Max SkillFirst Uses Blended Learning to Achieve 100% Pass Rate for Paramedics

Max SkillFirst

Best Use of a Blended Learning Program

December 2018

Company Background

Company-at-a-Glance	Max SkillFirst is a wholly owned subsidiary of Max India Group. Its vision is to impact the sales and services culture in India by being the most admired learning and development organization. With more than 245 branches and training infrastructure in 150 cities across India, Max SkillFirst is one of India's largest skilling organizations.
Headquarters	New Delhi, India
Year Founded	While Max SkillFirst was formally incorporated on May 11, 2015, it was running as a strategic business unit and center of excellence since April 2013.
Revenue	$1.9 billion
Employees	325 full-time employees.
Global Scale)	India
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	Key customers comprise Max Life Insurance Co. Ltd, Max Healthcare, Max Bupa Health Insurance Co. Ltd. and Allied Healthcare. Its primary target audience is front-line executives and first-time people managers, comprising approximately 52,300 people. The trainings cover induction/onboarding for all staff, nurses, doctors, front-office staff, front-line managers and agent advisors, office heads, associate partners, skill-builders on sales and recruitment processes, functional and behavioral trainings. MSF has also venturing into the B2C market by acquiring the Allied Healthcare Diploma business vertical from Miher.
Industry	Learning and development
Website	www.maxskillfirst.com

Budget and Timeframe

Overall budget	Total cost: INR 1.7 million ($25,750). • Mobile Technology: INR 20,000. • Designate 3D content (license based for one-year pilot): INR 180,000. • eLearning/video-based cost incurred so far: INR 1,500,000.
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	One HR employee, two content developers, two SMEs and six vendor team members for video shoot, editing, storyboarding and eLearning development.
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	Two SMEs and three from operations and project management.
Number of contractors involved with implementation	Three vendors for eLearning, video shoot and 3D videos (off-the-shelf).
Timeframe to implement	The 3D classroom took 3 months to launch, which involved tying with the vendor, identifying the 3D videos and mapping them with the curriculum and getting the equipment installed in the classroom; four months to create Phase 1 eLearning and video-based modules.
Start date of the program	July 2017

Business Conditions and Business Needs

The Indian healthcare industry is experiencing a new wave of opportunity. Providers are reinventing existing delivery models to bring healthcare closer to the patients. The change in the government's role from provider to payer has expanded the financial risk protection coverage to the marginalized.

At the same time, India is short of nearly 500,000 doctors (based on the World Health Organization norm of 1 per 1,000 population), while there is an 83% shortage of specialized medical professionals in community health centers across the country.

Easy access to good healthcare is considered a major marker of a developing society. There is a requirement for highly skilled professionals capable of overseeing, operating and assisting in delivering good healthcare to patients.

Advancements in the field of medical sciences have resulted in growth of healthcare industry in India. This has been fueled by the entry of many private players in the medical

field, leading to an increased demand for healthcare professionals who are not just doctors or nurses.

Paramedical technicians provide assistance to medical professionals and there has been an increase in demand for well-trained professionals in hospitals and labs. Increasing health awareness, affordable medical treatment and expansion of medical reach to remote areas have created a huge gap in the demand and availability of well-trained technicians. These factors together have created a huge employment opportunity.

As a result, Max SkillFirst decided to offer Allied Healthcare Diploma courses to equip students with the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to enable them to perform a wide range of medical care procedures and tap those career options.

The Allied Healthcare Diploma courses are affiliated with reputable national bodies and are well-recognized among healthcare service providers. Max SkillFirst has partnered with healthcare service providers for placement of students after successful completion of the course.

Many students for the courses come from small towns and are not very conversant in the English language. As a result, Max SkillFirst decided to use a blended learning methodology to make the learning most effective and for high retention.

A balanced mix of classroom, practical trainings and assessments and use of technology is the approach Max SkillFirst follows for the delivery.

Highlighting the key business conditions and needs are:

- A huge gap has been created between the availability and high demand for trained paramedic technicians due to a sudden growth of healthcare industry in India. This has been fueled by entry of many private players in the medical field.

- There is an increase in demand for well-trained professionals in hospitals and labs. Increasing health awareness, affordable medical treatment and expansion of medical reach to remote areas have created a huge demand for well-trained technicians.

- Those factors together have created a huge employment opportunity.

- There is need for government-recognized, credible and job-ready diploma programs. Max SkillFirst launched its four diploma programs with affiliation from the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and Indian Medical Association (IMA). Career Prospects involve working at hospitals, private clinics, diagnostic centers, blood banks, research and development departments of pharmaceutical companies.

Overview

- To enhance the understanding of concepts by using multiple delivery platforms.

- To achieve 100% pass percentage; that is, no student should fail in the final examination held by the National Institute of Open or Indian Medical Association.

