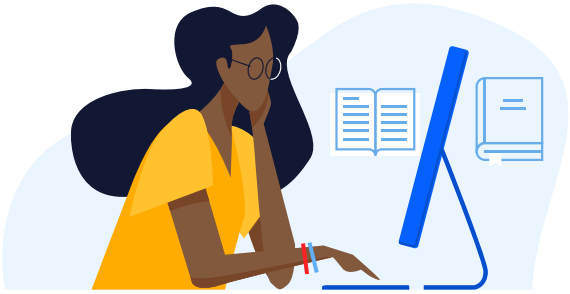
MINDEDGE LEARNING

Creating Online Experiences
at University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Continuing Education Case Study

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Conferences & Non-Credit Programs at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, offered a full roster of professional development and personal enrichment courses that adults can take to advance their careers, or explore a new hobby like dance, art, writing, or a second language.



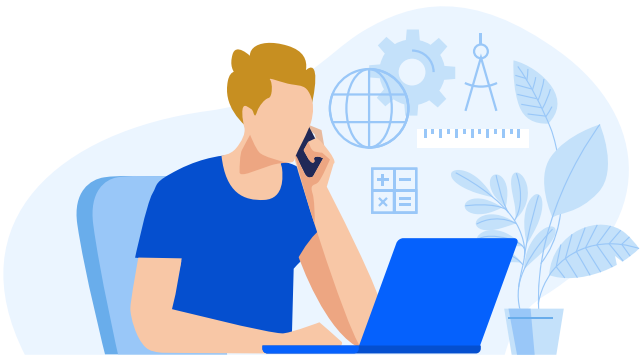
"Our tagline is 'Learning has no finish line.' That's the idea that, no matter where you are in your life, there's always something new to aspire to [or] learn,"

Director of Non-Credit Programs, Darrin Devault, said during an interview with MindEdge Learning's Chris Edwards, Senior Vice President of Strategy and Partnerships.



While their main demographic is adults, the Department of Conferences & Non-Credit Programs offered programming for learners ages eight to 80, such as a summer camp for children and a senior adult program in partnership with a senior center in Knoxville.

When the pandemic hit, and the department went completely remote, the team scrambled to salvage their spring 2020 course schedule while simultaneously helping instructors transition to an online format.



"We challenged ourselves with a couple questions," Devault said. ***"What can we do for our students to help them during the pandemic? How can we, as a department, stay relevant?"***

As part of this effort, the UTK team accelerated their onboarding of MindEdge as an online course provider, working to finalize the implementation of the relationship and delivering an online Lunch and Learn through the university Alumni channels to launch the courses. The event was focused on **Maximizing Your Online Learning Experience**.

"One of our long term goals before the pandemic was to identify and forge new partnerships with partners, such as MindEdge Learning, that offer online experiences," Devault said. ***"We were able to accomplish that with MindEdge and two other online learning partners."***

When the Department of Conferences & Non-Credit Programs vets new program partners, the team examines the catalog and demos the course materials, such as the activities and assessments, to ensure the material is relevant and substantial. When they feel confident about the quality of the courses, the team makes sure they feel comfortable with the program partners they plan to work with.

"I can't say enough about the folks at MindEdge Learning," Devault said. ***"You guys are such a wonderful new partner to us. You're enthusiastic, [and] you have a robust catalog of offerings that really blends well with what we already offer."***





They also embraced the idea of sharing free content, and the department partnered with an educational vendor to release a bundle of ten free, self-paced online courses during the month of May. The courses focused on hard and soft skills for those job searching, and those looking to polish their skills for the job they have. The free bundle brought in 500 enrollments.

"Part of our broader goal was to introduce people to virtual programming," Devault said. ***"A lot of people are accustomed to coming to an in-person, traditional classroom. Over this past year, we've used [the new online format] as an opportunity to introduce people to the concept of online learning, and show them the affordability and flexibility it presents to the learner."***

As he looked at the landscape beyond the pandemic-related shutdowns and forced remote activities—Devault expressed that his team is excited about the new opportunities that will come with their continued partnership with MindEdge.

"We feel like the future is really bright," Devault said. ***"We will probably have a few more months of up and down enrollments, but I really feel like we'll have a strong rebound, beginning in the fall 2021 term."***

Watch the interview on Youtube