



## ISS A/S, Upside Learning Build Strong, Strategic Training Foundations

ISS A/S

Best Learning Team

January 2019



### Company Background



<b>Company-at-a-Glance</b>	ISS is among the top 10 largest private employers in the world. It is a leader in the facilities management space. Each day, ISS has millions of daily interactions with clients, customers and visitors.
<b>Headquarters</b>	Copenhagen, Denmark
<b>Year Founded</b>	1901
<b>Revenue</b>	DKK 79.9 billion
<b>Employees</b>	500,000
<b>Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)</b>	74 countries
<b>Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)</b>	ISS has more than 200,000 customers each year; the business model is B2B but ISS also serves the users of their customers. Services offered are catering, cleaning, support, security and property and facility management.
<b>Industry</b>	Facilities management
<b>Stock Symbol</b>	ISS
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.issworld.com">www.issworld.com</a>

## Business Conditions and Business Needs

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### Snapshot of Business Conditions

ISS is a B2B company but impacts and engages with the users of its customers on a daily basis. As ISS competes with other facilities management companies on the basis of service quality and outcomes like higher employee engagement, rather than lowest price, these considerations become critical from a reputational and business standpoint:

- ISS employees must be given the same kind of treatment/experience that they are expected to provide for customers.
- ISS customers, being typically large and often global organizations, wish to create a superior employment atmosphere for their own employees. ISS plays a vital part in this through the manner in which contracted services are delivered.
- The customers' users must naturally be provided exemplary service, even from vendors, so that the entire business experience is positive and seamless.

### Snapshot of Business Challenges and Needs for Training

- **Varied Delivery Environments** — ISS team members could be working in the offices of a financial institution, a pharmaceutical company, a hospital, a mining camp or an international airport. In addition to vocational and on-the-job training to ensure high performance of daily duties, employees also must be prepared for what is appropriate in different environments.
- **Client Profile** — ISS serves clients in the hospitality industry, healthcare, defense, finance, aviation and many others. However, these clients all have one thing in common: they have high expectations of all ISS staff service delivery. ISS prides itself and sets business strategy on not only meeting, but exceeding, these expectations. For training, that breaks down to as practical a level as teaching managers to empower subordinates.
- **Workforce Composition and Cultural Variation** — Being such a large employer (500,000 people), the delivery of a consistent training experience across borders — working with many languages, ethnicities and cultures — presents a unique challenge. To illustrate, even to provide a simple example of what it means to have “service excellence” has to account for regional variations and many cultural nuances.
- **Localization, Translation and Regional Variations or Standardization** — Another challenge for a company of ISS's size is whether to focus on localization and contextualizing for regional variations (whether in policy, process or training language) or on standardization so that their customers can be guaranteed a

consistent service and that their workforce is sufficiently mobile to enable reassignment and relocation.

