How we create our educational content

When it comes to social media education, Hootsuite Academy means business. And we mean that literally; our mission is create the most up-to-date, relevant content on business and professional uses of social media.

Our method for creating our courses is consistent with Association for Talent Development's Master Instructional Designer model. As per ATD Best Practices, we employ the ADDIE model to develop our content.

The ADDIE model has been prominent in the field since the introduction of instructional systems design during Word War II and is accepted as best practice in the field.

Its components are:

1. Analyze needs

This phase involves extensive market and editorial research, and interviews with practitioners, current students, and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Our goal during the Analyze phase is to determine what our audience struggles with the most, and what they need to know to overcome these challenges.

2. Design the learning

This phase involves spelling out the target audience for the educational content, and the learning objectives, content outline, and production details. Subject Matter Experts are consulted at all points during the Design Phase.

3. Develop the program

This phase involves writing scripts, storyboarding, and recording, editing and producing the videos. During the Develop phase, we also create the supporting materials (e.g., Study Guides). As with the previous two phases, Subject Matter Experts involved with vetting all the materials produced.

4. Implement the design

This phase involves delivering the content to students, which in our case involved selecting a platform for delivering the video content and working out the user experience.

5. Evaluate performance

This phase involves testing students' knowledge of the content we've presented. This involves best practices around exam creation, and monitoring the percentage of students who are passing and failing. Our current pass/fail rate is approximately 75%, which is a reasonable standard.

All components of our certification program are reviewed periodically (at least annually) by subject matter experts and other qualified individuals to ensure that the:

a) Content of the education/training and assessment(s) is current and accurate;

b) Design and delivery of the education/training are consistent with generally accepted instructional design principles and appropriate for the intended learning outcomes.

The Hootsuite Academy Education Advisory Board serves as subject matter experts for the development and vetting of course content, curricula, and related assessments. The Board consists of an internal group of Hootsuite advisors, and an external group of industry advisors. In total, there are 25 members and their breadth of knowledge covers every current social media topic and professional role.