



Case Study: The Co-operative
Leadership Development Zone

A large, light green circular graphic element is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page. It is partially filled with a white circle, which contains the text "The co-operative". The background of the entire page is a blurred landscape featuring tall green grass in the foreground, a single tree on the left, and a blue sky with white clouds.

The **co-operative**



The Co-operative, Leadership Development Zone Case Study

Summary

This case study shows how The Co-operative and Kineo partnered to create a Moodle based online portal as a focus for leadership development. We'll take you through the challenge of designing a solution to reach out to The Co-operative's top 500 leaders through a collaborative development process to the delivery and marketing of an engaging solution.

The Challenge

The Co-operative has been going through a period of organisational change to increase cohesion throughout the group, build better brand awareness, re-focus strategy and ultimately increase growth. The re-branding of The Co-operative stores, banks and other services is one part of this initiative that you are likely to have experienced.

Integral to this change The Co-operative identified the need to focus on its top 500 leaders as being the key instigators of change. The key challenge faced was how to reach out to such a widely varied and geographically dispersed group of time challenged senior colleagues in a way that truly engages them, motivates and provides the developmental opportunities they need.

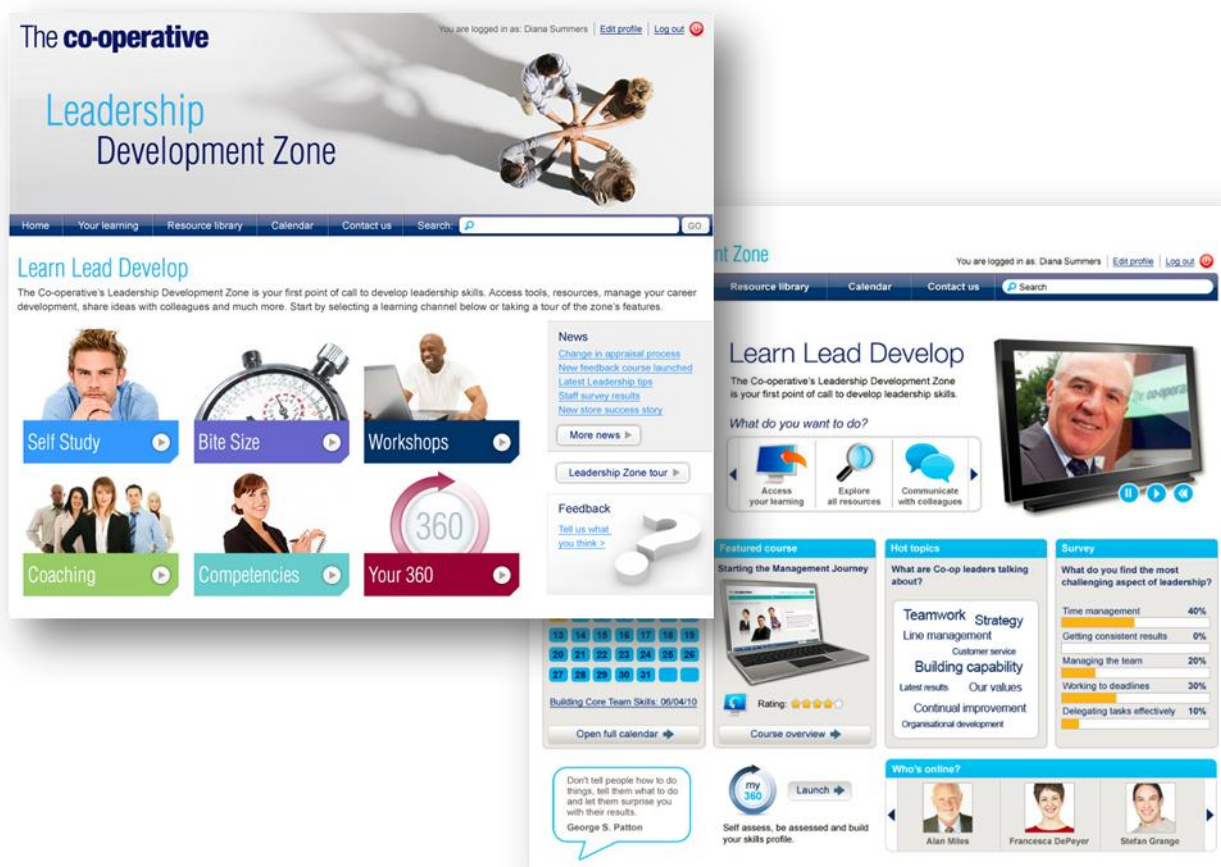
The Co-operative identified the need for a single point, online portal to act as a focus for their leadership development strategy. With this in mind they commissioned Kineo to help them to realise what this could be like.

