

Case study:

Hawk Training's implementation of Aptem –
lessons in change management



Founded over 30 years ago, Hawk Training has established itself as a provider of excellence in professional training and development. Recognised as an 'Outstanding' provider by Ofsted in 2013 and 2023, Hawk Training was also awarded 'Outstanding Innovation of the Year 2022' by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI).

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Hawk Training is nearing the end of its Aptem implementation, and what an inspirational journey it has already been. We are thrilled with the progress and feedback on the Hawk Training team’s perception of the system’s impact.

Here, the Aptem project team – made up of Implementation and Technical Consultants and a dedicated Customer Success Manager, share their views of the exemplary approach taken by Hawk Training on this significant system change project, which holds the potential for transformative outcomes for their organisation.



The challenge

There is no doubting the high-quality provision that Hawk Training offers its apprentices and employers. Established more than 30 years ago, Hawk Training's apprenticeships and vocational learning and development provision are rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. Managing Director Crawford Knott explains, "We are incredibly proud of what our organisation has achieved and are ambitious in our goals to further enhance the learner, tutor, and employer experience. A relentless focus on driving quality meant the time had come to provide our operational teams with the tools they needed to achieve this."

As any provider will recognise, the administrative burden of apprenticeship delivery can be significant, especially when juggling disparate systems, as the Hawk Training team was doing. Switching between systems is draining and carries the risk of non-compliance and human error.

In addition to giving their administrative team the best tools, they wanted a system to enhance the learner's experience further and enable their valued employer partners to engage more easily.

Vanessa Jones, Hawk Training's Operations Director who, together with Head of MIS, Andy Tyrer, is project managing the system implementation, explains, "It was time to rethink how we use technology to support our provision and our people. What we had was unsustainable in light of our ambitions. We needed to reduce the complexity of operational delivery while simultaneously improving the experience for our teams, learners, and employers. We were looking for endless manual checking to be replaced, resulting in visibility and simplicity."



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Vanessa Jones, Operations Director,
Hawk Training



The solution

After nearly two years of meticulous research and consideration, Terry Barnett, Chairman and Executive Sponsor of the project, and his senior leadership team concluded that Aptem was “*a suitable technology partner with a vision that aligns with our own around a relentless focus on driving quality.*” They were keen to leverage the functionality and flexibility of Aptem, designing onboarding and learning journeys that reflect the personalised approach they deliver to the learner throughout a programme. This was to be a significant change project for the business, and how they approached it is paving the way for them to reap maximum reward.



Aptem is a suitable technology partner with a vision that aligns with our own around a relentless focus on driving quality.

Terry Barnett, Chairman and Executive Sponsor of the project, Hawk Training



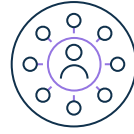
Championing change

While the day job clearly had to continue, this was never a ‘side of desk’ project for the Hawk Training team. The decision for wholesale system change was not taken lightly, and the leadership team, starting at the top with Terry, ensured the message of commitment to the project was cascaded throughout the organisation.



Pre-kick-off planning

This setting of expectations quickly resulted in robust planning behind the scenes as to how they would resource this project. Before the implementation kicked off, Hawk Training had access to detailed project planning tools provided by Aptem. From this, they could carefully plan which meetings required which resource. Nobody was pulled into meetings that weren’t relevant to their role, and consideration was given around timings to ensure that existing schedules, including teaching, were not disrupted. The team had plenty of warning about their expected involvement. People would dip in and out – kept informed of developments and called in only when needed. The result was, consistently, the right people in the right place at the right time – to input, learn, give feedback and make decisions.



Openness to a new role for technology

The team’s open-minded approach has been a pleasure to witness. Moving from disparate systems to Aptem is far from a like-for-like switch. This can be a big ask of the team members who have worked in this way for many years. However, the Aptem implementation team took a ‘playback’ approach that enabled the Hawk team to see the art of the possible through familiar, relevant content. Aptem’s Implementation Consultant took a sample of their programmes and played back to them how the journey would look and work in Aptem. “*This can do everything we’ve wanted*” was a common response. In this instance, the team had the mindset of using technology to bulk upload, bulk edit and so on. They quickly realised and were open to accepting that Aptem is about so much more – it’s about giving the staff, learners and employers the experience they want.