- To achieve 100% placements by helping with tie-ins with major hospitals and placement assistance.

Max SkillFirst was able to achieve the above targets. The entire batch passed the final examination and got certified. With help for placements, everybody got placed.

The programs were for the Max SkillFirst Allied healthcare center. The four diploma programs offered are:

1. Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology (DMLT).
2. Diploma in Operation Theatre Technician (DOTT).
3. Diploma in Medical Imaging Technology (DMIT).
4. Diploma in Dialysis Technician (DDT).

Max SkillFirst's vision is to be the most-admired learning and development organization. It aims to achieve this goal by enhancing the competencies and skills of professionals across industries and by making students job-ready through its Allied healthcare training programs.
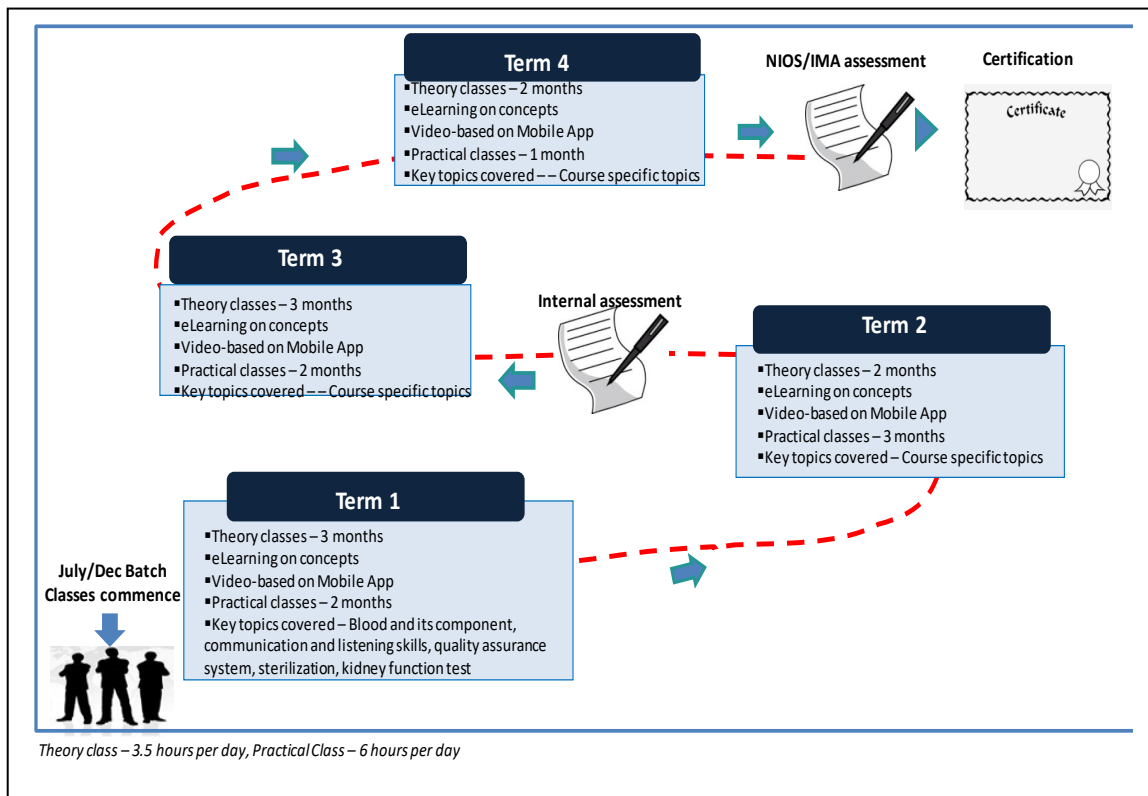
High-level Description of the Blended Learning Program

Skill enhancement and continuous learning reinforcement are the basis of Max SkillFirst's blended design approach. The blended approach has helped in achieving improved consistency in training delivery and gives an optimized return on investment.

- **Classroom** — Standardized content is delivered in regular classrooms well-equipped with LCD projectors, labs and libraries — both books and digital content.

- **3D Technology in the Classroom** — Max SkillFirst has the first smart classroom in the domain of Allied Healthcare professional education. Its 2D and 3D video modules are delivered using high-end technology, digital content and highly qualified faculty members.

- **Practical Trainings** — Intensive clinical postings are provided at hospitals under the guidance of doctors and faculty members.

- **eLearning Modules** — Student-friendly eLearning modules using simple local language have been designed in a way to contribute toward the teaching effectiveness and 24x7 availability for revision and as refreshers.

- **Video-based Modules on Mobile App** are developed on different procedures featuring expert faculty and in simple language. Its user-friendly navigation, attractive themes and customizable dashboard work in perfect harmony to create a unique user-experience.

- **Experienced Faculty** — Max SkillFirst understands the impact an instructor can make on the learning graph of his/her students. Therefore, it has deployed senior faculty with over 15 years of experience in the healthcare industry and in teaching.

