



Jobfind Center

SUMTOTAL® CUSTOMER SUCCESS

▶ The Company

Jobfind Center streamlines operations and helps more Australians move into work with flexible e-learning solution

In recent years, Australia has fundamentally transformed employment assistance. For decades, the government played a central role in the provision of employment services. The election of a new Federal Government in 1996 heralded a different approach, culminating in the establishment of Job Network in 1998.

Job Network was designed to replace government-based employment services with a network of private sector organizations providing skills training and job placement. This reflected the government's belief that private sector organizations were more likely to succeed in helping job seekers find work. Extensive government funding was made available so Job Network service providers could increase their clients' skills and subsidize expenses related to genuine attempts to find a job.



POWER. SIMPLICITY. NO COMPROMISES.

E-learning Revolutionizes Employment Services

Within this larger transformation, e-learning technology is redefining the way Job Network providers assist their clients. This change is helping service providers streamline their operations, boost their performance metrics and achieve better outcomes for job seekers while improving the efficiency of Job Network as a whole.

Pioneered by leading employment agency Jobfind Center Australia, e-learning is improving flexibility for job seekers and helping them become job-ready sooner. It is helping address Australia's national skills shortage by assisting job seekers to become valuable employees with sought-after skills and the ability to fulfill their personal potential.

As one of Job Network's largest private service providers, Jobfind has always used education and skills training to boost its clients' readiness for work.

“The early results are extremely encouraging and we expect e-learning to have a strong positive impact on our next Star Ratings assessment.”

- **Tony Wardler,**
Head of Technical and
E-learning, NTL

However, like most welfare-to-work service providers, Jobfind found some traditional instructor-led training programs costly, inflexible and slow to activate. Classroom-based instruction is conducted on a 'one size fits all' basis, with all clients receiving the same education regardless of their prior knowledge.

Another problem is the lag between when a job seeker needs assistance and when a course may be available. Normally a service provider needs to wait until it has a minimum number of clients requiring a course before it can be conducted cost-effectively. Remote communities are also disadvantaged. Often, job seekers in rural areas cannot afford to travel long distances to attend classes on a daily basis.

Responding to these challenges, Jobfind has adopted a revolutionary approach that integrates sophisticated computer-based training to improve client outcomes, reduce costs and improve its performance levels. Its partnership with e-learning technology provider SumTotal Australia & New Zealand is already showing promising signs of success.

Strengthening Star Ratings Performance

The primary performance metric for Job Network providers is the Government's Active Participation Model. Job Network service providers operate under fixed-term contracts and face ongoing assessment under the 'Star Ratings'

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performance-monitoring scheme. These ratings reflect each service provider's relative success in achieving employment outcomes for clients, with additional weighting given to priority clients such as the long-term unemployed, highly disadvantaged individuals, mature-age job seekers, indigenous Australians and people in isolated communities.

The performance metric takes into account the different labor market conditions (such as local unemployment rates and employment growth) under which each service provider operates.

Jobfind Training Services Coordinator, Julia Kennedy, says the company's experience using e-learning suggests a substantial improvement in client outcomes.

"Delivering results for job seekers is what counts," Kennedy says. "The early results are extremely encouraging and we expect e-learning to have a strong

For Jobfind [the SumTotal solution] meant lower capital costs, improved flexibility and an opportunity to minimize financial risk.

positive impact on our next Star Ratings assessment. We are not using computer-based learning for its own sake. Instead, we utilize e-learning as part of a 'blended learning' model that combines different teaching techniques to develop comprehensive skills for job seekers."

In the first three months after it deployed the SumTotal Learning Management System (TotalLMS™) from SumTotal Systems, Jobfind placed

83 clients into work and boosted the job-readiness of a further 500 job seekers. Significantly, all 83 clients were long-term, unemployed and out of work for more than 12 months.

"That's an extremely encouraging start," Kennedy says.

▶ Helping more Australians find Work

Driven through an easy-to-use Web browser interface, the Jobfind e-learning solution, called LearnNow, lets job seekers learn anywhere and at any time. This eliminates the need to wait for instructor-led courses to become available.

Computer-enabled training offers a fast track to help more Australians move into gainful employment.

Job seekers can build their skills on any Internet-connected computer, whether at a Jobfind Center, home, a friend's, an Internet café, a library or other location. This allows people to work in a familiar environment that is close to home and fits around their schedule.

E-learning offers distinct benefits for people looking for work. It is particularly suited to long-term unemployed clients and mature-age job seekers seeking to re-enter the workforce with new skills. Common barriers such as distance, expense,

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disability and family responsibilities are reduced. Government funding is available through the Job Seeker Account (JSKA) system to cover expenses incurred by job seekers who may not own a computer. This ensures no client is disadvantaged through e-learning, while job seekers without basic PC skills gain them quickly using the learn-as-you-go LearnNow system.

Compared with the 'one size fits all' approach used in traditional classroom training, e-learning is considerably more flexible. It allows the job seeker to undertake a program that recognizes and builds on their existing skills. This enables Jobfind to assist clients who may have partial skills coverage or job seekers wishing to change career path but who may require a skills boost. As a result, e-learning makes Jobfind more responsive to the individual client's specific needs and career objectives.

E-learning is particularly beneficial for job seekers in rural and regional areas where unemployment is a major social issue. Jobfind employment centers servicing regional areas, including Busselton (serving south-western Australia) and Casuarina (serving the Northern Territory), are finding an enthusiastic response from clients who save considerable time and expense through e-learning. "Online skills development overcomes the tyranny of distance, because job seekers don't need to travel for hours to attend a course in the capital city," says Kennedy. "That's an important benefit for people in rural and regional Australia."

