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Building a successful online education business with Open edX and Appsembler

The BodyMind Institute (BMI) brings an integrated education learning path to its students in the fields of wellness and personal development. Its Joomla LMS was proving inadequate, however, to supporting the growing business and vision of BMI; as a result, BodyMind Founder Lars Gustafsson spent much of his time consumed with technology. That's why the BodyMind team chose to work with Appsembler.

Appsembler setup BMI on Open edX and created a three-way integration between their WooCommerce site, Infusionsoft CRM and Open edX. Appsembler's expertise in working with the Open edX platform let the core BodyMind team concentrate on what they do best: enhancing the education experience for their students. Now BMI can move to the next level: understanding what truly drives their students' learning experience.

Learning the LMS Ropes with Joomla

The BodyMind Institute was founded to connect experts with people who want to learn how to improve their lives through health, wellness and personal development. Students are seeking a path that can include nutritional and health guidance, wellness choices, business, personal success and healing. The site includes dozens of courses, consisting of thousands of videos, quizzes and even full certification programs.

Before moving to the Open edX platform, the BodyMind Institute used other LMS platforms, most notably Joomla LMS. But even as they took that on, the team knew it wouldn't be a permanent solution.
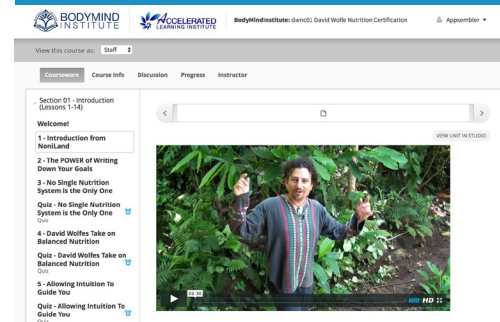
"We chose Joomla for the variety of plug-ins and its open source factor, but we knew that the time would come that Joomla would fall short in our ability to pursue much more in-depth education goals and procedures," Gustafsson said. The true problems only arose as the BMI grew and Joomla simply couldn't handle the load.

And BMI was forced to outsource the various pieces of the Joomla infrastructure, including such basics as hosting and security, all through different vendors. This meant that when issues arose, it all fell on Gustafsson's shoulders.

BODYMIND INSTITUTE

Challenge – BodyMind Institute (BMI) was stuck on a Joomla LMS that could not scale to meet its needs. The time of its CEO even was consumed with managing its frail technical infrastructure.

Solution – Appsembler setup BMI on Open edX and integrated it with WooCommerce and their Infusionsoft CRM.

Result – A saleable, rapidly growing online business serving thousands of students.

About BodyMind Institute – BMI provides online instruction on wellness and personal development.

"It's great the way in which everyone at Appsembler responds to our team," comments Gustafsson. "Knowing that Appsembler has our back, that's a big deal."

"So much of my time was consumed with just managing technology," he said. "When something was wrong, I was the center point to fix it."

Outgrowing Joomla and Moving to Open edX

Seeking a superior alternative, on an Open edX discussion board Gustafsson started asking questions about establishing an instance, and received advice and direction from Nate Aune, Appsembler Founder & CEO. BMI then contracted with Appsembler to create a fully packaged offering on the Open edX platform that met BMI's many needs.

Said Gustafsson of his relationship with the Appsembler team: "You want someone you can count on when you're doing that kind of move. I appreciate the solid nature of the Appsembler team because we needed to recoup our costs. It's the relation-ships that truly matter."

With 54,000 registered users, 10 percent of whom have paid to purchase courses, BMI is now approaching the critical mass of data necessary to better understand what drives their learning experience. They're now looking at whether a person has logged in as opposed to just signing up and and never coming back, and what drives that. That will lead to an understanding of what motivates learning. It is also leading to in depth development of education that is inspirational and life changing.
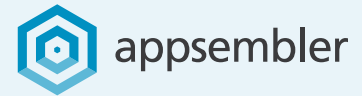
BodyMind architecture implemented by Appsembler

Under the covers this means that the Open edX system is central to a full technology stack that includes a WordPress-based front page that feeds to Woo Commerce for ecommerce. The signup triggers a campaign in InfusionSoft that includes tagging and then learners are signed up in Open edX.

This build is about more than technology. It's about a number of pieces working together to ensure a solid future. That is why BMI needs the support offered by Appsembler, not just as part of the build, but as part of an ongoing relationship that helps the institute grow through remarketing, newsletters and email. It all works together to ensure that students remain engaged and BMI continues to expand.

To learn more about Appsembler, please email **info@appsembler.com** *or visit* **www.appsembler.com**.

About Open edX
Open edX is the open source software developed by Harvard and MIT that powers hundreds of online learning sites around the world.

About Appsembler
Appsembler is the Open edX Enterprise Expert, providing customization, implementation, hosting, support and training. Appsembler works with such corpo-rate and higher education clients as Microsoft, The MIT Sloan School, New York Institute of Finance, Open University, Cloudera, Penn State University, InterSystems, and Metalogix.