

# New Learning in the Citizen Shops and Citizen Spots

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**Organisation:** Agência para a Modernização Administrativa (AMA) – Administrative Modernization Agency

**Country:** Portugal

**Level of government:** Central government

**Sector:** General public services

**Type:** Communication, Human Resources, Methods

**Launched in:** 2014

**Overall development time:** 3 year(s)

**Link to the innovation's website**

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# Description

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The New Learning Initiative aims to develop professional and personal skills of the employees of the Citizen's Shops and Citizen's Spots (managers, coordinators, public servers). This learning initiative considers new forms of participation and achievement through innovative learning methodologies, with a strong focus on the use of new information and communication technologies and training models in eLearning.

The initiative brought not only a new way of learning more flexible, more interactive and more diversified but also a new opportunity for people to develop their ICT skills, to share ideas and to discuss the challenges they have everyday in the Citizen Shops and Citizen Spots.. This project also gave the opportunity to create communities of practice within the public services network, allowing professionals to communicate more easily and to debate common issues for a better public service. Through this initiative the board of AMA has the opportunity to promote training for a greater number of employees at a much lower price, implement policies and procedures for all citizen shops and spots more quickly, involving all central and local public administration bodies.

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## Why the innovation was developed

- The “New Learning” Initiative is a learning project aimed to develop professional, social and personal skills as well as ICT skills by its current use. It was created to offer tailored made learning solutions, due to the specific needs of the citizen shops and citizen spots' professionals to develop their competences as well to promote a culture of lifelong learning in public services in a fast way, anytime , anywhere.
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## Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve user satisfaction

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## Main beneficiaries

General population, Government bodies, Government staff

# Results

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## Efficiency

- The initiative brought a new way of learning, of sharing knowledge and of creating new knowledge through forums of discussion and communities of practice. Employees have not only the possibility to access to knowledge anytime, anywhere, but also to be updated and be more open to innovations and change.
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## Effectiveness

- This initiative helped to create a learning community within the citizen shops and citizen spots network; it brought new opportunities of dissemination and a more involvement of the employees and the public and private organizations. The entities that are represented in the Citizens Shops were indirectly affected by the learning innovations of AMA as their employees reacted very positively to the new methods and wanted more of them. Some entities also choose some of our courses as the main learning solutions for the development of their employees' competences and to improve the efficiency of service to citizens.
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## Service quality

### Responsiveness:

- The initiative has increased the responsiveness of the network service, not only because it secured the training, on time and without major shifts and/or changes on customer service teams, of all employees of the new citizen shops and citizen spots that were opened over the years. In addition, employees learned more efficient and effective procedures, along with the possibility of a rapid and widespread sharing of new solutions across the network, which allowed them to provide a better service to the needs and expectations of citizens.

### Reliability:

- Employees, having continuously training and development of skills, where the news and the latest information is immediately shared with all teams, provide more clear and accurate information to citizens and can develop their work in a more secure, confident and updated way.
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## User satisfaction

- The initiative has been the main instrument to even the skills of the employees and to prepare them for the new challenges of public services, as the citizens are more informed and require more quality, attention and immediate answers. Many of the employees, when they first come to the citizen shops and citizen spots, don't have the specific competences or have few experience. Plus, all the training solutions we develop have not only the purpose to develop technical competences but also social and personal ones, allowing the employees to learn how to react in different situations. The ICT skills developed by the use of the LMS and by the use of outlook and office software have been very significant as a large group of professionals only knew how to work with simple software. The New Learning Initiative not only brought blended learning and eLearning methods but also new ways of creating learning solutions, involving the beneficiaries on their own learning and of their colleagues.
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## Other improvements

- The initiative facilitated the changing process of AMA to an organization based on three major values: intellectual value (focus on increasing technical skills and knowhow of professionals), organizational value (focus on the consolidation of the culture of the organization, with greater awareness of the mission of the citizen shops and citizen spots and a greater practice of its values), social value (focus on better communication and sharing among peers and the various internal and external stakeholders of the organization).