Hawk’s Digital Learning Coordinator is busy adding all the SCORM assets into Aptem, ready to provide a seamless learner journey. Phase two will additionally bring Hawk Training’s existing training workbooks into Aptem. This is just one aspect of a significant system consolidation exercise that will reap rewards both financially and in terms of customer experience.



Openness to new ways of working

Having been wedded to a particular way of working for a significant period, a major system change can be quite liberating. But only if you have the right culture to allow for change to happen, respectful of the individuals that make up your team, their concerns and challenges, their hopes and aspirations. This is already coming to fruition at Hawk Training, as the team have listened to advice from their Implementation Consultant, who has herself implemented Aptem in a previous training provider role. They have stripped back and standardised all their progress reviews and processes. *“Shortly before the Aptem implementation began, we introduced a matrix structure across the organisation. This removed silos and created real cohesion with the implementation project, which came at a time of real openness to change and new ways of working.”* Vanessa Jones, Operations Director.



Innovative approaches to system usage

Through open dialogue with their Implementation Consultants and Customer Success Manager, the Hawk Training team are already pursuing innovative ways to use Aptem functionality. For example, they are currently doing some work on building Gateway, and EPA forms into Aptem. This is in agreement with their EPAOs, who were

receptive to this change as the reviews can be date and time-stamped within Aptem. Prior to Aptem, they were drowning in an unrealistic number of checklists. By bringing as many of those into the system as possible, they are significantly reducing the risk of human error.



A culture where everyone is valued.

The culture at Hawk Training undoubtedly lends itself to successful change projects, in no small part due to a respect for the end-user. The tutors, the people building the curricula, and the functional skills specialists are all invited to ask questions and input into the implementation. It's a critical success factor not only to get the buy-in of the on-the-ground users of the system but also to raise the bar on how the implementation progresses. The devil is in the detail, and these people are the experts. Through this practice, the Aptem team has already seen superior ideas and solutions emerge, with a sense that the whole organisation is delivering change together.

A word from Hawk's Operations Director



Vanessa Jones is delighted with the project implementation. She says:



We thought long and hard about the technology we chose to invest in, and the Aptem implementation has surpassed our expectations. This is a best-in-market system that reflects the high standards that come with the Hawk Training brand.

I'm proud of our team and thrilled to have fostered such a positive relationship with the Aptem team. We are well aligned in our vision and standards. The expertise and approach of Aptem's Implementation Consultants enabled us to build trust and confidence from the outset – and it helps that they are great people to work with. They have stretched and challenged us as we seek to embed the platform in the most effective way. I'm excited to see how our learners, tutors and employers adapt to the transformative functionality that awaits them.”

Next steps

The first kick-off and deep-dive session took place on 8 April 2024. By June 2024 nearly 2,300 learner records were imported into Aptem, with their first Aptem ILR run in July. It's been a momentous effort from all parties, and we are excited to be playing a part in the next phase of this impressive organisation's journey.



At a glance



2,300

learner records imported into Aptem.



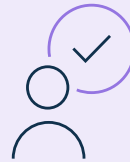
550+

SCORM assets were brought into Aptem.



54

full delivery and migration programmes are now in the platform.



40

Hawk Training staff trained on the Aptem system in just over three months.



28

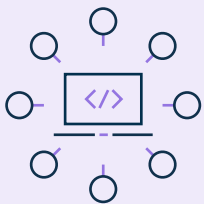
sub-programmes were created to manage Functional Skills and End Point Assessment.



Flexible forms and reviews functionality stripped back and standardised.



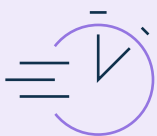
Bespoke reports using the output from OData.



Integrations set up with NAS, Skills Builder and Cognassist, and a Communications Connector with Microsoft Teams.



Application, eligibility, IAG, initial assessment processes and onboarding programmes set up on Aptem.



ILR up and running within three months of project kick-off.



A relentless focus on driving quality meant the time had come to provide our operational teams with the tools they needed to achieve this.

Crawford Knott, Managing Director,
Hawk Training



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