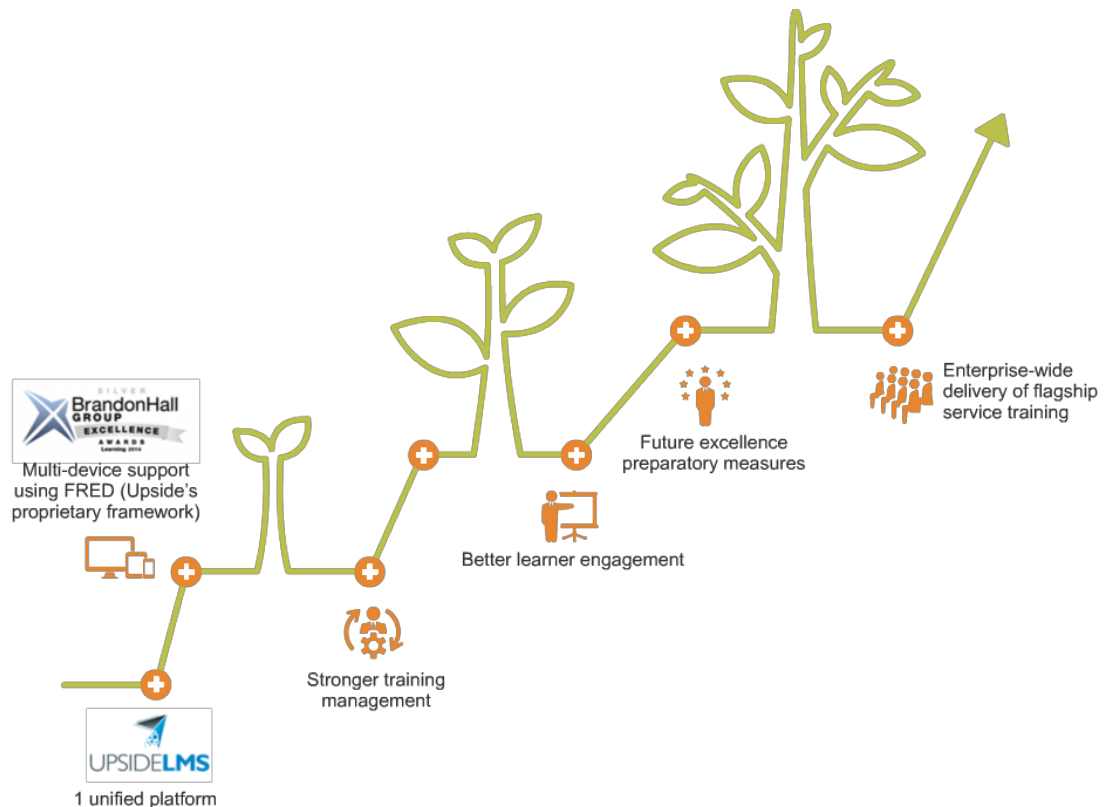
- **Making the Abstract Concrete** — The flagship training of the ISS service culture — “Service with a Human Touch” — teaches employees the concept of the human touch as a cultural touchstone within the organization. This is business-critical in that ISS considers “Service with a Human Touch” to be one of its key market differentiators. As it is both customer service and cultural training, it is delivered as a conceptual model with an expectation that each employee will creatively find ways to manifest it and training must enable them to do that — while still being scalable, replicable and accessible to all levels of the business.
- **Strategic Clarity and Imagination** — ISS consider itself the market leader in technology, innovation and efficient service delivery. The learning and development team is expected to be the torch-bearers for this organizational culture, using technology and innovations effectively across the world to ensure all team members are able to access the development opportunities on demand.

## Overview

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The partnership between ISS group learning and development and learning partner Upside Learning started in November 2016. In this short period, the association has achieved a considerable amount of positive results. The highlights are:

Figure 1: ISS Group and Upside Learning Achievements



Source: ISS A/S

## One Unified Platform — UpsideLMS Deployed as 'MyLearning'

ISS first partnered with Upside Learning to implement a uniform, standardized and centrally controlled learning platform. The UpsideLMS has been implemented and made available to ISS locations in about 30 countries so far and will be made available to the whole of the ISS team by the end of 2018. This has been a considerable logistical challenge, considering that because of the multiple time zones, service tickets come in waves as one region after another starts its business day. However, with the support of UpsideLMS' 24x7 service team, ISS group learning and development still has been able to quickly and efficiently handle these service requests and plans to cover 50 countries in all.

## Multi-Device Support Using FRED

Upside Learning has its own proprietary responsive development framework, FRED. Recognized instantly as a high-caliber, high-performance framework, FRED has won much



acclaim right from the start, being awarded the Brandon Hall Group Silver for Responsive eLearning Development within a year of its launch.

Given the needs of the organization and the high percentage of its team who are not office-based and are working on mobile BYOD, ISS made a strategic training decision to start making training available on any device. The obvious choice was to use FRED. By 2018, many of the legacy trainings have been redeveloped for delivery on mobile devices.