The Journey

Over a period of 9 months Kineo worked in partnership with The Co-operative to realise the vision of the **Leadership development zone**. Instead of working to a predefined set of requirements, both teams worked together to help define and evolve those requirements. The Co-operative established a steering group of senior leaders as well as a Community of Interest to represent different areas of the business. The purpose of which was to provide focused input, create a leadership framework, steer the overall design approach and to develop relevant content for the portal.

Kineo initially provided consultative support to advise on the design, development and implementation of the new way of learning for their senior leadership population. Kineo went on to provide the interface and technical design expertise to help shape a learning portal solution appropriate to the needs of the audience.

Early concept designs for the Leadership Development Zone



Some of the key challenges we faced in realising the project were as follows.

Communication

Great communication between each team is a critical factor to the success of any project and was of particular importance here. A wide range of people required coordination in terms of hands on effort, or provision of feedback and steer; this included The Co-operative project team and Community of Interest (COI) and members of Kineo's Sheffield and Brighton offices. Strong project management from both sides was key to facilitating effective communication and coordinating the project as a whole. The experience and input of the COI and Kineo's consultants was invaluable in guiding the project towards the best solution.

Working with a blank canvas

As learning portals go the project started as a concept, rather than a defined list of functional requirements. The system design was therefore born out of a response to the needs of the audience. We tried out design concepts based on the vision and suggested functionality and content, then reviewed these and iterated as the thinking evolved. We developed a prototype version of the portal, which was very well received and gave us confidence that we were on the right track.

Leadership Development Zone Prototype

The screenshot displays the 'Leadership development zone' of 'The co-operative good for everyone'. The page is signed in as 'User Name' and includes links for 'logout', 'your account', 'help', and 'contact us'. A search bar is present with the text 'Search the Leadership development zone' and a 'GO' button. The navigation menu includes 'home', 'how to use this site', 'topics', 'my learning', 'discussion forums', 'personal profiles', and 'feedback'. The main content area features a 'Hot Topic: Engaging & Inspiring People' section titled 'Positive Compelling Communication' with a background image of a wind turbine. Below this, there are three columns of introductory text and images of people. The right sidebar contains a 'HOW DO I WANT TO LEARN' section with a list of learning types: Self Study (0), Workshops (3), Bite Size (2), Coaching (2), eLearning (1), and Self Assessment Tools (0). Below this is a 'KEY LEADERSHIP TOPICS' section with links to 'Leading People' and 'Strategic Thinking'. A circular diagram in the center of the page illustrates 'The Co-operative Leadership Model' with components like 'Living One Co-operative Brand', 'Engaging Customers', 'Leading Our People', and 'Shaping the Future'.

Getting the message out and the leaders in

Both teams recognised that the pressures faced by leaders in a thriving organisation would potentially make them a difficult group to engage and bring together. With this in mind we planned for how to facilitate this engagement from the outset.

- **Representing different business areas** – Being a large, complex organisation with multiple business areas (Food, Specialist Commercial Businesses, Funeral care etc.) and functions (HR, Marketing, IS, etc.) involving representatives from across this range was vital in designing a portal that would have a broad appeal. The Community of Interest was instrumental in providing this perspective at the key stages of the project.
- **Building interest through effective marketing** – From the outset we discussed how we would attract leaders to the portal. We utilised internal marketing in the form of interactive e-zines (electronic magazines) developed by Kineo to initially engage attention and deliver the key messages.
- **Using the leaders to guide the evolving design** – In order to truly engage the target leadership audience, enable them to get the most out of the portal and to become champions of its development and wider business change we relied on the leaders themselves. This was achieved via a number of interactive focus groups allowing leaders to have an input to both the content and functional direction of the portal. This provided leaders with the incentive to participate, support and give feedback on the Leadership development zone.

Promotional E-Zine



“We could have ended up with a well presented website with useful content that nobody looked at. This was identified right from the start as a risk by The Co-operative team behind the project and so together The Co-operative and Kineo and came up with an approach that meant there is a constant draw to the site.

The key was to identify key topics, promoted by relevant senior team members and focus on them for a set period of time. This created focused discussions and an increased buzz which attracted high numbers of busy senior managers to look at the online content and take part in conversations with their peers. The Co-operative is using working groups to identify and help design and develop the topics and so everything on the site is fresh, relevant and important.”

