HOW ECOLE CHOCOLAT UTILIZES MOODLE AND LAMBDA SOLUTIONS TO ACHIEVE CONSISTENT SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

AT-A-GLANCE

CUSTOMER'S BUSINESS: Chocolate Arts & Professional Chocolate Making School

OPPORTUNITY: To service all areas of the market by offering online chocolatier programs

SOLUTION: Moodle hosting and expert support from Lambda Solutions

RESULTS: Ecole Chocolat has achieved continuous growth and global accessibility

ABOUT ECOLE CHOCOLAT

Founded in 2003, Ecole Chocolat Professional School of Chocolate Arts offers a portfolio of programs for chocolate making—mastering techniques while gaining the expertise and business knowledge to become a professional chocolatier or chocolate maker.
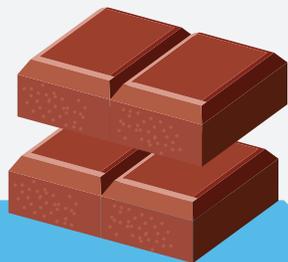
Ecole Chocolat's programs are offered primarily online. Unlike with physical course material, like textbooks, the program curricula are constantly updated to reflect the latest news, techniques, and advances in the industry.

With over 6,000 past and present students, Ecole Chocolat has been able to **increase student enrollment consistently year after year** due to the flexible nature of their online course offerings of renowned teachings.

ecole chocolat

6,000
PAST & PRESENT STUDENTS

> 66 Building an online educational program is extremely time-consuming, and we didn't want to have to go through the experience again a few years later because the system we chose no longer met our students' current technology needs. 99

PAM WILLIAMS
FOUNDER OF ECOLE CHOCOLAT

THE CHALLENGE

A core challenge for Ecole Chocolat is that unlike traditional learning institutions—such as schools, colleges, and universities—their students are from all over the world, in different timezones, using different devices, and learning at their own pace. These factors create some unique challenges when it comes to providing accessible, high-quality eLearning.

"Our biggest challenge was delivering online learning to students across the globe who were using many different devices on very different Internet Service Providers with different data speeds. We needed something technologically advanced, but still simple enough for anyone, anywhere, to use on a dial-up connection" confirmed Ecole Chocolat founder, Pam Williams.

Ecole Chocolat has a long history of experience with Learning Management Systems (LMS) and in 2003 they licensed a proprietary LMS through the University of British Columbia (UBC). That proprietary system was rigid, costly and in 2006 access to the proprietary software was discontinued which left Williams in a bind.

"UBC had a huge IT team to manage proprietary software which I greatly benefited from," Williams explained. "With such a large expert team who managed my former LMS, I was worried that I would not be able to find a cost-effective and reliable alternative."

Williams needed to make a decision fast as her grace period was quickly closing and she knew an extended service outage was absolutely not an option. The nature of providing remote eLearning programs means that "[students] expect to have access to the online courses 24/7/365," Williams confirmed. She did not want the process of migrating from one LMS to another to negatively impact her business.

THE SOLUTION

Moodle cloud-hosting and expert support from Lambda Solutions.

"In choosing an LMS, we wanted to provide the best online learning experience for our students that would be responsive to technology changes in the long term," confided Williams.
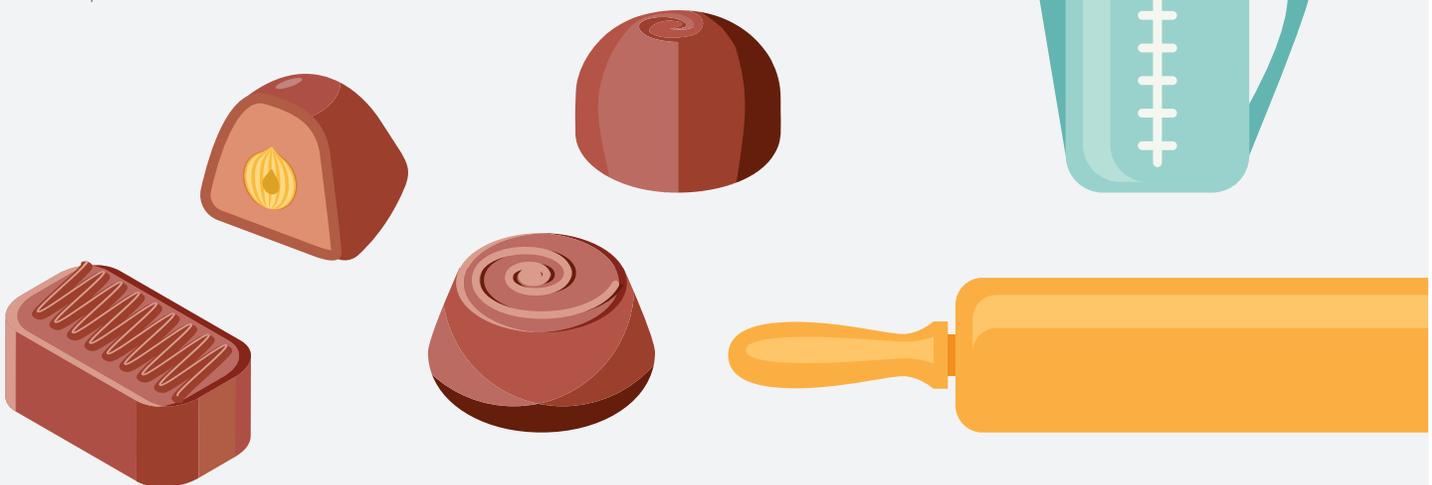
UBC had decided to switch from their proprietary LMS to Moodle, the most popular LMS in the world. Williams decided to follow suit, especially when she discovered that the open source nature of Moodle meant that it was free, only requiring managed hosting and expert support to meet Ecole Chocolat's unique needs.

