

# How Loop Helped HarperCollins UK Transition From In-Class Training to Digital Learning

80%

Employees Actively  
Using Loop In First  
Three Months

93%

User Retention Rate  
Over Six Months

60%

Decrease in  
Face-to-Face Training



CASE STUDY

HarperCollins is the second largest consumer book publishers in the world, publishing over 10,000 new books every year across a variety of genres. HarperCollins UK employs over 900 people in London, Glasgow and Honley

## Highlights

### Challenges

- Permission-reliant process impeded learning
- Face-to-face training slow and inefficient
- Traditional training methods were not in line with new, digital business model

### Solution

- Consulted and collaborated with Looop's learning experts
- Created Looop test site for stakeholders to trial
- Organized new content into five "hubs" for self-directed learning
- Reduced reliance on permission-based learning

### Results

- 80% user engagement rate in first three months
- 93% user retention rate after six months
- Significant cost savings
- Increasingly digitised learning experience



"Three months in we had 80 percent of people viewing at least one piece of content on Looop.

Eighty percent of the business would never have taken part in face-to-face training; it might have been 30 or 40 percent in the old model. That increase is hugely significant."



Jo Taylor

Learning and Development Consultant  
HarperCollins

## Challenges

### Embracing a digital learning strategy

When it comes to adapting traditional business models to modern technology, HarperCollins are leaders - not followers.

As the second largest book publisher in the world, HarperCollins was the first trade publisher to digitise their content and create a global digital warehouse, now boasting a print and digital library of over 200,000 titles.

The company has made a push to adopt a strategy of keeping things simple, digital and affordable in order to compete over the long-term.

That's why, upon review of the company's learning and development programs, HarperCollins' UK division saw a need to apply the same philosophy.

"The organization had been through a lot of change in terms of their business model," recalls Jo Taylor, HarperCollins Learning and Development Consultant. "They were challenged to cut costs and improve the efficiency of their learning and development programs, which meant finding a new approach."

"We wanted to move our strategy away from analogue, face-to-face learning and move towards a digital, self-directed mindset."



With our previous system, we were only able to reach a minority of our employees," adds John Athanasiou, Director of People, HarperCollins UK. "The offering tool was too workshop based, it was not creating the community of learning we strove for.

What we needed was a more bespoke digital and physical development platform that could reach our employees across multiple sites and provide a more on-demand L&D experience - like a YouTube of learning."



John Athanasiou

Director of People  
HarperCollins UK

The challenge of reducing spend while improving engagement and retention was a daunting one, but Jo knew it could be possible if the company found the right approach and technology to put learning in the hands of staff when and where they needed it.

"We wanted to move our strategy away from analogue, face-to-face learning and towards a digital, self-directed mindset," Jo explains.

Their method of face-to-face training was inefficient and heavily reliant on in-class sessions. Worse, the distribution of training depended on a permission-heavy process that slowed learning to a crawl.

"The old system was a simple online portal for booking sessions. There was no element of content at all - it was just a course booking system," recalls Jo. "It was very permission heavy. Employees had to ask permission to take a course, then wait to see if their manager approved it and then wait again until the course was full before it could be offered. It was incredibly time consuming and frustrating."

To successfully transition HarperCollins to a digital learning strategy, Jo needed a partner who was willing to help her not only master the technology, but collaborate with her to create effective content for the online medium.

“I knew I needed to present a partner with the full package, somebody that was willing to truly partner with us,” Jo recalls. “And I knew that was what we would get with Loop.”

## Solution

### Revamped training with an ‘inside-out’ approach

Jo approached David James (Loop Chief Learning Strategist) for his insight.

“I knew David from years ago when we were both with different organizations,” Jo recalls. “I picked David’s brain about what was great out there in terms of learning and development and he introduced me to Loop.”

After demoing Loop, Jo saw how the platform could help her client not only reduce spend, but improve the quality and accessibility of their training.

“Loop was very cost effective,” explains Jo. “The pipeline of innovation Loop brought to the table is something I wanted to be a part of. They offered the opportunity for the true partnership that I had been seeking.”

Jo was sold, but with a number of competing products under consideration, she needed to prove to her client that Loop was their best option.

To showcase exactly what Loop was capable of, David created a fully functional “test site” for John and the team at HarperCollins so they could experience the platform firsthand.

“I loved that we can reach the entire company via the portal with the push messaging and that employees are able to create content and share it with the company,” says John.

“I also really liked that Loop gave us the option of running closed groups. That feature has given us the ability to use Loop for our millennial program ‘Gen.HCUK’ to drive the cohorts to blog to share their ideas with one another - whilst creating an experience for the guys on the program.”

"Loop really supported us through the entire process; they said that they would and they did. They were always available when I called."