### **Stronger Training Management**

At the start of the partnership, ISS still was using classroom delivery for many programs. This made training management unwieldy in terms of tracking, compliance, catalogue management, etc., given the sheer size of the organization and the number of employees. Additionally, the training of front-line staff posed challenges particularly for onboarding training. For instance, the staff could be assigned to different client sites/operating from ISS offices and there could also be high turnover in some locations — but it was vital to roll out the training in a timely and scalable way all the same as the front-line staff are the face of the ISS services. The partnership with Upside has helped address these challenges through multiple initiatives as explained in the highlights.

### **Better Learner Engagement**

The problem with classroom delivery of training that includes scenario-based exercises is that learners do not get an “equal” opportunity to tackle the exercises. Someone will inevitably be the first to offer a solution, as a result interrupting or influencing the problem-solving thought process of the other learners. ISS and Upside have partnered and developed rich animated eLearning scenarios so that each learner is able to actually perform the exercises and benefit from them. This has been hugely beneficial for service quality and building frontline capability.

### **Future Excellence Preparatory Measures**

In keeping with how the rest of the organization works, ISS often has sought to leverage Upside’s expertise in innovation to explore ways to offer better instructional solutions and learning technology solutions. The strength of the relationship is that regular face-to-face meetings are scheduled so that Upside can present learning from its research and experimental prototypes for ISS to evaluate. The interventions discussed are beyond “regular” eLearning consultancy as they are firmly oriented in business strategy and include development of larger, non-task specific skills like design-thinking, ideas for preparing to meet the predicted challenges that the facilities management industry will



face with evolution and so on. Upside Learning builds off ISS business expertise and strategic insight to offer focused performance development expertise.

## **Enterprise-Wide Delivery of Flagship Service Training**

“Service with a Human Touch” is the essence of what makes ISS stand out from its competition. This is a training program that is delivered organization-wide across all countries, units and designations. “Service with a Human Touch” is a premium classroom program. Conducted with polished materials and richly interspersed with audience activities, the program is intended to be undertaken by all ISS team members, including frontline teams. To support the delivery of this training and study the cultural impact and to provide effective onboarding and refresher training, ISS contracted Upside to convert three elements of the program into eLearning (for scalability and cost-effectiveness) without losing out on the richness of the learning experience or failing to convey the abstract and human-centric messaging in a conventionally impersonal medium.

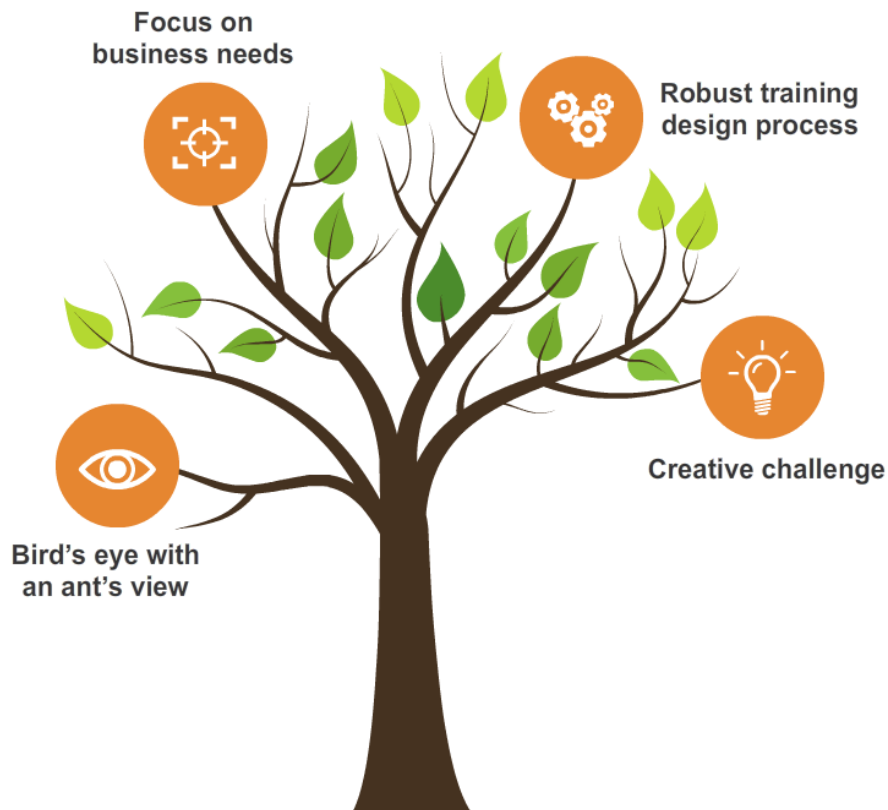
The closeness of the ISS-Upside Learning partnership was the key to overcoming these challenges and delivering a highly appreciated redesign of this business-critical training. ISS arranged for Upside Learning to attend the classroom session to absorb the participant experience and thereafter, the two brain-stormed and collaborated in an iterative process to come up with a set of extremely high-quality and well-received modules including animated branched scenarios.

