

RainStorm Consulting Case Study

A statewide network of educational websites

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For more information
rainstormconsulting.com/casestudies

With multi-million dollar budget cuts looming, Maine's Adult Education Association partnered with RainStorm Consulting on an ambitious project: To launch powerful new websites for Maine's local adult education programs. **The goal:** To attract more learners, more revenue, and to re-define adult education in Maine as a viable, modern statewide network.

The status quo

Despite rising revenues and increased enrollment in 2006 and 2007, the Maine Adult Education Association (known as MAEA) and its geographically-diverse network of local member programs faced significant budget cuts and an aging, disconnected brand in need of a refresh.

Project:

Maine Adult Education portal

Website address:

<http://www.maineadulted.org>

Development time:

June 2008-December 2008

The transformation

Working with a strategic marketing firm, MAEA committed to an ambitious plan to overhaul and unify its brand. The primary goal: to present its dozens of unique local programs as a unified, statewide network offering a consistently excellent and affordable educational product for Maine people.

MAEA stakeholders and RainStorm Consulting defined the key to this strategy as **new websites for every one of Maine's local programs**, with each new program website sharing a set of powerful features and consistent design elements. **At the center of this network of connected program websites is the "portal" site**, MaineAdultEd.org, a single destination combining over 3,000 courses from programs as far as 380 miles apart.

The Maine Adult Education portal and related program websites are built upon SiteTurbine, a suite of web-based software developed by RainStorm Consulting for educational clients. **Highlights of the more than 80 websites include:**

- **State-wide course search:** On <http://www.maineadulted.org> or from any one of more than 80 individual program websites, prospective students can search the *entire statewide catalog* of adult education courses, in addition to the courses offered by their local programs. This statewide reach empowers students to locate the best courses in the area, in turn helping adult education programs of all sizes promote their offerings.

- **Online registration:** Using their new website, local adult education programs can begin accepting online course registrations in about 15 minutes using only a PayPal account. This process eliminates costly overhead and time involved for individual programs and allows them to open an additional revenue stream as well as provide an added convenience for their prospective students.
- **Simple management, outstanding support:** Using the suite of web-based tools provided by SiteTurbine, local program directors and administrators can easily customize their websites with local content, news items, and frequently asked questions for students, all with basic internet skills. No costly website maintenance or software downloads are required — in fact, RainStorm Consulting provides unlimited telephone and email support to all staff using the websites.

The results

- **Expanded audience, expanded revenue:** In just the first four months since the launch of the Maine adult education portal and program websites, **over 40,000 Maine people have visited the site**, viewing nearly 360,000 pages. More than 1,000 Maine citizens have registered for classes online, earning five-figures in revenue for individual programs.
- **Smaller programs, equal success:** Revenue and traffic is not centered solely on larger programs in more populous areas — in fact, **five of the ten most active program websites are from less populated, geographically-disparate areas in Maine**. This significantly increased access means not just additional revenue for programs facing budget challenges, it also means that **more people are finding and taking advantage of new educational opportunities**.

Testimonial:

“Our students have readily embraced the online registration and payment option and have found it to be quick and convenient. We have found that it broadens our potential customer universe — we've gotten many more registrations from outside our traditional population base this semester.”

- Ellen Dickens, Director of Union 74 Adult Education

For more information

RainStorm Consulting is proud to partner with educational organizations of all sizes to help them attract students, promote their mission and realize success on the web.

To learn more about how your organization can partner with RainStorm Consulting to succeed on the web, contact CEO Brian Rahill: (207) 866-3908 or brian@rainstormconsulting.com.