# Development

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## Design

As the public services network was becoming bigger and new management challenges came along, the need to train the professionals and to share the same procedures along the network became an essential factor of success. The geographical distribution of the Citizen Shops, and more recently the Citizen Spots, was also considered important in the evaluation of the best training methodologies. The idea of the initiative came from the current training coordinator, it started with a pilot course with trainees from different Citizen Shops and with different responsibilities within the shops in order for us to try the new methodologies within the several profiles. At the beginning, the training department had 2 members and the Citizen Shops network had about 2300 employees. Nowadays, the training department has the support of over 10 trainers of the organization, spread across the country and a network of public services, also by the opening of Citizen Spots, of about more than 5000 employees. Design time: 6 month(s)

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## Testing

- The initiative only began after a thorough SWOT analysis of the entire public service network at the time, with interviews with several shareholders, directors and employees of several professional categories. The first course, in blended learning, was a pilot course which was attended by representatives of various Citizen Shops with a crossworking team who jointly, created solutions and educational contents and monitor the whole process of learning. The budget was low or almost none but we gathered several sponsors (private sector in general and elearning providers in particular), which contributed with computers, internet connection devices, training rooms and content software that helped us leverage the project. Throughout the project we have always been concerned to continue creating small working groups to rethink new methodologies, new solutions and new courses as well as to use the technique of “mystery customer” to check the quality and impact of our training solutions.

Testing time: 6 month(s)

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## Implementation

### Tools used:

- We used Learning Management Systems (first Formare – a portuguese platform – and then, since 2014, the LMS Moodle); a website created on sharepoint 2010; Several software applications (Photoshop, Camtasia, Articulate and Flip Viewer).

### Resources used:

- The training department has fluctuated between 2 to 3 members. From 2014 we formed a group of 20 organization trainers' throughout the country, to support the ultimate goal to train about 2,500 new employees of the Citizen Spots. Currently, in 2016, we have 10 trainers that, in parallel to their daily professional activity in Citizen Shops and Spots, streamline training courses. From 2009/2010 we presented several applications for cofinancing European projects that have allowed us to continually climb the initiative and benefit several thousand employees, not only of our public services network but also of several bodies of the central and local public administration, not to mention the indirect beneficiaries that are all citizens.

Implementation time: 1 year(s)

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## Diffusion

- The New Learning Initiative was presented in several government councils and meetings with the boards of directors of public institutions and other responsible from different public bodies training departments. Some solutions and courses were made available to INA, the institute in charge for the training of public employees in Portugal, to spread along the entire public administration. We also shared solutions and results of the New Learning Initiative at European and international level, to similar bodies of our Agency.

Diffusion time: 1 year(s)

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## Challenges and solutions

- The initiative has been very important in terms of governance/management because it has been developed with the participation of beneficiaries, coordinators of the citizen shops and citizen spots, coordinators of the public and private entities and the board of Directors of AMA. On the other hand, this initiative has been a privileged channel for the dissemination of organizational procedures, rules and new knowledge in the context of public services. The results of the initiative were further complemented by the several partners who consider our training methodology more effective and motivating. Our main area of training was defined in 2010 by the Secretary of State for Administrative Modernization, as a solution to spread among all the public employees in attendance services.

## Partnerships

**We made partnerships with several organizations from the public sector, during all stages of the Initiative but also with several companies from private sector, specially at the testing stage.**

Other Public Sector, Private sector

The private sector sponsors have provided free, or at low cost, information and communication technologies and training rooms for the pilot course. The public sector partners shared their knowhow of its areas of intervention and administrative modernization and participated in brainstorming meetings to create more suitable solutions to the trainees and the objectives of the training projects that have been promoted over the years under the New Learning Initiative.

## Lessons Learned

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### Lessons Learned

- What worked well: Involvement of all stakeholders; multidisciplinary teams; using simple technology, intuitive and empowering interactivity; training model adapted to the target audience and context; pedagogical intervention strategy; diverse approaches in the design of teaching materials; motivation and coresponsibility; Continuous evaluation of the initiative, learning and its effectiveness What worked less well: few human and financial resources that, if existed, could bring more impact and benefits to trainees and to the public service; not always the organizations/partners and employees adhered fully to the change and to the new objectives of the organization/network; adherence to new technologies and new training methodologies is not always easy.

### Conditions for success

- Conditions that we think are essentially for the success of this type of innovation: good LMS (learning management system) and CMS (content management system); good communication infrastructures; the change should be promoted and accompanied always by the board of the organization; there must be an assertive leadership and continuous guidance; human and financial resources; and a management always motivated and inspiring.

### Other information

This initiative was created by AMA, a Public Central Administration organization whose mission is to develop, coordinate and evaluate measures, programs and projects in the areas of modernization and simplification of administrative and regulatory, management and distribution of electronic public services, within the framework of policies set by the Government. The New Learning initiative is a public initiative also because it's for all the public and private entities that are represented in the Citizen Shops and Citizen Spots, benefiting also, indirectly, the citizens in general.