## **Learning Approaches**

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The work done by the ISS-Upside Learning partnership has seen a marked evolution. These are the drivers of that growth:

Figure 2: Drivers of Growth



Source: ISS A/S

### Bird's Eye with an Ant's View

Everyone knows the strength of a bird's eye or big-picture perspective. This is amply provided by the ISS half of the partnership by consolidating inputs through one key point of contact, the group learning and development manager for systems and solution design, who has oversight of all global eLearning projects. From the Upside Learning half, a similar big-picture perspective is headed by the relationship management team led by the director of custom learning solutions. The "ant's view" is provided by the supporting teams that offer project and ground-level perspectives of how things can be done differently or better in day-to-day performance. Both sides of the partnership leverage the ant's view to offer insights into use opportunities, improved messaging and training efficiencies, which are then streamlined or curated by the bird's-eye view of what would be most valuable to business needs and strategy.

### **Focus on Business Needs**

While it is easy for particularly training partnerships to limit themselves to project-level thinking, the ISS-Upside Learning partnership is unique in that it always considers the larger business and overall direction of intended growth. People development approaches guide training approaches and the training partnership anticipates the future needs of employee development and performance. This is seen in scheduled relationship catch-up meeting discussion points and project-level framing of training requirements. The discussion of the everyday is effectively bridged to meld with the strategic vision.

### **Robust Training Design Process**

All new training requirements are diligently researched and collected through strong stakeholder engagement by the ISS half of the partnership. The presented requirements are then analyzed in-depth by the Upside Learning half to offer reframing for appropriate solutions and effective training impact. The teams work together to speak with stakeholders and check viability of considered solutions, prototype wherever necessary, and iterate based on user test feedback. The familiarity trap of close association is avoided consciously by always prioritizing the caliber of the training-needs analysis phase.

### **Creative Challenge**

Sometimes the need for speedy turnaround or established ways of working sacrifices creativity. Periodically, conversations in the partnerships offer creative challenges for each side to address: Can the training be done more economically or by reducing the deployment package size without sacrificing media richness or multi-language support without raising costs? Can stakeholders be convinced to let go of conventional associations of navigation or message control so that more contemporary exploratory or game-based approaches can be offered? Both sides take up these challenges enthusiastically to see if “conventional wisdom” of constraints can be overturned. This definitely reflects in the kind of approaches the partnership has been able to offer ISS staff.

