skillable

Case Study

How Quest Software scaled a performance-based learning program and increased training consumption 244%.

Quest

Company
Quest Software

Industry
Software Development

Employees
3,800+

First Skillable lab
Launched in 2021

How do you reskill and certify more than 1,000 partners, validate that they're job ready and increase sales velocity in less than 12 months?

That's what Quest Software, a leading software development company, had to figure out.

Quest Software helps its customers secure and manage their IT environments. Alongside their robust partner network, they support more than 100,000 organizations, including 97% of the Fortune 500. When Quest acquired BinaryTree, a cloud migration company, in 2020 to bolster its product offering, they had to reskill and certify that these 1,000 new partners could implement and support their products.

Mergers and acquisitions are known for navigating the unknown, but the team at Quest found themselves in a perfect storm of circumstances:

- **The transferrable skills between the companies' solutions were incomplete.** This was a serious problem because to implement Quest solutions, partners must be certified or they lose their partner status, which threatens revenue streams for the partner and Quest.
- **Training was only available in instructor-led training (ILT) formats**. The logistics and sheer volume of classes was going to be extremely difficult and costly to facilitate around the world.
- **The COVID pandemic** was at its peak, rendering the ILT training impossible for an unknown period.
- **They had a limited resource pool of experts** to turn to for any sort of virtual training.

If they didn't train the partners well on the respectively new products, there would be longer sales cycles, potential declines in customer satisfaction (CSAT), higher operating costs and risks to their brand reputation.

To keep business moving, Quest needed to find a scalable technical training and certification solution that could:

Increase sales velocity by reskilling and certifying a large volume of on-the-go professionals across their partner network to effectively sell and implement Quest solutions.

Reduce the risk of potential customer satisfaction issues for both channel partners and Quest due to troubled implementations, which would require Quest to deploy high-cost technical teams to stabilize implementations.

The team responsible for finding the solution was Quest's Professional Services delivery team led by Joe Tobias, Director of Professional Services, Luke Buckley, Senior Advisor of Technical Training Development, and Andrew Lubchansky, Customer Technical Training Advisor. They were responsible for partner enablement and training, ensuring that their partners were fully equipped with the knowledge, skills and abilities to represent, sell and implement Quest solutions.

Challenge

Create a scalable partner education solution that efficiently supports the development and validation of partner skills around the world.

Solution

Leverage Skillable to quickly develop new training content, integrate learning experiences into the flow of work and create live environments for hands-on practice, skill validation and Performance Testing.

Results

- 244% increase in partner training consumption
- 183% increase in partner-led sales
- 85% reduction in certification costs per candidate
- Freed high-cost resources from manual tasks

Four challenges Quest was facing.

01 Limited skills parity required more intensive training.

"We had a whole new product set that partners were not familiar with and unfortunately in this situation the parity of technical skills wasn't transferrable. While the products accomplished similar things, how they worked was different. Even if a technician knew the best practices of migration products or how to troubleshoot them, they wouldn't know the nuances or how to navigate the UI, making them more susceptible to errors, longer resolution times and misconfigurations, which would require additional support from us. They needed time to be hands-on with the tech," said Luke.

02 To solve the challenges in partner enablement you can't just say "let's go virtual and train everyone online."

Given the tight timelines, the Quest team began churning out online classes. Due to the extremely technical nature of the subject matter, they used their own subject matter experts as proctors, which had increased operating costs associated with billable hours and opportunity costs by taking them off more direct revenue-generating activities.

It wasn't scalable or sustainable given the number of people they needed to effectively train and certify. "We couldn't have one proctor and 50 partners asking questions, as people could get left behind. Effective class management is important. It was a, we need a bigger boat, moment of truth," said Luke.

03 Training simulations and sandboxes were not robust enough to handle scenarios where there's more than one right way to do the job.

Simulations were not scalable when you must program the different branching possibilities or click paths. And if Quest told partners which path to take, that removed the critical thinking and the purpose of their training.

Sandboxes were better for providing a practice environment, but there wasn't a means to validate that a person was job ready other than asking knowledge check questions and taking their word for it, which is exactly how disaster strikes in any circumstance, especially a multi-million-dollar implementation.

Quest needed a performance-driven, outcome-based solution that put partners in high-fidelity, live environments where they could complete real-world tasks and then have their proficiency checked via automated skill verification.

They shared their challenge with their BinaryTree peers, who had been using a virtual lab solution to support their ILT hands-on training. They said, "You should talk to Skillable."