Mark Harrison, Kineo Director and Consultant

The Solution

The open source Moodle learning management system (LMS) was used as the portal's technical platform. Moodle was seen as the ideal solution for the following reasons:

- Open source means a cost effective start point with no on-going user licence fees
- Its content management capabilities enabled Kineo and The Co-operative to build a wide range of content pages and related assets directly into Moodle
- The open source nature enabled Kineo to adapt the way Moodle worked with content creation, publishing, search and display
- Ability to host a wide range of electronic content from e-learning to web pages to Microsoft Office documents
- Booking of classroom/face-to-face courses as well as e-learning
- Mechanisms for feedback are provided, such as surveys and polls
- Moodle is very flexible and scalable so provided a solution which could meet current and future needs

Kineo enhanced Moodle's content development and publishing tools to enable content to go through a creation, review and publishing process, which allows contributions from a wide range of users with the safety net of review prior to going live. Furthermore the framework by which content is displayed was custom built to draw in relevant content. The Moodle search functionality was also enhanced to enable this.

Another area of customisation was around the classroom course booking. As this face-to-face training would be provided by a number of different suppliers we enabled external bookings to be sent via email to the relevant people.

“We chose Kineo because of their expertise and flexibility in designing, developing and implementing a range of innovative, Moodle based, learning solutions across a range of sectors. The Moodle platform allowed The Co-operative to create its own unique portal providing leaders with a positive and engaging learning experience based on their individual needs together with a cost effective way of maintaining and developing the site.”

Project Stakeholder - Vincent O'Donovan, Head of Group Training & Development

The Results

The project has been a resounding success both in terms of the development process and the results.

Success as a project process

Having held an end of project review Kineo and the Co-operative identified the key project success factors as follows:

- **Great partnership** – From the outset The Co-operative felt that they had made the right decision to work with Kineo and appreciated Kineo's flexible approach. We maintained a great working relationship throughout the project with a strong project management connection, open and honest communication and a pragmatic approach to resolving any issues.
- **Effective design approach** – The journey from more or less blank canvas to successfully rolled out solution was driven by effective project planning, coordinated involvement from all key stakeholders and a design team that was able to grasp and interpret the needs, through to making them a reality. The Co-operative fed back that Kineo broadened the horizons in terms of what was possible from an online solution.
- **On time and on budget** – Being key criteria for any project we delivered successfully on both counts. The Co-operative also found the Moodle based solution to be excellent value for money.
- **Technical success** – In a number of ways the platform really pushed what was possible with the Moodle LMS and is seen as one of the best Moodle solutions that Kineo has yet implemented.

