



Customer: JobStart

Web Site: www.jobstart-cawl.org

Customer Size: 53

Country or Region: Canada

Industry: Nonprofit

Partner: WolfBridge TSS

Customer Profile

Based in Toronto, Canada, JobStart is a not-for-profit agency that provides innovative employment services to over 7,000 individuals each year including adults, newcomers to Canada, persons with disabilities, students, and youth.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office Professional 2007
 - Microsoft Office OneNote 2007
- Windows 2000 Professional
- Windows XP Professional

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Nonprofit Employment Agency Uses Interactive Training Tool to Help Teens Succeed

“Office OneNote is easy to learn and easy to use. It’s a great tool for replacing the normal hard copy notebook—not only will we reduce paper, but the class material will be much more interactive.”

Yuyi Fu, IT Manager, JobStart

Based in Toronto, Ontario, JobStart is a nonprofit United Way member agency that helps participants gain the skills needed to achieve economic self-sufficiency. In December 2007, the agency received Microsoft® Office OneNote® 2007 through a sponsorship from Microsoft Canada and began testing the software in its youth program. JobStart anticipates that using Office OneNote 2007 will reduce costs while increasing collaboration between students and instructors.

Business Needs

JobStart was originally established in 1980 as the Centre for Advancement in Work and Living. For 28 years this nonprofit agency has been committed to helping Toronto’s youth become gainfully employed. JobStart also provides innovative employment services to adults, newcomers to Canada, persons with disabilities, and students.

In November 2006, JobStart received the Minister’s Silver Award for Excellence in Service Quality from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. This award recognizes the excellent employment services JobStart provides to individuals and

employers and its capacity to respond to the changing needs of the community. JobStart delivers Employment Ontario, an integrated, client-centered service designed to provide employment and training to individuals 16 years of age and eligible to work in Canada. JobStart is funded by all three levels of government, by United Way of Toronto, and by an Unlimited Potential Grant from Microsoft Canada.

For the past 14 years, JobStart and the Toronto District School Board have worked in partnership to offer Literacy Basic Skills (LBS) instruction and General Educational Development (GED) test preparation to

individuals seeking employment. Sam Sanfilippo, LBS/GED Instructor, says the goal is to help young people upgrade their math, reading, and workplace skills to improve their chances of being employed or placed in an apprenticeship opportunity.

As a nonprofit agency, JobStart is committed to increasing the quality of its service while reducing costs and running more efficiently. “We recently began tracking how much paper we use to print our math and English worksheets,” says Julia Knapp, Director, Programs and Services, JobStart. “In the past six months we’ve already used over 20,000 sheets.” JobStart began looking for a solution that would reduce printing and paper costs while increasing the flexibility and dynamism of the educational tools available to its instructors.

Solution

At the end of 2007, JobStart was contacted by WolfBridge TSS, a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner, who told the agency about the Microsoft Office OneNote® 2007 digital note-taking program. “As a nonprofit, we also receive corporate sponsorships,” explains Knapp. “We were very excited when WolfBridge told us that we were receiving Office OneNote 2007 through a sponsorship from Microsoft Canada.”

JobStart decided that the LBS/GED Program would be the best place to launch Office OneNote 2007. “We have a computer lab available to us as part of the program, and the youth we work with are already familiar with basic computer skills,” explains Knapp. “We also have a lot of hard copy needs, so we saw this as an opportunity to save paper while also making the material more interactive for the youth attending the LBS/GED Program.”

In December 2007, Yuyi Fu, IT Manager at JobStart, installed Office OneNote 2007 on two Dell desktop computers and plans to deploy the software to all 10 desktops over the next four months. JobStart anticipates enhanced collaboration between students and instructors as they begin working with shared Office OneNote 2007 notebooks stored on the network server.

“We’re using the LBS/GED Program as a test environment for Office OneNote 2007,” Fu says. “Going forward, I would recommend that all of our programs use Office OneNote 2007 because then we could shift from hard copies to electronic versions for all of our materials. Not only would we save huge amounts of paper, but we could share information much more easily—with OneNote, everything is searchable and can be shared instantaneously. In the future we are looking to use OneNote across the agency.”

Benefits

JobStart anticipates that its instructors will use Office OneNote 2007 to dynamically engage students who’ve struggled with traditional education methods. Sanfilippo plans to incorporate audio, video, and hyperlinks to Internet resources as a way of drawing his students more fully into the learning process. He also plans to use the flexible digital note-taking features to more effectively organize paperwork, lesson plans, and student worksheets. JobStart expects to reduce printing and paper costs, and sees the potential to enhance collaboration throughout the organization.

Engage the Senses, Engage the Mind

Sanfilippo anticipates that using the interactive features of Office OneNote 2007 will make it easier for him to hold the

attention of his students. “Everybody comes into the program at different levels of ability and with different goals,” says Sanfilippo. “Using Office OneNote 2007, I can customize training materials to match the different learning styles of our students to really help them succeed.” Working with audio, video, and other multidimensional content, students become active collaborators in their learning experience, rather than just passive participants.

“OneNote is so much better than old-fashioned notebooks,” says Fu. “With a notepad, you can’t search, share information in real time, or hyperlink to other resources. With OneNote, you can do all of those things and more!”

Saves Time and Money

Fu anticipates that using Office OneNote 2007 will potentially help JobStart save hundreds of dollars per year on printing and paper costs. “Shifting from a ‘hard copy mindset’ to a ‘digital mindset’ could mean huge savings,” Fu says, “not only financially, but also in terms of the time it takes to search for documents or share information. In the future, OneNote could be used to collaborate across the agency.”

Fu concludes, “Office OneNote is easy to learn and easy to use. It’s a great tool for replacing the normal hard copy notebook—not only will we reduce paper, but the class material will be much more interactive.”