- **High-End Content and Technology** — Max SkillFirst uses high-end content and technology to bring the best of both worlds. Student-friendly training material has been designed in a way to contribute toward the teaching effectiveness.

Figure 1: Learning Roadmap for the Programs

Term 4
- Theory classes – 2 months
- eLearning on concepts
- Video-based on Mobile App
- Practical classes – 1 month
- Key topics covered – – Course specific topics

NIOS/IMA assessment

Certification

Term 3
- Theory classes – 3 months
- eLearning on concepts
- Video-based on Mobile App
- Practical classes – 2 months
- Key topics covered – – Course specific topics

Internal assessment

Term 2
- Theory classes – 2 months
- eLearning on concepts
- Video-based on Mobile App
- Practical classes – 3 months
- Key topics covered – Course specific topics

Term 1
- Theory classes – 3 months
- eLearning on concepts
- Video-based on Mobile App
- Practical classes – 2 months
- Key topics covered – Blood and its component, communication and listening skills, quality assurance system, sterilization, kidney function test

July/Dec Batch Classes commence

Theory class – 3.5 hours per day, Practical Class – 6 hours per day

Source: Max SkillFirst

Design of the Program

Audience Profile

The audience for the programs is 12th Class pass-outs (high school students) from any stream. They belong to small towns and are not very well conversant with the English language, though the medium is in English and the final assessments also are conducted in English. Therefore, the eLearning and videos created had the voice-over in Hindi so that the students can understand the concepts and processes well. The duration of each program is two years and all four programs have affiliation with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and Indian Medical Association (IMA).

Design of the Programs

The design of the program has shifted toward technology-based training delivery with Level 3 content and use of high-tech and high-touch technology.

Snapshot of "From" and "To" of the overall design (what it was before the blended approach used in design to the current design).

- **Content**
  - **From** — Level 1 content, paper-based content and PowerPoint Training (PPT)-based content.
  - **To** — Level 3 content, media-rich content (i.e., videos, animation, PPT, etc.), availability of content on digital platform and third-party content integration.
- **Technology**
  - **From** — No use of eLearning and mobile/tablet; no use of analytics.
  - **To** — LMS and app access to all trainees; web/mobile analytics.
- **Mode of Training Delivery**
  - **From** — Instructor-led delivery and in-person guest lecture delivery.
  - **To** — Blended learning using a combination of traditional classroom methods and online digital media, usage of cloud-based technology, anywhere, anytime access to content and use of technology (i.e., Skype) for guest lectures and visiting faculties.
- **Assessment**
  - **From** — Pen- and paper-based assessments.
  - **To** — Frequent technology-led assessment/quizzes, LMS and app-based online assessment/quizzes and self-paced learning assessment.
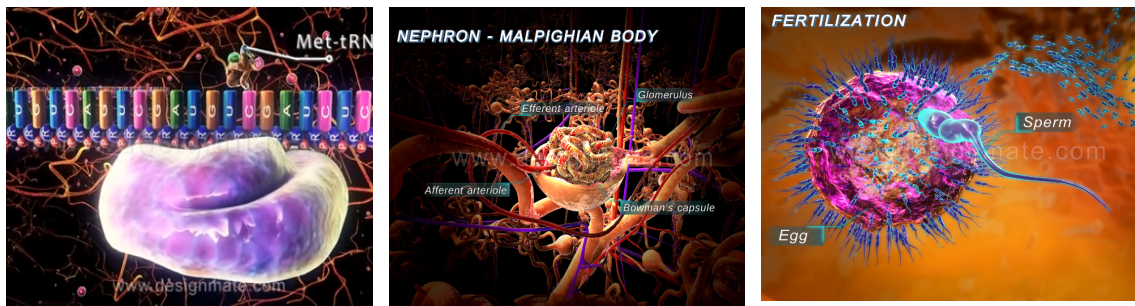
Figure 2: The Blended Approach
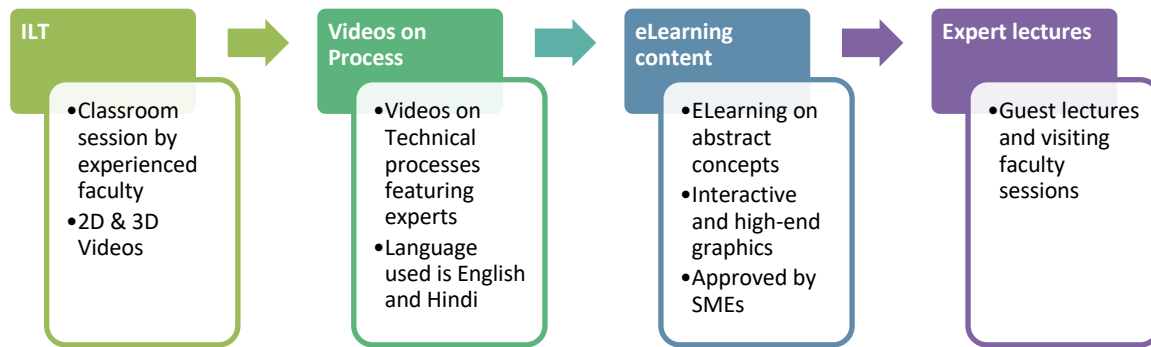
Source: Max SkillFirst

