The State of Tennessee IT Academy –
A Workforce Development Success Story

In the midst of the current digital transformation, public sector organisations are being tasked to modernise their IT capabilities despite restrictive budgets and regulatory demands.

In addition to these pressures, governors and their CIOs are under the spotlight for a portfolio of underperforming projects, legacy systems that are consuming significant resources, and the ever-evolving risks associated with poorly protected networks and citizen data.

This has caused state executives to place a priority on the development of existing staff, while ensuring that new state employees are being hired into the right jobs, with the right skills to improve on the job productivity.

The State of Tennessee partnered with Learning Tree to build IT Academy, which operates as a state-run professional development hub and serves more than 1,500 state IT employees.

CHALLENGE: The State of Tennessee IT organisation had found it challenging to meet the needs of a 21st century government, while competing with the private sector to recruit and retain top talent. The state was in the midst of updating its IT organisational structures and classification, requiring a complimentary development program in addition to the reorganisation efforts that had already begun.

The state's IT department is made up of roughly 1,500 staff members that are supporting over 38,000 employees and serving 6.6 million residents.

Updating the state's IT organisational structures and outdated classifications was a huge challenge. The state's IT workforce is made up of approximately 1,500 staff members that are supporting everyday operations for over 38,000 employees. This state government serves a growing population of more than 6.6 million residents. At the same time, state government was struggling to attract top talent and retain its best employees. This combination of scale, growth, and staffing challenges required a transformative change to meet the needs of constituents and internal agencies.

SOLUTION: The state embarked on a journey to consolidate agencies for shared services and updated IT job classifications. With the knowledge that well-skilled staff are the foundation for a successful transformation, the State of Tennessee awarded, via a competitive procurement, a contract to Learning Tree International. Learning Tree partnered with a specialised team and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) across state government to build IT Academy. IT Academy operates as a state-run professional development hub and serves more than 1,500 state IT employees with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to support their agencies and customers. The state staff partnered with Learning Tree's IT Workforce Optimisation Solutions; the flexible, multi-year program includes the delivery of instructor-led courses across over 20 curriculum paths.

Solutions Included:

- Customised curriculum paths and web-based training modules that are regularly reviewed and updated with state SMEs to provide the State of Tennessee workforce with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities based on the defined job roles and practical, on-the-job application.

- An online IT Academy Knowledge Portal to support employee engagement and program-wide transparency, and provide self-service and program reporting.

- The Full Circle Training Experience, which includes pre- and post-course surveys, and post-course chat coaching sessions to ensure on-thejob application and a return on the state's training investment.

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Deliverables

IT Academy has emerged as an ambitious, highly effective entity to train staff and support the needs of a modern IT workforce. The State of Tennessee is supporting its IT operations through an effective workforce development program, and to date, the program has delivered strong results in enhancing knowledge, skills, and abilities.

650+
CLASSROOM EVENTS

3,200+
EDUCATION HOURS delivered
through web-based training modules

On a 4.0 Scale...

Average score of
CONTENT QUALITY

9,600+
COURSE ATTENDANCES

Only .5%
OVERALL STATE OF TN IT BUDGET
used to modernise the skills of
an entire workforce

Average score of
INSTRUCTOR QUALITY

Results

At the midway point of this workforce development program, the state has seen significant increases in the skills of their employees in critical areas like software development, project management, and information security. Examples of these increases in competency have been reported by the state's central IT organisation, as well as over 30 state agencies.

27%
PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT
reported by the State of Tennessee Employees*
*Results are an average of reported performance by attendees

- The State of Tennessee's central IT organisation and additional large state agencies **are investing in ITIL®** to support IT service management and delivery.

- The state's project managers are utilising state-specific methodologies to **support the software development needs of a 21st century government agency.**

- The Tennessee Department of Children's Services **successfully implemented Oracle and SQL Server database** skills to better organise and easily access information.

- Curriculum paths include **IT Success Skills** to develop well-rounded IT employees with business-critical non-technical skills.

- The State of Tennessee is **leveraging their investment in Tableau Software** to improve the quality of their data visualisations.

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