

Findings during the development of Virtus VET center and assessment of Mod courses

Brief Project Description

The main goal of the "Virtual Vocational Education and Training – VIRTUS" project is the development of an innovative, fully functional virtual vocational education and training centre, which will provide appropriately designed modular certified courses in Tourism and Hospitality Services and Social Entrepreneurship, corresponding to the regional growth potentials and skills requirements and targeting to the increase of the participation rate of Adult Learners in continuing VET.



Requirements Analysis

Central to the success of the VIRTUS project is the development of the electronic training platform. During this stage of the project it was essential to collect related requirements, from several sources, in order to design the platform as effectively as possible. The design decisions were based on this analysis, as it allowed to categorize the requirements into contextual and technical ones. It was concluded that both learners (recipients of the trainings) and trainers (providers of the trainings) prefer intuitive solutions regarding the operation of the platform; such solutions do not require excessive efforts on learning how to use the platform.

Moreover, the survey allowed to identify the most important roles within the platform which are those of the:

- Administrator
- Training Provider
- Developer
- Customer
- Learner

Contextual Requirements

The classification of requirements was related to the information which will be available on the platform. It is important for the learners to feel like they belong in a cohesive digital community; thus, one requirement was to allow the collaboration between learners through discussion forums.

Following the results of the requirements survey, the Virtus Description of Work and Virtus reports, in order to create an efficient platform both synchronous and asynchronous learning should be supported.

Other significant contextual features that have to be included are the provision of an e-library, the use of multimedia contents such as video lectures, quizzes, introductory videos to guide the learners, etc. Regarding the responsiveness of the project, it is important for the learners both the duration of the trainings to be known and the existence of an associated certification after completion.



Technical Requirements

Technical requirements are referred to the specifications of the virtual environment, including interoperability, flexibility, adaptation, personalization and management of the platform. An important requirement that has to be implemented is to design an accessible and user-friendly platform; this is important as the learners have different levels of computer literacy, and the platform has to be accessible to all of them.

For the creation of a hyper learning environment it was proposed to combine the best aspects of Learning Management System, Personal Learning Environment and gamification.

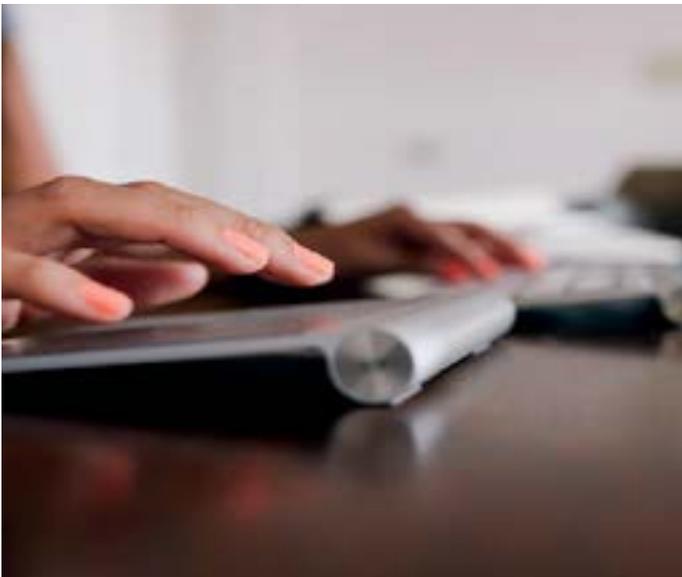
This platform has also to be included a set of configurable tools for authoring and deploying modules, as well as the assessment of learning outcomes, according to the European Certification standards.

Assessment of Module "Tourism and Hospitality Services"

Based on the requirements analysis, the goals of the courses are to improve communication and language skills of adult learners. Furthermore, the focus should be given on the development of soft skills and familiarization with digital communities.

According to the target groups' needs, the module of "Tourism and Hospitality Services" was designed in order to cover many aspects in the field of tourism. Through the module, learners will get qualified regarding the different types of tourism and how a business adapts on this classification.

Besides this, through the trainings, learners will be able to understand the processes of travel agencies and which steps are needed to design a tour or a trip schedule. Other forms of tourism enterprises that should be analyzed are the different types of hotels that include animation as a service, different restaurant types and the significance of conferences and events.



Hospitality, especially in Greece, is a tradition and that is the main reason for understanding tourism marketing processes.