Loop's innovative 'inside-out' approach spoke directly to HarperCollins employees by highlighting the jobs they are doing and the jobs they want to be doing within the company, without any generic 'learning' content.

Ultimately, it was Loop's ability to easily create customized content and accommodate multimedia such as video that won John and the other stakeholders over.

"What stakeholders didn't understand initially is that we were going to create and curate our own content on Loop that had a HarperCollins feel," explains Jo.

"Once John had played with the program and saw the videos we had shot on an iPhone, he got it - and he loved it," Jo smiles. "Now he's as much as a user as anyone else. He's the first to go searching for content. He's very hands on, very authentic in that way."

With John on board, the real work began.

Together, Jo and David discussed a strategy that revolved around creating content for five customized content "hubs" specific to HarperCollins - Transmedia, Leadership, Editorial, Innovation and Careers.

"I ran through my plan with him and he gave me feedback on where he thought I was missing something," Jo says. "He even looked at the content in each of the hubs - his feedback made a massive impact."

This strategy ensured that employees could quickly find the exact information they needed, empowering them to direct their own learning in a way that was not previously possible.

For HarperCollins's staff, it was a huge change from the permission-heavy training process of the past.

"We've made it more pick and mix: if you're not interested in developing your career then you don't need to go on the career hub; if you want to know what's going on in editorial, there's a whole hub for that," Jo explains. "It's very much built in the model of making sure that the skills, behaviours and attitudes are realized within the organization - helping the bottom line as well as the values."

Jo could rely on David's expertise when creating the digital learning content, especially as she worked to make customized multimedia elements a larger part of the company's program.

“David was very helpful in terms of walking us through how to create content, giving us great examples as well as being on hand if we got stuck,” smiles Jo.

“He came over and gave us an online tutorial on how to create content. He helped me break down how to have conversations with each hub to get the most out of them.”

David wasn't the only member of the Loop team willing to step in and lend a hand. CEO Ben Muzzell also proved helpful to Jo as she was transitioning.

“Ben was great on the back end and liaising with the technical aspects and uploading the data,” recalls Jo.

“Loop really supported us through the entire process; they said that they would and they did. They were always available when I called.”

Loop acted as both consultants and collaborators, not just platform providers, and that made a tremendous difference as Jo led HarperCollins' transition into digital learning.

## Results

### A more engaged staff at a much lower cost

Loop's platform has allowed HarperCollins to transition from 100 percent face-to-face training to 60 percent digital.

Most importantly, HarperCollins employees responded extremely well to the change in delivery and accessibility.

“Now with Loop and iDevelop we can reach about 80% of our employee base. Our employees are now able to learn anytime, anyplace, on any device/medium,” says John.

“Eighty percent of the business would never have taken part in face-to-face training, it might have been 30 or 40 percent in the old model. The increase is hugely significant,” continues Jo.

“Loop has totally transformed our learning experience. We have gone from 20th to 21st century learning with a more modest budget and better ROI,” John adds.

With such impressive initial numbers Jo anticipated a drop-off in use in the months that followed. To her delight, usage remained remarkably consistent during the second quarter - a telltale sign that Loop had struck the right cord with learners.

"The thing that has really worked is bringing learning inside out - generating content internally, rather than curating content externally. We've flipped learning around."

"We've retained 93 percent of our initial users. Of the initial 80 percent of our employee base who were using Loop, 76 percent have continued after six months" Jo enthuses. "I was expecting a much more significant drop. I'm quite proud of that; it shows that Loop is definitely working."

Jo attributes sustained employment engagement to Loop's innovative "inside-out" approach to training and development.

"The thing that has really worked at HarperCollins is bringing learning inside out - generating content internally, rather than curating content externally." Jo continues, "I thought we'd be sourcing much more content externally, but we've flipped it around, which is why I think we've managed to sustain our numbers."

Jo hopes to take user engagement to another level next quarter by introducing a new hub which will allow users to create and share their own content.

"We are hoping over time that we will be able to have more and more people within HarperCollins creating content, starting with the Gen.hc.uk hub early next year."

Loop's ability to enable HarperCollins to create their own content has made such an impact on learning and development that their offices outside of the UK have begun to take notice.

"I think some of the stuff we are doing is cutting edge. The ability to create content in Loop has been a differentiating feature for us," explains Jo. "It's something John is now looking to introduce to HarperCollins worldwide, not just the UK."

Having found the ideal partner in Loop, Jo is excited for the future of learning and development at HarperCollins.

"With Loop I feel like I have a real partnership. They support me and I feel invested in," smiles Jo. "Loop helped learning and development become something that people value beyond being just something they think they should have. It's agile, forward focused and really easy to maintain and navigate. It feels 21<sup>st</sup> century."

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