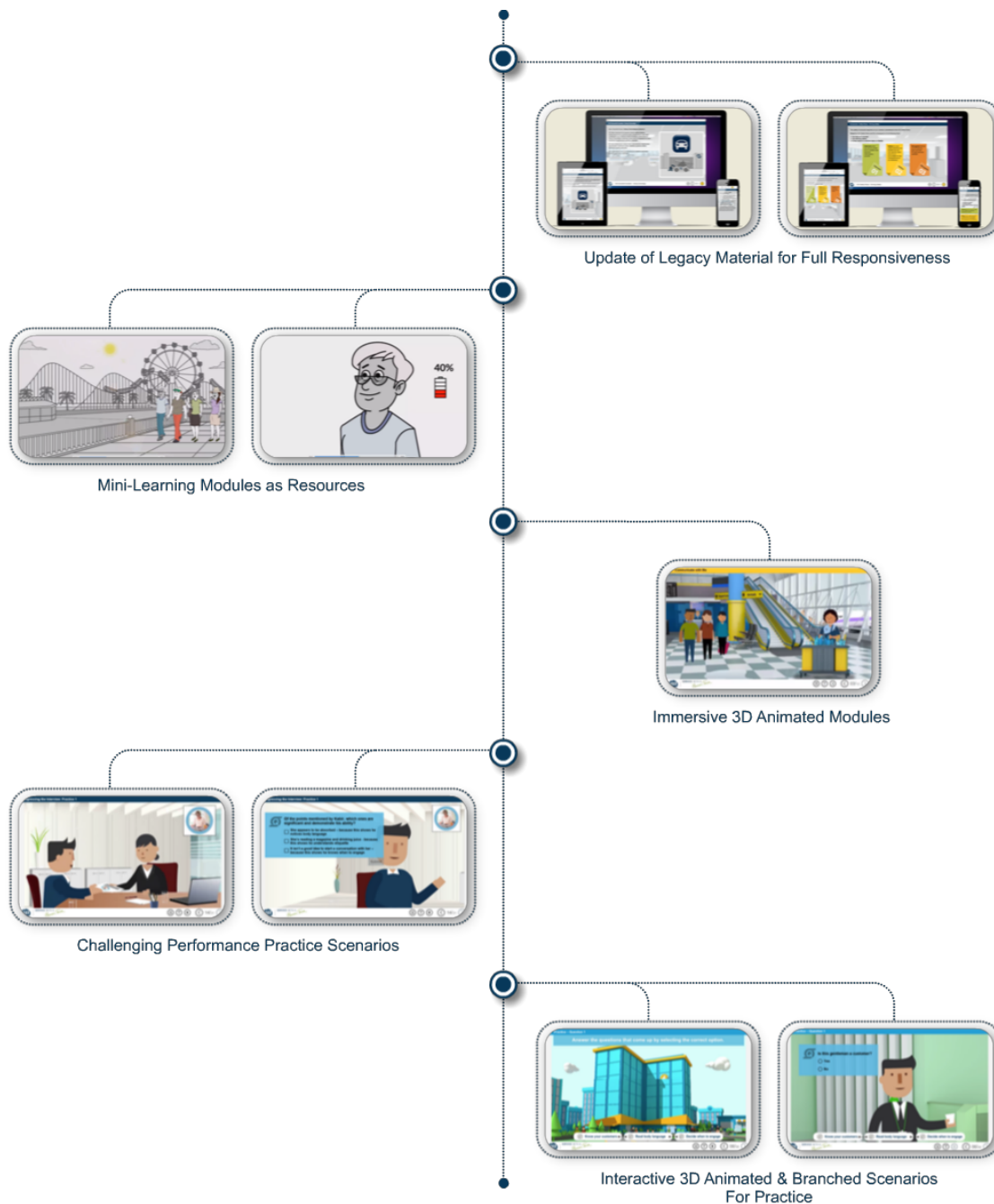
### **Results of Way of Working**

Here is a summarized timeline of innovation and approach improvement that the partnership has yielded, citing sample modules for demonstration:





Figure 3: Innovation Timeline



Source: ISS A/S

## Delivery of Solution

ISS considers implementation to be made up of two main stages — design and development, and deployment. Its partnership thinks of both stages as also two stages in which to add value to the organization.

