

Developing competencies to drive growth

Dematic supports international expansion while maintaining quality standards with D2L's Brightspace platform

As Dematic's business grows, it needs to ensure that new employees can quickly gain the competencies they need in order to contribute high-quality work, as well as helping established engineers to level-up by learning new skills. Working with D2L, the company has built a transparent, scalable certification program that helps engineers and managers match the right skills to the right projects.

At a glance

Client: Dematic

Learners: 1,000

Industry: Logistics, Material handling

Website: dematic.com

Platform/Features:

- D2L's Brightspace platform
- Competencies
- Quizzes
- Assignments
- Rubrics
- Intelligent agents
- Release conditions

Interviewee:

- John Heinel, Vice President, Global Software Solutions
- Stephanie Scheifele, Director of Global Product Information
- Cara Scott, Certification Program Manager
- Kitrek Riese, Software Engineering Manager
- Tim Watts, Software Engineer

Highlights:

- Enables rapid expansion of Dematic's certification program to support the company's growth
- Accelerates onboarding from 12 months to 8 weeks, helping new employees quickly gain the skills they need in order to deliver value to clients
- Provides total visibility of engineers' competencies to help managers select the right team for each project

“Before we started, one manager shared that it was taking them about 12 months to really feel confident in training an employee to work on projects independently. Soon after we implemented D2L’s Brightspace platform, we got that down to five months, and today it takes about eight weeks.”

Cara Scott, Certification Program Manager, Dematic

Challenge

Managing a global talent base

Dematic is a leading supplier of integrated automation technology, software, and services to optimize the supply chain. The company has engineering, manufacturing, and service centers located in more than 25 countries, as well as a global network of 8,000 employees who have helped deliver more than 6,000 customer installations worldwide.

In recent years, Dematic has seen rapid growth, with a significant number of new engineers joining the company each year. Onboarding new team members quickly is critical to make sure everyone can work productively, and to maintain high quality standards.

Stephanie Scheifele, Director of Global Product Information, comments: “Dematic places a great deal of importance on developing internal excellence, which facilitates project execution for our customers. Training and developing our employees to operate efficiently, from that first customer contact through to the final project implementation, is critical to our overall learning and development strategy.”

To help its software engineering team scale and operate globally, Dematic needs a competency-based certification program that scales globally too. Employees around the world need to be able to complete their training and development in their own time and on-demand, which means learning and training systems and processes must always be reliable and available.

Dematic also needs its training processes to run as efficiently as possible, which means its certification team must be able to focus on developing content and assessing learners rather than spending too much time on program administration.

Stephanie Scheifele recalls: “We had piloted our certification program and we knew that it could be successful, but we didn’t have the tools to really expand globally. We needed some automation to help us scale without adding more staff and overhead.”

Solution

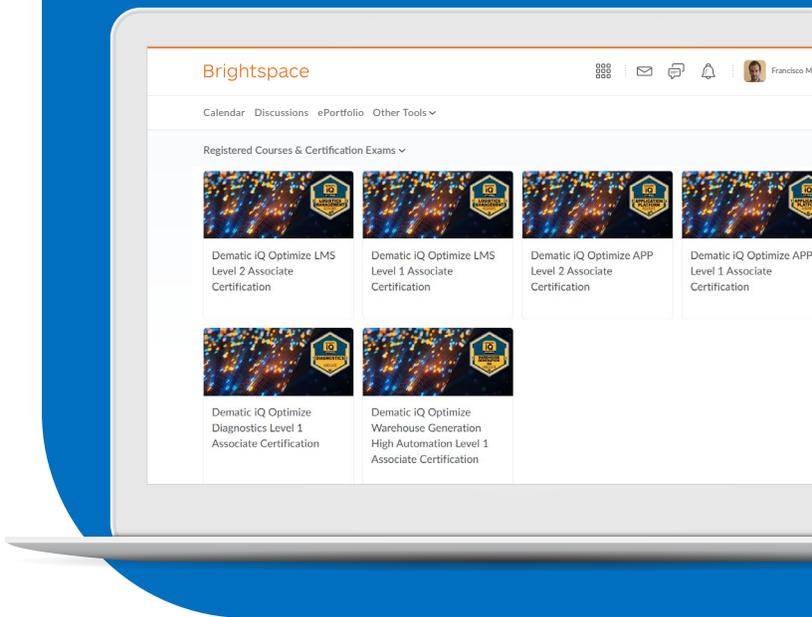
Competency-based certification on a global scale

Dematic began looking for a learning management system that could help assess the skills of its employees and guide their professional development.

