



Case Study: Food Safety Training

Leveraging Online Learning to
Support Knowledge Consistency



Background - The Company

Launched as a pilot project at one St. John's school in the fall of 1989, [The School Lunch Association](#) (SLA) has since grown to support 37 schools across the Province of Newfoundland & Labrador and serves approximately 6,300 meals to students per day. The organization stays true to its original mission statement, striving to operate a non-stigmatizing program that provides a hot, nutritious lunch for school children, regardless of a family's financial situation.

The valuable work that the SLA does would not be possible without the ongoing support that it receives from various [sponsors](#), which helps fund operational costs for the geographically diverse 100 person operation, which includes executive, food service, and various other service and support staff members.

The Challenge

As a non-profit organization, the SLA depends on a diverse set of employees and external volunteers to support the daily operation and must adhere to a robust set of safety procedures to ensure it:

(a) adheres to the requirements within the *Provincial Food Premises License*, (b) safeguards the well-being of its staff, volunteers, and the young students who are availing of this critical service, (c) maintains a positive reputation in the community, and (d) stays ahead of emerging health and safety issues that could impact the operation (e.g., COVID-19).

To that end, a focus on continuous training, and specifically food safety training for all relevant staff is considered a core operational requirement. With those involved with food preparation and delivery being geographically spread across the Province, it is an ongoing challenge to access, assign, and ensure timely completions of relevant and reliable training content. Further, ensuring that all staff, regardless of position or tenure, have consistent awareness and understanding of the safety practices and procedures is of paramount concern.



Company: School Lunch Association

Challenge: Ensuring the continued advancement of food safety best practices and knowledge consistency amongst all staff.

Solution: The various health and safety courses offered within SkillsPassNL – the free, publicly-accessible online training platform. The training gave an effective and trackable workplace safety supplement to existing procedures and corporate policies.

Outcomes: The Association leveraged the various Food Safety (and COVID-19) training options within SkillsPassNL to augment required training for their Food Premises License, drive consistency amongst staff regarding best practices, and support food safety inspection readiness. To-date, over 50 SkillsPass certifications have been achieved as part of the Association's continuous training objective.

The Value: "SkillsPassNL offers free and easy-to-access online training that further enhances our Food Safety protocols, and ensures that all current and future staff members have access to relevant training that can be completed on-demand."

- John Finn, Executive Director, School Lunch Association



Given the size of our operation, consistent staff knowledge in food safety, and overall occupational health and safety is paramount. SkillsPassNL provided us with a valuable training tool that supplemented our in house curriculum. We applaud the Province and WorkplaceNL for these efficient training opportunities."

John Finn
Executive Director, School
Lunch Association



The SkillsPass Solution

In assessing training options to address its ongoing commitment to training and safety, the SLA was looking for effective, credible, and easily accessible online training options that went beyond the basics and minimum standards, and ensures that all staff have a consistent and complete understanding of the training. The SkillsPassNL program, and training platform offered support in this regard.

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador launched the SkillsPass™ solution under the [SkillsPassNL](#) moniker in 2018. The program offers over 30 training courses and delivers and validates training, skills, and credentials across the Province for the benefit of all employers and workers- including a strong emphasis on Food Services. For the SLA, SkillsPassNL offered access to relevant, credible, and flexible online Food Safety training that would augment existing license training requirements, and offer additional employee skill development and maintenance.

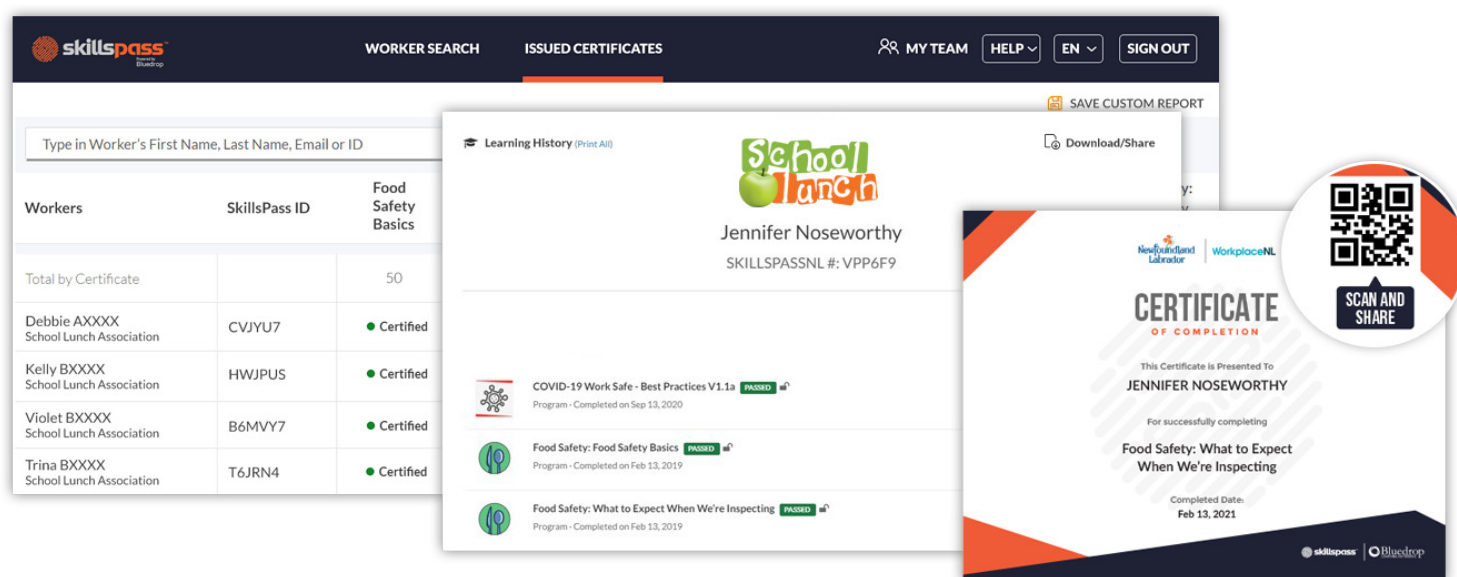
The training options available on SkillsPassNL are online, allowing employees to complete the training anywhere, and at their own pace- thereby ensuring limited disruption to their day-to-day work schedule, which is a benefit to the employer as well. The program is offered at no cost by the Province, and offers support to all employers, employees, and individuals seeking employment.