04 Completion-based training and knowledge checks aren't enough preparation for implementing enterprise technology solutions and products.

Quest uses a variety of learning products to deliver training, quizzes and knowledge checks, but there wasn't a reliable way to truly validate technical skills. They needed hands-on practice environments where implementation partners could demonstrate their skills, build their confidence and validate job readiness.

The first "aha!" moments.

Free up expensive Instructor resources by automating manual tasks.

One of the areas proctors spent hours in was scoring and checking learner labs —a required step in validating job readiness and issuing a certification.

"When we learned we could immediately and automatically score a learner's work with Skillable AND provide tailored feedback based on their results, we realized we had a scalable solution to our problem and could pivot to self-paced learning," said Luke.

This change alone would eliminate eight to 12 hours a week for each proctor and free them to focus on more topline activities, such as advancing sales opportunities or providing technical support.

That's when Quest learned Skillable wasn't just a virtual lab hosting platform, but an end-to-end, performance-driven learning environment that could help them assess and validate peoples' skills at scale.

> We realized we had a scalable solution to our problem and could pivot to self-paced learning.
>
> – Luke Buckley,
> Senior Advisor of Technical Training Development

Get training in market quickly and leverage automated skill validation while building new in-house development capability.

Through the BinaryTree acquisition, Quest inherited the ILT training labs built on Skillable's platform, but their shift to self-paced learning required a strategy and resources to repurpose the labs quickly. The result was a rapid series of course and lab development projects through 2020 and 2021.

To meet the deadlines and limit the strain on their internal resources, Quest:

- Engaged Skillable's Professional Services team to work together to develop the migration strategy for their current labs and assets.
- Defined a project scope where Skillable would build custom labs to Quest's specifications with the expectation that as the Quest team became more proficient on the platform, Skillable would transition to providing highly-specialized support such as writing the automated skill verification scoring scripts for labs.

Part of the solution also included:

- 24/7 lab availability so a partner could spin up training labs on demand.
- Ability for partners to save lab progress so they didn't have to re-start their training each time they launched their lab.
- Automation tools that could streamline and scale multiple processes while protecting the integrity of the learning experience, including managing lab access and duration periods.
- Skillable Studio, Skillable's lab development and authoring platform, would give Quest the autonomy to build their own labs.

What growth, improvements and outcomes have the Quest Services delivery team seen since partnering with Skillable?

Today, Quest is self-sufficient and leverages the Skillable Professional Services team for getting new training and capabilities in the market faster.

"We knew we had the talent to grow and manage this program ourselves, but we needed the solution in market as soon as possible," said Joe. "The Skillable team met us where we were, understood our vision and helped us deliver with excellence."

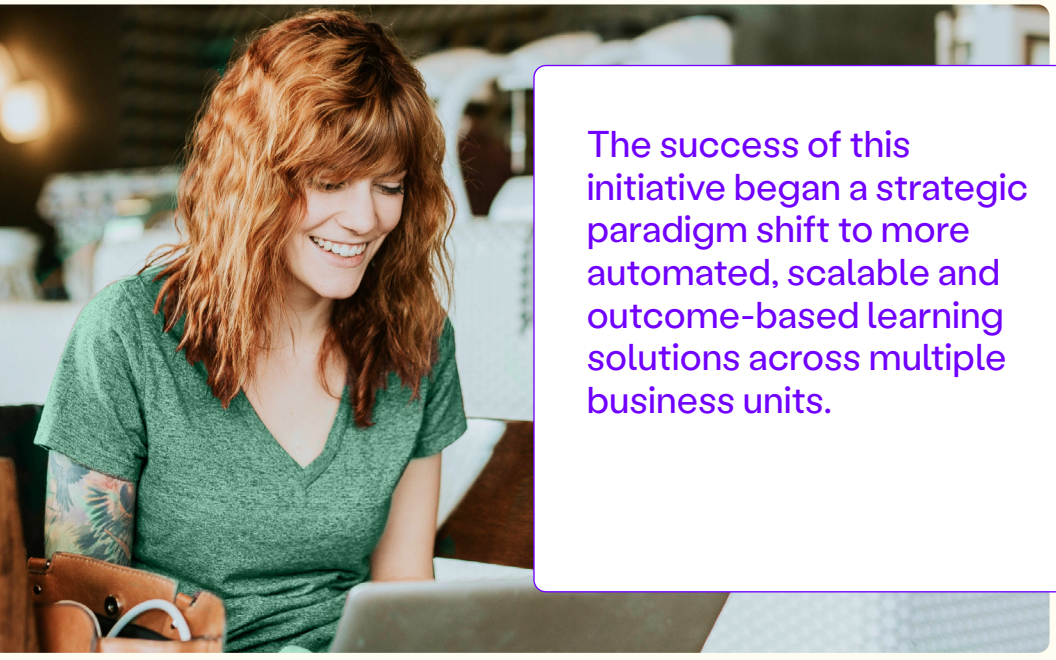
A 244% increase in partner training consumption after building an integrated learning experience.