Better still, Moodle had a more sophisticated look and feel than the old LMS. Williams explains further, "When I started with Lambda, I went on the recommendations that Lambda could provide superior hosting and that Moodle was the way to go. At that time, Lambda was one of the main shops that specialized in Moodle. It was Lambda's business to make Moodle work flawlessly and we knew Lambda would be a reliable firm who could provide us with 99.99% uptime."

Williams says, "Lambda has surely kept to their policy of 99.99% uptime which was a significant improvement from our old LMS". When Williams reflects further on the past 16 years with Lambda she adds that "Lambda cares about me as a client, which is so important to me. We are a small company but we are successful at doing what we do because we do it really well. Our students come to us because we can provide a reliable education, which Lambda helps us achieve".

" I would recommend Lambda to anyone considering launching an online educational experience. Our students come from all over the globe and need 24/7 access to our curriculum and we rarely experience downtime. Lambda offers the easy to use, but extensive Moodle platform (there is a learning curve as there are so many features) and excellent customer service that allows Ecole Chocolat to successfully meet the needs of our students. "

PAM WILLIAMS
FOUNDER OF ECOLE CHOCOLAT

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S O L U T I O N S

THE RESULTS

Continuity of Service & Superior Support

In the 13+ years that Ecole Chocolat has been with Lambda, they have only worked with a few support technicians providing them with unprecedented stability. "We know the faces of people who help us on a daily basis. We have dealt with 2 or 3 support staff. This gives us the power of historical knowledge—they know us and know what we need. Lambda's expert support team knows the tweaks and functionalities we like and are able to do it without us asking," says Williams. She added further that, "I have been amazed with Lambda's honesty and ethics—they have gone as far as talking me out of upgrades to wait for a later release, which put money back in my pocket."

Increased Enrollment Year After Year

Ecole Chocolat made the move to Moodle and Lambda Solutions during the 2008 recession. Despite that, Ecole Chocolat continued to remain profitable and even experienced an increase in enrollment from the previous year. Williams remarked, "We haven't been affected by the economy—we are amazed that we have become a recession-proof business from providing reliable 24/7/365 online learning. Lambda makes this possible." Even after more than a decade, Ecole Chocolate continues to grow both in terms of student enrollments and in the number of courses they offer.

Optimized For Global Accessibility

Despite the successful migration to Moodle, Williams was concerned with providing a quality eLearning experience in the future, and wanted to eliminate the headache of keeping pace with the increasing rate of technological evolution: "Building an online educational program is extremely time-consuming, and we didn't want to have to go through the experience again a few years later because the system we chose no longer met our students' current technology needs."

Fortunately, the decision to go with Moodle and the LMS experts at Lambda Solutions has proven to be the ideal long-term solution. Ecole Chocolat now offers 14 online programs per year, wherein students are required to spend anywhere from 6 - 12 hours per week in study, research, and practice.

Despite the emergence of potentially disruptive technological advances, such as the ubiquity of mobile device platforms, Williams can confirm, "We have been able to keep current with any technology our students, online tutors, and internal team are using. As our team and online tutors are scattered around North and South America, having an LMS system that is easy to use from any device is imperative."

"I would recommend Lambda to anyone considering launching an online educational experience. Our students come from all over the globe and need 24/7 access to our curriculum and we rarely experience downtime," Says Williams. "Lambda offers the easy to use, but extensive Moodle platform (there is a learning curve as there are so many features) and excellent customer service that allows Ecole Chocolat to successfully meet the needs of our students."

LAMBDA
SOLUTIONS

> **" Lambda has enabled Ecole Chocolat to deliver high-quality online chocolate programs to our students for the past 16 years, filling a gap in available educational opportunities for people wanting to learn the art and science of chocolate making and start their own chocolate businesses. "**
>
> **PAM WILLIAMS | FOUNDER OF ECOLE CHOCOLAT**

ABOUT LAMBDA SOLUTIONS

As an LMS solutions provider, Lambda Solutions manages, hosts and supports some of the world's largest Learning Management Systems, helping to deliver online learning and training for over one million users. We're different because we're data-driven—we built Zoola Analytics to extend and enhance the reporting capabilities Moodle and Totara Learn. With access to all learning data, you can drag-and-drop to create reports on any aspect of learner and course activity— in minutes. Lambda Solutions also provides LMS training and certification, set-up/configuration, data migration and integration, and development services.

Contact our team

We want to talk to you if you're looking for reliable Moodle or Totara hosting and support, if you need customization and consulting for your existing system or, if you need a solution with robust reporting capabilities for your LMS. Our solutions combine a choice of robust hosting platforms, seamless integration with your enterprise applications and friendly, easy to access support.

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