Classroom Content Design

The content for the classroom session is designed keeping Max SkillFirst's audience in mind. The medium used for instructions is simple English and Hindi. Interactive sessions are included.
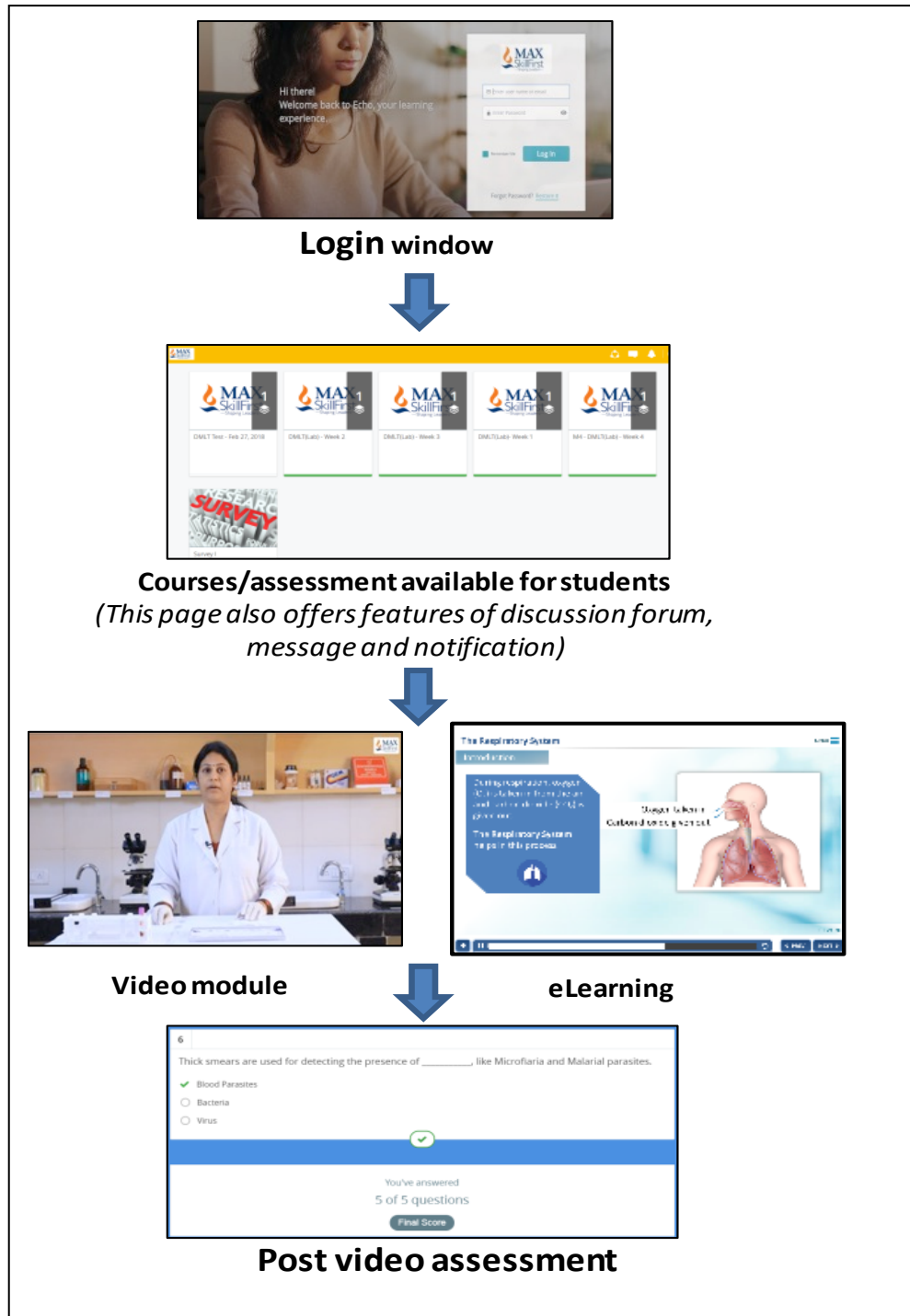
The classrooms are equipped for showing 2D and 3D video modules using high-end technology.