To make it easier for partners to find and consume training, Quest wanted a streamlined connection between their partner portal, existing systems and lab environment. When Skillable released its updated integration tool, Skillable Connect, Quest was able to build a highly-connected ecosystem and leverage Skillable's learning management system, Skillable TMS, for lab delivery and to funnel additional usage data for reporting.

Most importantly, this integration enabled them to bring self-paced content to users in Quest's partner portal—and the partner adoption was immediate.

> The level of documentation and the way it's presented is exceptional.
>
> – Andrew Lubchansky, Customer Technical Training Advisor

In 2021, partners consumed roughly 1,000 total courses. For the first half of 2022, partners were averaging 160 courses a month, and when they integrated learning into their portal, consumption skyrocketed to 400-500 courses a month. They ended 2022 with partners consuming over 3,400 courses. A 244% increase.



The success of this initiative began a strategic paradigm shift to more automated, scalable and outcome-based learning solutions across multiple business units.

Other business units across Quest have seen the results and they want in. "We're being brought into conversations earlier with product managers and product developers to help build training that meets specific needs. We are more cross-functional than ever before," said Andrew.

As Luke put it, "We've helped mentor and clear a path for other units to hit the ground running and scale quickly."

Business outcomes Quest has achieved since partnering with Skillable.

Partner involvement in training makes for improved business outcomes.

More partners are participating in training, partner sales have improved and Quest has been able to retain the market segments gained in the BinaryTree acquisition.

289%
more partner users per year

85%
reduction in cost per candidate for certification

183%
increase in partner-led sales since modifying the program

1,297
total partners trained

Unique people trained across seven course titles.

170%
increase in certified people

The average number of people certified per month increased from 20 to 54.

2,166
total certificates issued

After training, partners can certify across multiple products.

1-3 months
saved with Skillable

Course development cycles and releases went from 3-5 months to 2-3 months with Skillable.

Training/skill data Quest is now tracking that they couldn't prior to Skillable.

- Average completion time
- Average score
- Number of canceled attempts
- Problem areas and activities
- Periods of inactivity
- Students who skip certain portions of the course

Stats as of February 2024.

Quest's process improvements with Skillable.

Scoring performance and issuing certifications **before Skillable.**

7-step process with turnaround times up to 3 days.

With Skillable

3-step process with immediate turnaround times.

- Partner completes lab
- Skillable platform immediately automatically checks work and issues pass/fail with feedback to Quest CMS via Integration
- Credential issued

2 hours saved per lab

Course sign-up process **before Skillable.**

6-step process with turnaround times up to 3 days.

With Skillable

4-step process with a 95% decrease in support tickets.

- Partner enrolls in a course directly in the partner portal
- Channel team alerted
- Channel team contacts partner and creates training order
- Order is completed, automation instantly issues lab with all materials within 12-24 hours using integrations

95% decrease in support tickets related to course sign-ups/enrollments

Lab support and troubleshooting **before Skillable.**

5-step process with turnaround times of 2-4 hours.

With Skillable

3-step process saving 2-4 hours per issue.

- User has an issue and clicks "Support"
- Support can log into their specific instance and provide personalized support
- Student is updated via support ticket with Root Cause Analysis and next steps

Quest lab milestones since 2021.

3,894
courses assigned

2,091
unique students

14
labs published
(courses + exams)

13,256
labs launched

Stats as of February 2024.

Continuous customer enablement and forging a true strategic partnership.

Eric Strause, the Skillable Strategic Account Director partnered with Quest, said, "It's been great to see how the partnership has grown and strengthened over time. They needed us to help them get started developing labs, while creating a path for them to take ownership of their program.

"Now they're self-sufficient. As regulars in our customer enablement sessions, they're always learning and leveraging new platform capabilities while also providing us feedback on how we can improve. That's what being strategic partners is all about."

Learn more about how you can build performance-based training programs with skill validation.

Request a free demo

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