The Analysis & Adoption

The SLA began utilizing the SkillsPassNL program and platform upon its initiation in 2018 by the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, beginning with the Food Safety Basics training as a boost to existing staff knowledge. As the available content and the SLA's operation and requirements continued to grow, so too did its utilization of the SkillsPassNL platform, leading to the creation of their "Employer Network" on the platform.



Figure 1: SkillsPass Employer Network, Employee Training Results, and Certification Sample (For Illustration Purposes)



In setting up their Network, the SkillsPass Adoption Team provided the requisite support and quickly enabled the SLA with direct (no-charge) access to an online hub- whereby it could easily review training options, assign the courses to staff, and track course completions and certifications. SLA Executive Director John Finn said, *"We place a high value on ensuring that all new and existing staff have the same level of Food Safety training. While this is often challenging with over 100 employees, SkillsPassNL was able to address this challenge with ease by allowing us to track employee progress and identify knowledge gaps through their online employer dashboard."*

The SkillsPass platform offers employers a user-friendly, single view dashboard that highlights all employees in their unique Employer Network, and the specifics on what has been assigned, completed, and, if applicable, what certifications are soon to expire.

With the organization and employee base set up with accounts, the access to additional training was made that much easier. For example, the SLA was quick to deploy the COVID-19 Work Safe Course being offered by the Province in late 2020 as the pandemic continued into the return to School time period. SLA Operations Manager, Jennifer Noseworthy stated, *"As we prepared for the 2020-2021 school year which was complicated by the challenges associated with the pandemic, we wanted to ensure that all steps were taken to protect our staff, students, teachers, administrators and our school communities...the Covid-19 Work Safe course was easy to access and was a significant asset in this regard."* The decision was subsequently made to have staff complete this valuable workplace safety training supplement.

The Results

To date, the SLA has earned 50 course completion certificates overall, and this is continuing to grow. The organization continues to avail of relevant training options and completions by new employees- online, at their own pace, and at their preferred schedule.

The School Lunch Association is leveraging the SkillsPassNL platform the way it is intended: utilizing validated and timely safety training put forth by the Province to their benefit and professional development. *"The Operation Managers of the SLA worked with the SkillsPass Adoption team and mastered the roll-out of training to a large number of staff with proficiency; then had the ability to track all training of their staff in one secure database,"* said Crystal White-Dawe, Adoption Manager with SkillsPass.



The School Lunch Association has attained over 50 training certifications within the Food Safety training stream, and has also advanced OH&S training with the SkillsPass COVID-19 Work Safe Course. The organization continues to place a high emphasis on the timely and consistent completion of training; and the real-time, on-demand access to the SkillsPassNL platform ensures that this can be easily achieved.

About SkillsPass

The earliest version of SkillsPass was launched in 2010 by Bluedrop Learning Networks, a Canadian pioneer in e-learning technologies. After years working with a global client roster including Microsoft, Cisco, Sony, Pfizer, RBC, Dell, Fluor and Exxon-Mobil, Bluedrop identified an unmet need among small and medium sized business whose traditional approach to managing employee training left many behind.

Employees were facing a rapidly changing world where continual training was key to their livelihoods, but that world was still using outdated learning platforms that did not serve them or keep pace with technological innovations. The practice of stranding training certificates in corporate data silos was a barrier for everyone involved. Governments, regulators and industry groups who were frustrated by this outdated approach became SkillsPass' first allies.

Bluedrop made it their mission to create a learning platform that would benefit an entire workforce across a jurisdiction or an industry. Yes that means employers and their employees, but also industry groups, unions, regulators, training providers, employment centers and regulators. A 21st century learning delivery and management system would need to be ubiquitous, trustworthy, and verifiable. It would need to seamlessly follow employees as they moved around and changed jobs.

With these insights, SkillsPass was born. It has grown over the years to include six provinces, the U.S. Small Business Administration, the U.S. State Department, and numerous leading industry groups in several countries.

Today, over 2 million worker's records are housed in SkillsPass and that number is growing quickly.



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