Figure 3: Snapshot of 3D Animated Content

Source: Max SkillFirst

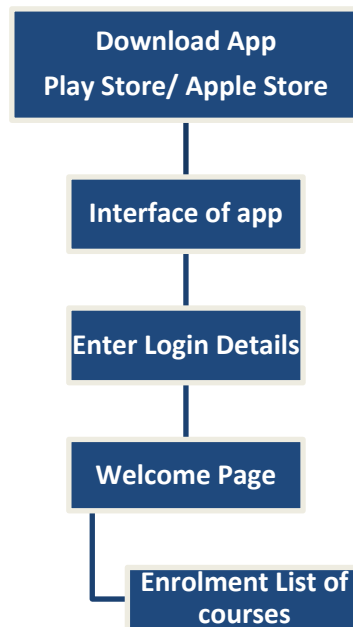**Figure 4: eLearning and Video-based Learning — Process Flow for a Student**

Login window

Courses/assessment available for students
(This page also offers features of discussion forum, message and notification)

Video module   **eLearning**

Post video assessment

Source: Max SkillFirst

Figure 5: Overview of Structure and Content of the Platform

Mobile-Based App: Program Flow

```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Download App        │
│ Play Store/ Apple Store │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
   ┌─────────────────┐
   │ Interface of app│
   └─────────────────┘
            │
   ┌─────────────────┐
   │Enter Login Details│
   └─────────────────┘
            │
   ┌─────────────────┐
   │  Welcome Page   │
   └─────────────────┘
            │
        ┌─────────────────┐
        │ Enrolment List of│
        │     courses     │
        └─────────────────┘
```

Source: Max SkillFirst

Mobile-Based App

Every user has a different learning pace. Identifying and then adapting to the learning abilities of each user is a challenge that all trainers hope to overcome. Max SkillFirst's technology enables users to create self-paced courses that allow them to learn at their own pace and consume varied content such as videos, eLearning, presentations, recorded classes, and more. Its technology is very well-consumed on the following aspects:

- Quick accessibility from the online academy and virtual classroom for the users.
- Cloud-based learning content management system to scale-up for the users
- Learning categories are easily identified on platform by the users.
- Mark relevant content as a favorite for accessing it again.
- Control file accessibility.
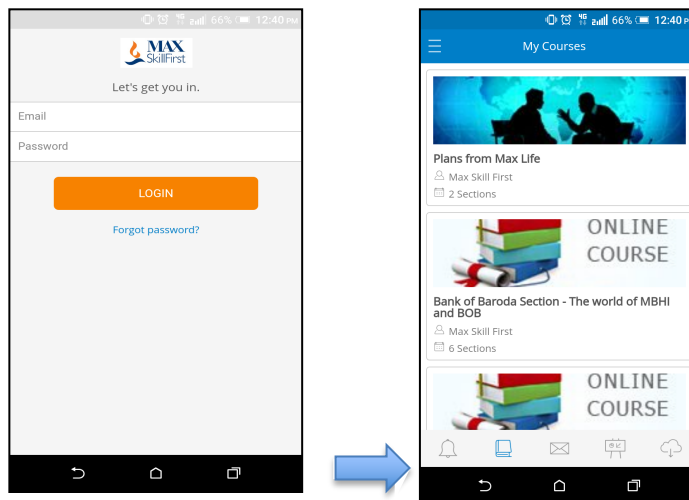
Figure 6: Learning Platform Architecture for MSF APP
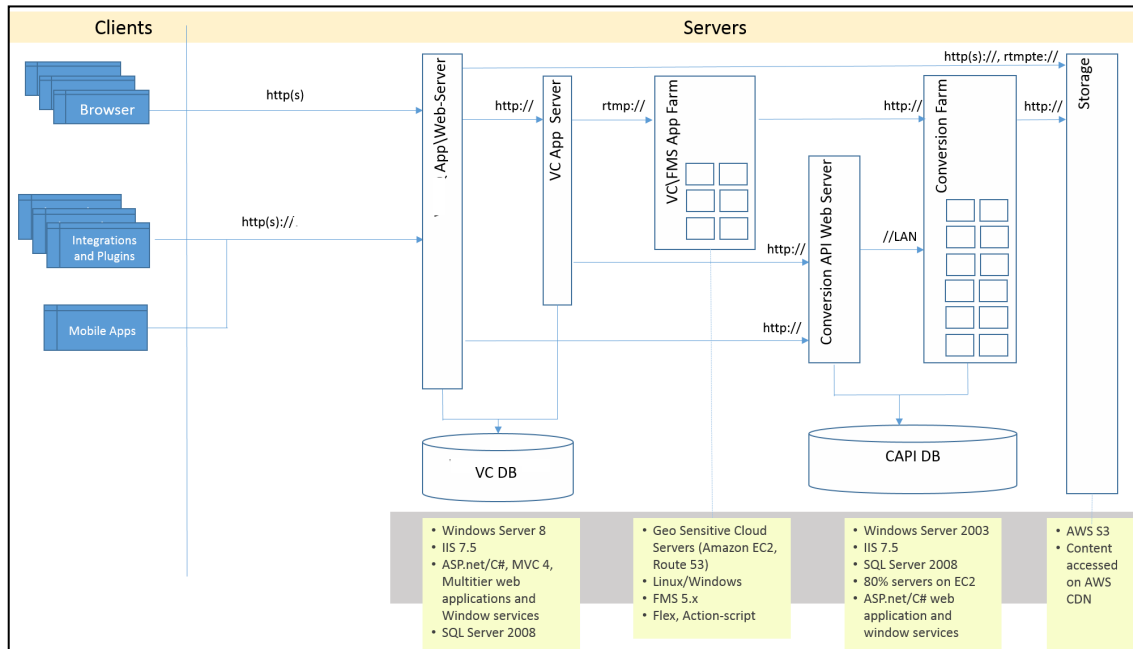
Source: Max SkillFirst