### Design and Development

During design and development, these are the contributions that each side of the partnership typically makes:

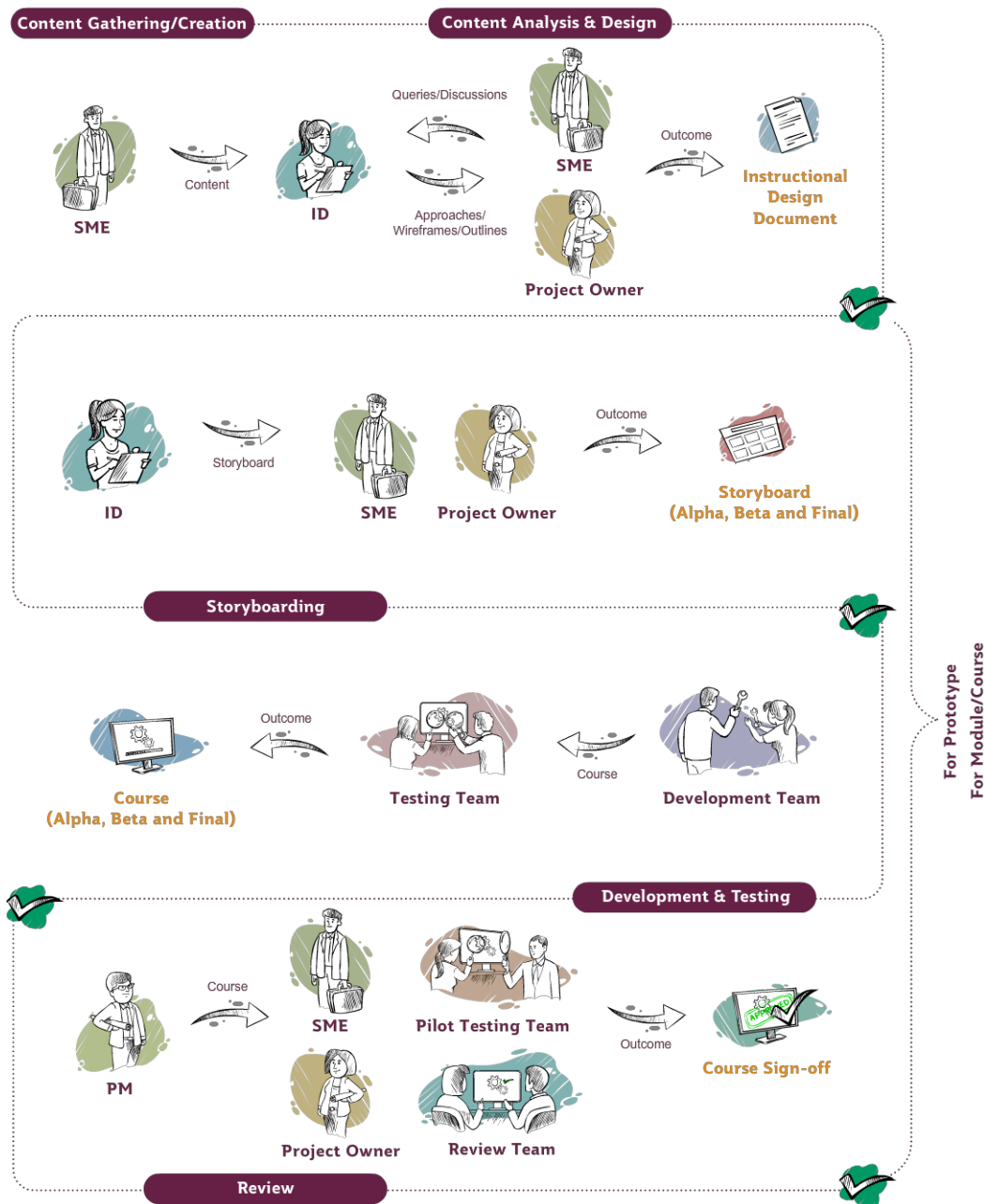
**Figure 4: ISS and Upside Learning Contributions**



Source: ISS A/S

Combining the capabilities helps deliver learning solutions that are truly tailored to ISS' needs, context and business realities. ISS and Upside Learning work together to leverage insights from expert practitioners in the organization by following this model of interaction:

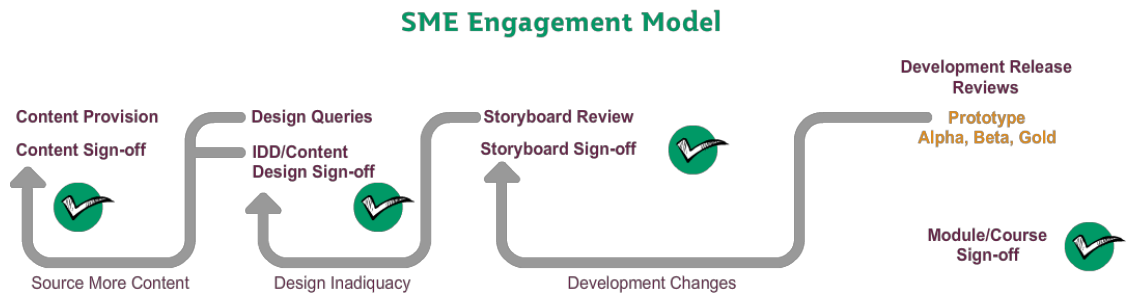
Figure 5: Interaction Model



Source: ISS A/S



Figure 6: SME Engagement Model



Source: ISS A/S

## Deployment

Once a well-designed and impactful module is developed for viewing on any learner device, deployment is the next opportunity to better serve the organization.

As people can imagine, a global LMS in 50-plus countries cannot be managed centrally. Global modules are created between the group learning and development manager, systems and solution design/SMEs and Upside Learning, which then are made available to countries through UpsideLMS’s country client system.

This means that ISS staff in different countries are very much responsible for driving and managing the system in their own countries, while developing their own internal support structures. In some cases, toolbox talks might be used. In others, it is simply a question of rotating team members in front of a site computer so they can access the material one by one. However, the L&D team always acts as a support resource to the country teams.

## Measurable Benefits

ISS anticipates a longer-term effect on performance rather than an immediate one. As a result, the data trends related to performance are not yet mature enough to be disclosed. In the shorter term, however, training management benefits to the organization are realized in that learning data has been possible to gather and use for ascertaining training needs.



**Figure 7: Short-Term Performance Results**

Number of certification programs successfully launched:	694
Number of learners served:	409,439
Completion rate:	93%
Assessment pass rate:	86%
Training support requests successfully closed:	2,600-2,800
Average SLA for resolving a request/ticket:	18-24 hours

Source: ISS A/S

## Overall

As this is an ongoing relationship, there is no conclusion point. However, looking back at the previous year which was also the first full 12-month period, a lot has already been achieved. For instance, the partnership’s work has already won the ISS Global Innovation Award for Upside LMS customization and deployment.

These are some of ISS’s takeaways on reflection:

- The engagement model followed works well and serves the business stakeholders effectively.
- There is a strong partnership and good communication, which helps both sides in the partnership appreciate each other’s perspective and incorporate it into ways of working.
- The partnership has been as productive as hoped, as borne out by the short-term metrics captured so far.
- The attempt to provide economies of scale through reuse and streamlined process adaptations has worked well. The bird’s eye/ant’s view approach has paid off.
- The push-pull model of design thinking and development offering generation has kicked off to a good start with both sides having sufficient aspects to work on for future implementations.



ISS is a strategically insightful and innovative organization. ISS's group learning and development has a valuable role to play in preparing the organization for future market conditions and in staying Agile — while never losing sight of what makes ISS great: “Service with a Human Touch.”

The ISS-Upside partnership has proven its understanding of that role and of the potential value that can be created, so already many long-term development ideas with new technologies and intervention forms have been identified for exploration. More innovation should follow in the years to come.



## About Brandon Hall Group

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Brandon Hall Group is an HCM research and advisory services firm that provides insights around key performance areas, including Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, and HR/Workforce Management. With more than 10,000 clients globally and more than 25 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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