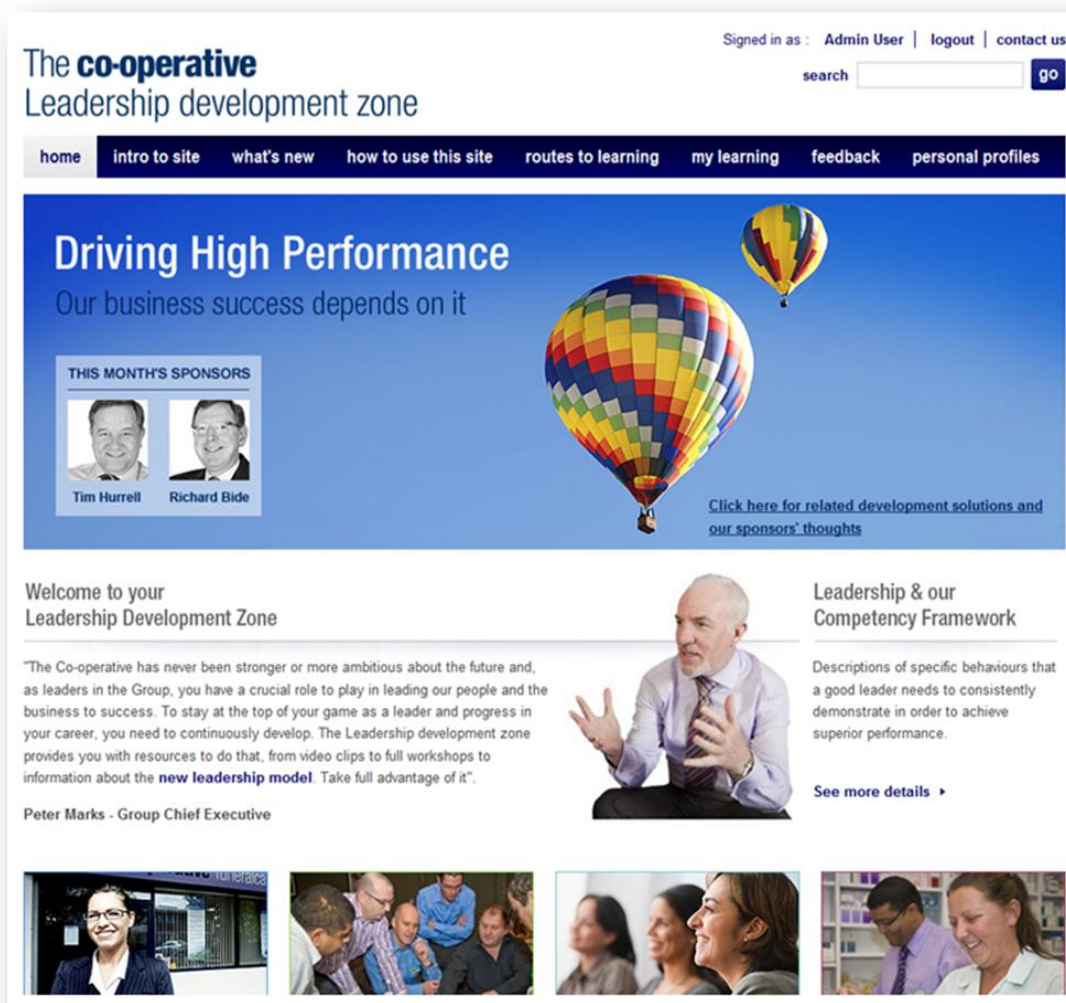
Success as a leadership development resource

The combination of the expertise of The Co-operative's Community of Interest and Kineo's consultants enabled the creation of an effective leadership development framework and accompanying online solution. By understanding the leadership audience's needs the solution was designed to meet these specifically and to be marketed in a way that would entice involvement.

5 weeks in and 42% of the top 500 leaders are involved

After just 5 weeks from going live 42% of The Co-operative's top 500 leaders were accessing the portal, a number that is steadily growing. Involving senior leaders from inception of the project coupled with the e-magazines and an 18 month marketing and embedding campaign were felt to be contributing factors to this success. End user representation in on-going development will be of continued real benefit and will be what keeps the Leadership development zone thriving.

The live Leadership development zone



The **co-operative** Leadership development zone

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Welcome to your Leadership Development Zone


"The Co-operative has never been stronger or more ambitious about the future and, as leaders in the Group, you have a crucial role to play in leading our people and the business to success. To stay at the top of your game as a leader and progress in your career, you need to continuously develop. The Leadership development zone provides you with resources to do that, from video clips to full workshops to information about the **new leadership model**. Take full advantage of it".




Peter Marks - Group Chief Executive

Leadership & our Competency Framework

Descriptions of specific behaviours that a good leader needs to consistently demonstrate in order to achieve superior performance.

[See more details >](#)



The Future

Being a flexible and scalable solution Moodle was seen as a solution which could not just meet The Co-operative's immediate needs but also be future proof. Future enhancements that are being considered include:

- Enhanced functionality for learners and reporting for administrators
- Scaling the portal to the next management tier and beyond
- Further content development including blended course delivery and integration with content from third party suppliers and platforms
- Inclusion of online personal development planning and appraisals
- Use of Moodle's collaborative learning tools (forums, chat, wikis, blogs) to promote knowledge sharing and community.

Kineo and The Co-operative are continuing to work together on new initiatives. We are currently developing a showcase e-learning piece on the performance management process, which will be launched on the Leadership Development Zone, and look forward to a great on-going partnership.

“I’ve really enjoyed working with The Co-operative on the development of their Leadership development zone. We were able to develop a really good working relationship with the key members of the The Co-operative team, which helped us respond to the different challenges that we encountered along the way. There were quite a lot of unknowns at the start of the project, but close collaboration allowed us to design and create a final product that met their needs and timescales.” **Darren Holmes, Kineo Project Manager**

“The project has surpassed my expectations. The Leadership development zone has acted as a real catalyst to the formation of a learning culture within The Co-operative. Easily accessed learning at the point of need enables our leaders to be the best they can be.”

Project Sponsor - Jackie Lanham, Director of Group Resourcing & Development