Easy Steps to Access the Interface for MSF App

Learners can go to the Google Play Store/Apple Store to download the Max SkillFirst app.

Figure 7: MSF App Interface

Source: Max SkillFirst

Delivery of the Program

Smart Classroom

Instructor-led sessions were delivered in classroom session. A program calendar was created for all batches.

Figure 8: Smart Classroom Program Calendar

First Year		
Term	Details	Dates
Registration		
Induction		
Term 1	Theory Classes	
	Practical Classes	
	Theory Classes	
	Practical Classes	
	Theory Classes	
Term 2	Practical Classes	
	Theory Classes	
	Practical Classes	
	Theory Classes	
	Practical Classes	
	Internal Examination	
Break		
Break		
Monthly internal examination		

Second Year		
Term	Details	Dates
Term 3	Theory Classes	
	Practical Classes	

	Practical Classes	
	Theory Classes	
	Theory Classes	
Term 4	Practical Classes	
	Theory Classes	
	Theory Classes	
	Sent-up Exam (preparatory)	
	End-term Examination	
Break		
Results and Diploma certificate grant		
Monthly internal examination		

| Events	Dates
Holi celebration	
Diwali celebration	
Teachers day celebration	
Healthcare related events	

Source: Max SkillFirst

Mobile-Based App

The approach to distribution was multi-platform such that it could be made available to a large audience easily. The total number of participants covered under the technology for 2017-18 is 240 participants.

Users are able to access these modules directly by downloading the MSF app from the App Store on iOS or the Google Play Store on Android. They can also access the modules on their laptops.

Figure 9: MSF Web Application
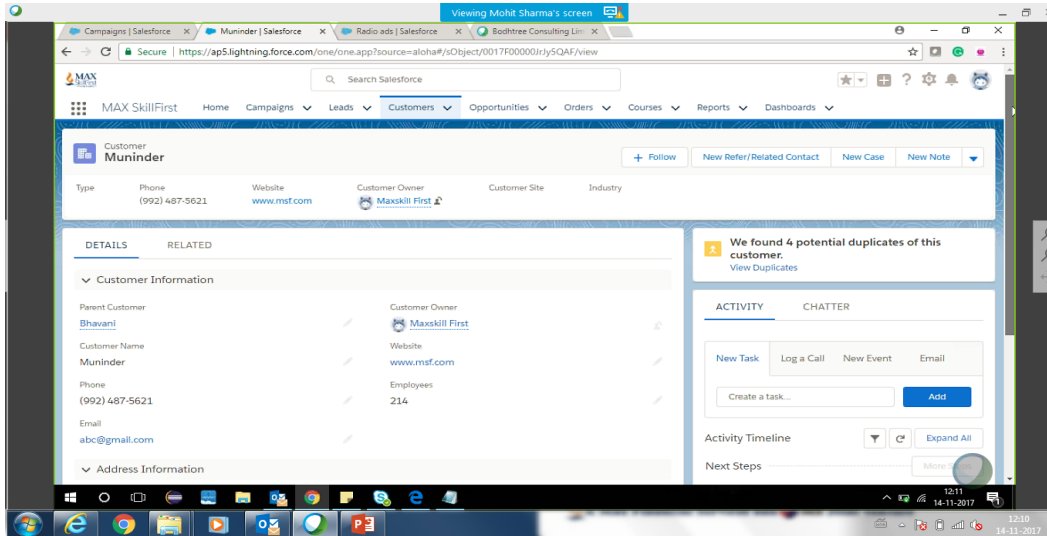
<div align="right">Source: Max SkillFirst</div>