“We take a complex, competency-led approach to certification, which is standard in the education sector but hasn’t yet been widely adopted in the corporate world,” says a Technical Writer at Dematic. “When we looked at most corporate assessment systems, they were too lightweight for our needs—they could give employees a score, but they didn’t have the backing of a competency framework or the ability to provide flexible feedback. That’s what led us to D2L.”

While the flexibility of Brightspace was a key factor in Dematic’s selection process, there was also a significant human element. Cara Scott, Certification Program Manager, explains: “We didn’t just want to establish a relationship with a vendor—we wanted a partner in education. D2L really stepped up and supported us every step of the way.”

The team started by using D2L’s Brightspace platform to handle certification-related assessments and assignments, and it’s now starting to integrate its training program content too, creating a single platform for all its certification needs. Today, Dematic’s certification framework includes around 250 competencies, each directly linked to objectives in the training materials and questions in the assessments. This enables Dematic to report directly on each employee’s competencies and helps managers assign the right people to the right projects more effectively.



The Brightspace solution features such as intelligent agents and release conditions help to automate much of the administration of the certification program by sending alerts and notifications to learners, unlocking new course content at appropriate stages in the learning journey, and presenting badges and certificates when key milestones are reached.

D2L’s Brightspace platform also helps Dematic streamline the grading of employees’ assessments, while still providing personalized feedback to help learners develop their skills. The majority of the assessments are designed so that they can be graded automatically. Meanwhile, for questions that do require peer review, such as coding exercises, rubrics are used to increase consistency and the grading process is anonymized through blind reviews to eliminate the risk of bias.

According to Kitrek Riese, Software Engineering Manager: “It’s really helpful to be able to generate meaningful questions that can be automatically graded. It provides directional information about the performance of the person taking the training, and it lightens the load on my team by reducing the amount of grading we have to do manually.”

Result

Clear learning pathways and transparent talent management

Dematic's new competency-based certification program, powered by the Brightspace platform, was an immediate hit with the company's learners.

Tim Watts, Software Engineer at Dematic, comments: "Brightspace is a big improvement on our previous system—it's easier to navigate the exams, and it's much more streamlined and user-friendly. Certification can feel like a mammoth task when you're a new engineer and you're trying to balance your studies with your work. By making the whole experience more approachable, it takes away some of the pressure and helps people perform at their best."

Kitrek Riese adds: "I'm really pleased that Dematic decided to invest in this type of training program. Without this type of capability, we wouldn't be able to bring our engineers on board and up to speed in such a consistent and efficient manner."

In fact, the onboarding experience has significantly improved, and Dematic has found that new employees are able to make a direct impact on projects much sooner than before.

Cara Scott says: "Before we started, one manager shared that it was taking them about 12 months to really feel confident in training an employee to work on projects independently. Soon after we implemented D2L's Brightspace platform, we got that down to five months, and today it takes about eight weeks."

This speed of onboarding proved particularly valuable when the COVID-19 crisis hit. With most customer sites closed, Dematic's recently hired engineers were



encouraged to focus on certification; and when sites began to reopen, they were ready to service a huge intake of new orders. As Cara Scott recalls: "One of our senior executives told me a couple of weeks ago that the certification program was a major factor in our ability to handle that sudden peak in demand."

John Heinel, Vice President, Global Software Solutions at Dematic, shares: "The certification program has been a critical component of our global software strategy by positively impacting our teams growth and development. It has provided quantifiable results around our teams' skill level to build a higher level of confidence in our engineers preparedness to deliver for our customers."

Today, Dematic can offer its software engineers a practical, rewarding learning path. Going forward, the company has decided to expand the program's focus from individual products to end-to-end solutions, and provide certifications for its mechanical and controls engineers too. Cara Scott concludes: "We want the whole organization to benefit from the success of the model we've created."