SMi Source™

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About ScienceMedia & SMi Source™

For nearly 25 years, ScienceMedia has been delivering innovative learning solutions aimed at improving clinical competency throughout Life Sciences' R&D, clinical, medical affairs, and commercial organizations worldwide.

SMi Source™ is the industry's only cloud-based, on-demand, multimedia training content library of 15,000+ microlearning topics and 200+ full courses.

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