Student Page

The Student Page includes details for candidates taking admission and automated generation of acknowledgment email and PDFs (i.e., referral forms, student code of conduct, etc.), form upload (10th, 12th, etc.), unique student ID number and ID card.
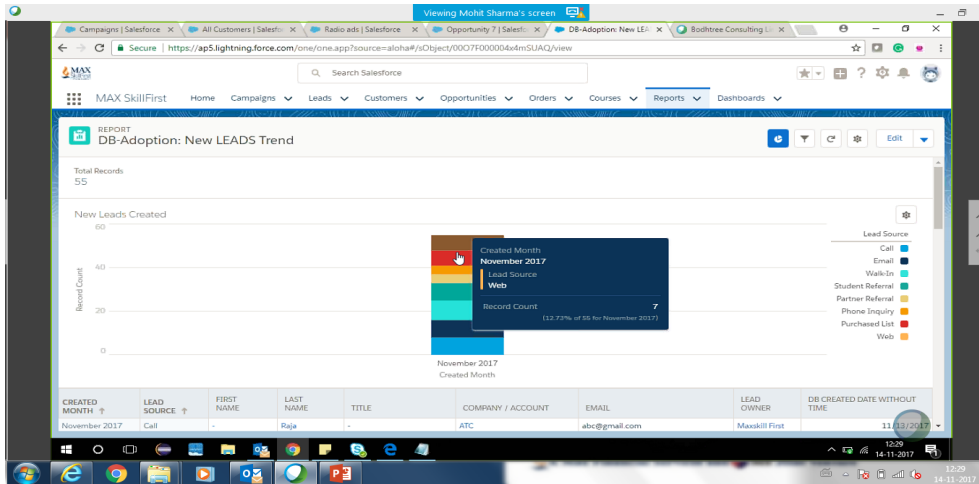
Figure 10: MSF App – Student Page

<div align="right">Source: Max SkillFirst</div>
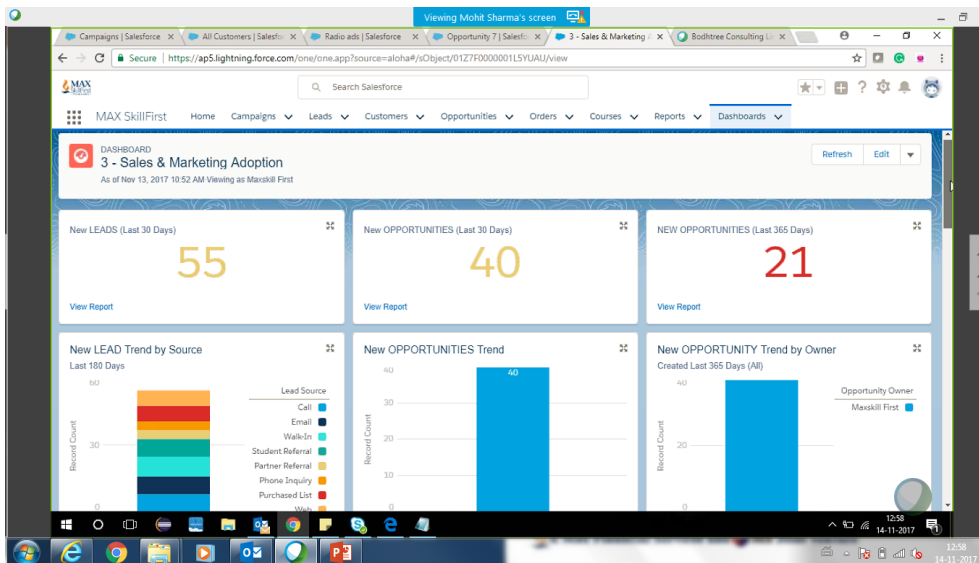
Mobile Application

The mobile application has all functionalities similar to the web application.

Figure 11: MSF Web Application Functionality — Reports

Source: Max SkillFirst

Figure 12: MSF Web Application Functionality — Dashboards

Source: Max SkillFirst

Learning platform services are 24x7 self-paced learning and in modular formats for just-in-time learning and refreshers.

Change Management Efforts

While launching blended video-based and eLearning modules via apps, the key challenges Max SkillFirst faced were:

- **Internet Access** — Many students did not have internet access on their mobile phones, as a result they were unable to download the app. To overcome the challenge, SIM cards were provided by the company for a few months to get them started.
- **Did Not Have Smart Phones** — Many students did not have smart phones, as a result Max SkillFirst provided the option of a browser-based application which could be used on their laptops.
- **Initial Adoption was Low** — Max SkillFirst did targeted communications via SMS, regular discussions with the students on the usage and asking them what challenges they were facing, resolving individual issues and aligning faculty. This helped in increasing to adoption to 90%.

Measurable Benefits

Measurable benefits as seen by the organization was the target enrollment enrollment of 240 students achieved and students got placed in major healthcare chains.

- **Training Reach/Coverage Numbers** — In view of the long learning hours and absenteeism and the challenge of repeating the session, the video-based learning capsules successfully addressed those challenges. The adoption of video-based and eLearning rose to 90%.
- **Student Feedback** — Feedback from students in focus group discussions and one-on-one meetings with students have been very positive and everybody has confirmed the impact of visual modules on their retention and improvement in scores.
- **Pass percentage** — The use of blended learning approach has helped in achieving 100% of students passing and getting certified.