E-learning is also helping Jobfind expand the range of training programs it provides. The company currently offers nearly 200 online courses, ranging from basic business and computer skills to motivation, interview skills and advanced computer applications. Jobfind also uses e-learning to develop skills for call center operations, customer service, retail sales, occupational safety, financial services, insurance and accounting.

The most popular courses to date include computer skills, using the Internet, Microsoft Word and Excel applications, and the International Computer Drivers License (ICDL) qualification. Over 1,800 courses are available for deployment through the TotalLMS environment.

▶ Added Flexibility for Job Search Plans

In Job Network, the relationship between the service provider and the job seeker is defined by a formal contract known as a Job Search Plan (JSP). The JSP defines each party's obligations and responsibilities. When a job seeker first comes to an organization like Jobfind, they discuss their career objectives and identify skills they may need to develop in order to meet those goals. A Jobfind consultant helps the client focus on their objectives and what is necessary to achieve them. The result is a personal program to develop skills and move into work as quickly as possible.

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“e-learning helps Jobfind efficiently manage each client as an individual,” Kennedy says. “Unlike traditional classroom teaching, there is no need for clients to review material they already know. The system can administer preliminary tests to confirm knowledge and help the employment consultant assess an appropriate starting point for the client.” Importantly, TotalLMS also lets the Jobfind consultant supervise their client’s progress to ensure they remain on track to meet JSP targets. Integrated management tools alert consultants when clients are falling short of progress so the consultant can take appropriate remedial action.

▶ **Streamlining Employment Assistance**

By enabling Jobfind to assist more job seekers in finding gainful employment, e-learning is helping the company meet its own performance targets, streamline administrative functions and use government funding more effectively. The result is stronger cash flow for the company and better results for clients.

The first advantage of e-learning is its instant setup. Using TotalLMS, a Jobfind consultant can create a job-search program on the spot, allowing the client to begin immediately. This contrasts with instructor-led courses, where the service provider usually needs to line up participants before a course can start.

“E-learning allows job seekers to begin learning new skills and enhancing their existing knowledge within minutes,” says Kennedy. “The TotalLMS software helps our consultants assess the client’s knowledge and create a personalized program during the client interview. This instant response encourages better outcomes for job seekers and Jobfind.”

According to Deloitte Consulting, e-learning can reduce training times by 35 to 45 percent compared to instructor-led training. This saves time and money for both the client and the service provider. The net result is job seekers who are ready for employment sooner and more likely to have the skills to retain a job once employed. E-learning is further distinguished by its ability to track a client’s progress towards JSP targets based on empirical data. TotalLMS enables consultants to monitor clients’ success in completing assigned courses and learning modules. This ensures consultants can intervene immediately if they become concerned that a job seeker is not fulfilling their JSP obligations. If remedial action is required, the learning management system provides hard data to support the consultant’s course of action.

▶ **Compelling Value for Money**

According to Julia Kennedy, online training offers compelling value for money because it is cheaper to provide and administer. “e-learning minimizes the need for expensive training room facilities and reduces the fees paid to specialist instructors,” she says. “We can offer well-designed and educationally sound courses for a fraction of the price of traditional teaching.”

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Because Jobfind uses e-learning technology as a hosted service managed by SumTotal Australia & New Zealand, its upfront costs were minimal, with most charges based on actual usage. For Jobfind, this meant lower capital costs, improved flexibility and an opportunity to minimize financial risk.

Jobfind can aggregate its claims and handle more management and reporting activities automatically. This reduces the cost of administering employment-assistance programs, with significant savings for the government and taxpayers.

Automatic reporting of e-learning activity has greatly simplified the service provider's JKSA funding claims. Moreover, e-learning enables the company to provide a greater proportion of training itself.

A supplementary benefit relates to Jobfind's own staff development. E-learning allows Jobfind consultants to develop new skills and reduces the burden of routine administration. Many client-supervision functions are fully automated by the TotalLMS. This allows consultants to handle a larger

caseload while focusing on helping clients towards job-readiness rather than paperwork. The result is better client outcomes and improved staff satisfaction and retention.

▶ Better Outcomes, Greater Efficiency for Job Network

In a presentation to the 2004 conference of the National Employment Services Association (NESA) in Adelaide, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) executive Finn Pratt identified training as the one of the most important factors in helping job seekers move to work. E-learning offers a unique opportunity for Job Network. By strengthening Australia's employment assistance services, e-learning advances the Government's objective of getting more job seekers into work. It also comes with the potential to address national shortages in specific skill areas – a priority identified by both sides of politics during the 2004 recent federal election campaign.

E-learning also offers the ability to streamline the administration of employment assistance services and job seeker skills development. TotalLMS contains sophisticated management functionality that lets Jobfind automate many administrative tasks handled by Job Network providers. For example, Jobfind can aggregate its claims and handle more management and reporting activities automatically. This reduces the cost of administering employment-assistance programs, with significant savings for the government and taxpayers.

Efficient administration and easier processing of JSKA reimbursements enable Job Network to achieve more without blowing-out spending. With DEWR research showing training to be such a vital and effective form of job seeker assistance, e-learning programs represent money well spent.

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▶ Conclusion

For job seekers, e-learning improves access to training, enhances flexibility, supports greater personalization and boosts employment outcomes. For Job Network service providers like Jobfind, computer-assisted training allows them to bolster client skills and get more job seekers into work – the critical metric of success for companies offering employment assistance.

From the Government's perspective, e-learning can help reduce the social burden of unemployment. This includes the direct budgetary cost of unemployment payments but also broader socio-economic costs, including poverty, crime, social dislocation and underachievement. Computer-enabled training offers a fast track to help more Australians move into gainful employment and benefit from increased wealth, higher self-esteem and a greater sense of fulfillment.

For more information, please contact us at +1 650 934 9500, or toll-free at +1 866 768 6825.

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