Pricing and quality of products are vital for providing the best services to tourists and customers. The project's goal is to provide information so as the learners will be able to outline strategies in order to attract clientele. Thus, after obtaining the knowledge on how to create a successful tourism business, it is important to learn the way about handling customer complaints and gaining positive feedbacks.

Finally, the emphasis is given on widely used software like MS Office and tourism related social media that work as an intermediate between business and clientele.

Assessment of Module "Social Entrepreneurship"

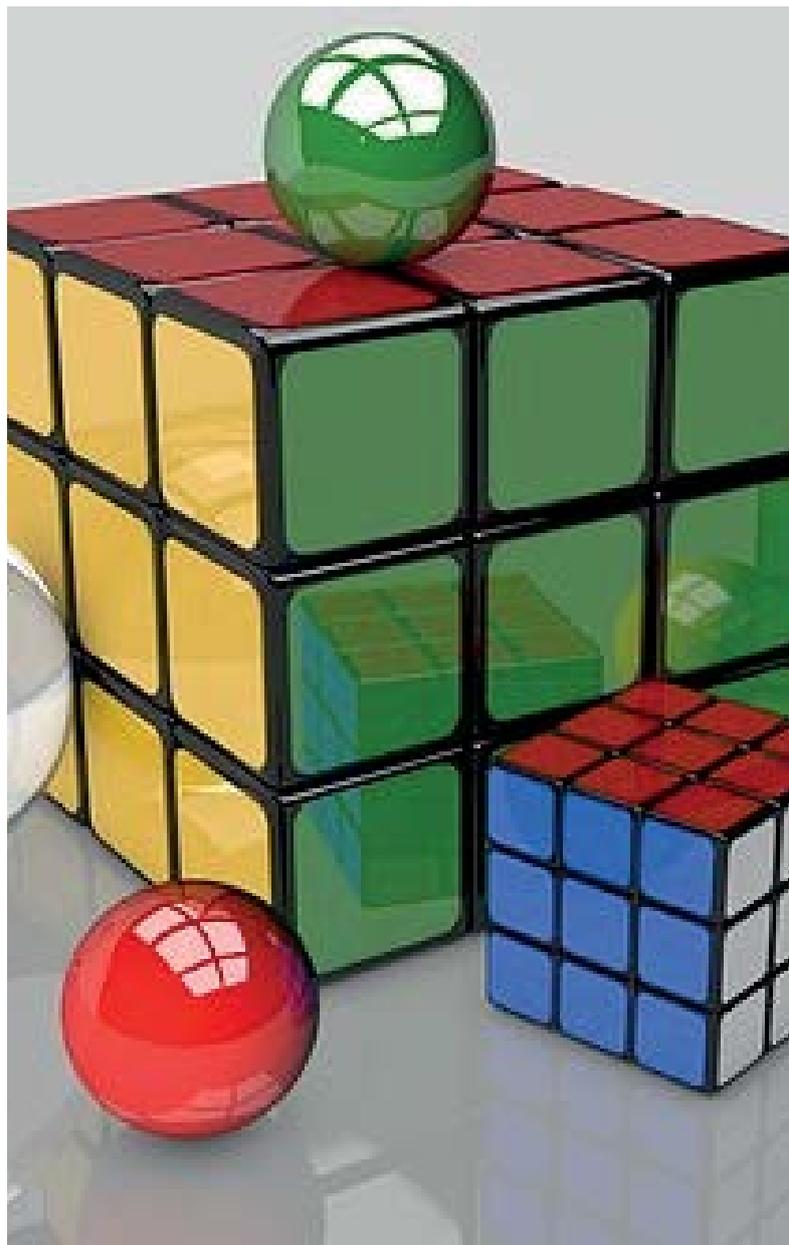
This training module aims to equip learners with the methodologies and tools required in order to recognize the potential for the development of a successful, socially-oriented entrepreneurial activity.

An introduction on the notions of social entrepreneurship and social value proposition will be the drivers for the holistic development and change of businesses' concepts. A basic skill for the learners is the ability to analyze the market and recognize the marketing models so as to understand the concept of branding and the associated competition.

By the completion of this module, learners will have gained knowledge in the identification of different social networks and the possibilities that they offer for marketing purposes in their businesses.

E-marketing is a revolutionary way of marketing that defines an innovative path in businesses. Due to this fact, a section that provides information on marketing and communication management using web pages and social media is included in the module. It is significant for an entrepreneur to understand which are the appropriate communication tools in order to approach costumers.

The goal of the module is to exploit the ideas of social media marketing in the business context, in order to qualify people who are willing to exploit the modern trends in their businesses.



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