Sound Bites

Word-of-mouth has reached a wider population and Max SkillFirst's next academic year batches are already filled to capacity.

- "When I enquired about the course, I was quite apprehensive to begin with as I was an Arts background student. But as the course started, I discovered that the classes at Max SkillFirst covered basic science and were extremely interactive." — **Akshay Verma,** lab technician, Fortis Hospital

- "Hands-on experience on the latest dialysis equipment at Max SkillFirst has helped me in outperforming my peers at work who have received little practical exposure, that, too, on old equipment." — **Vikas Tiwari**, dialysis technician, Metro Hospital

- "Max SkillFirst trains students on the latest equipment with adequate precautionary measures and prepares them to be a successful imaging technician." — **Yashwant Kumar**, radiographer, Clinical Diagnostic Centre

- "I joined Max SkillFirst's DOTT course because of the experienced faculty, opportunity of clinical posting at reputed hospitals and as per the advice of my friend who did the course at Max SkillFirst. Today, I am placed at a reputed hospital and earning more than my colleagues who passed out from other institutes." — **Arun Kumar**, OT technician, Max Hospital

Overall

- Short bite-size videos are very effective and an easy mode to train students on technical processes. They were able to demonstrate the process in a lab setting with confidence.

- The use of working language and blended format aided students to learn and retain knowledge easily. They understood what is exactly expected from them.

- The business case for video-based content has to be supported by direct correlation with effectiveness and pass percentage, thus sharply articulating the ROI.

- Business sponsorship from the CEO to faculty members is critical to make it successful. Nothing moves in the institute without the permission of the facilities and head of department, hence he/she has to be completely aligned with the potential of the learning solution.

- The rollout involves change management. When Max SkillFirst first proposed the shift from classroom to blended learning, faculty started feeling insecure as they felt their number of training days will get reduced, which may lead to a reduction in head count. Also, their need and importance will reduce. Max SkillFirst managed this change via company-level change management interventions and extensive communication.
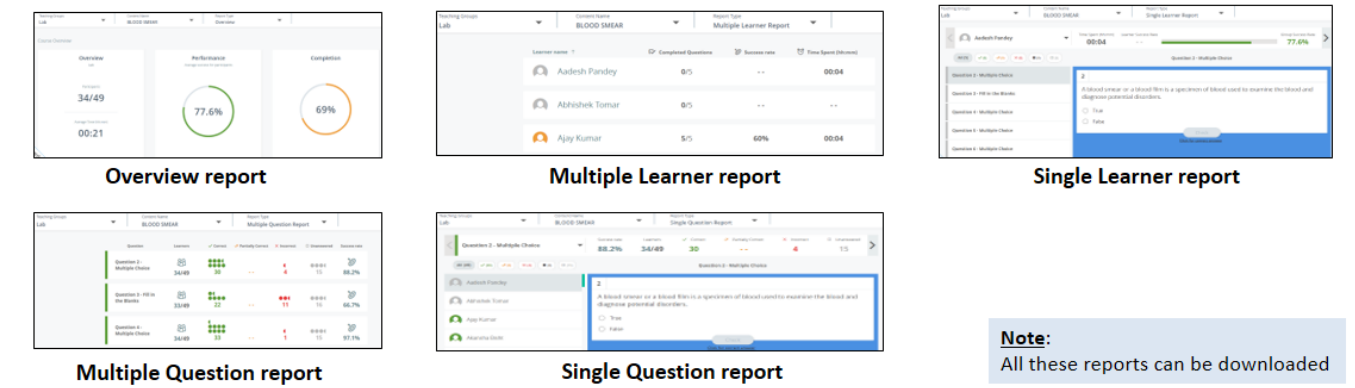
- Market the programs well and with ROI identify places and people where early adoption is happening and then replicate the best practices.
- Involve people who created the content for creating the hype and increased adoption. This creates a strong drive for the audit processes.

What's Next/Future Outlook

- In view of the huge success of the blended learning methodology and adoption of technology, Max SkillFirst is planning to convert a few courses to completely online.
- Create interactive videos to make the learning more effective, enhance user engagement and add local flavors.
- Create more bite-size videos as just-in-time learning for quick recap and revision.
- Transform other courses on similar lines.

Figure 12: Annexure – Types of Generated Reports

Overview report

Multiple Learner report

Single Learner report

Multiple Question report

Single Question report

Note:
All these reports can be downloaded

Source: Max SkillFirst

Figure 13: Video-Based Modules

Source: Max SkillFirst 2018

Figure 14: eLearning Modules

<div align="right">Source: Max SkillFirst</div>

About Brandon Hall Group

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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