

Digitising professional development post Covid-19

Harnessing the power of a secure digital identity has become more important than ever before. As South Africa's Covid-19 cases continue to spike it has become alarmingly clear that social distancing and effective work from home solutions will be prerequisites for the foreseeable future.



Carrie Peter

In the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) space, digitisation has become essential, ensuring points are allocated and confirmation of competency maintained.

Experience shows that the most incredible technology available means nothing if it is not adopted. To overcome this, incredibly complex technology must be presented to the user in a simple, intuitive, and user-friendly format – especially now in a time when those who never expected to rely on technology need it for their day-to-day functioning.

Carrie Peter, owner of e-signature solutions, Impression Signatures, confirms that the key to longevity in this market is not only investing in “Covid solutions” but rather thinking beyond Covid-19. The emphasis should rather be on developing those solutions that will transform workplace processes for the better – now and in the future.

Essentially, CPD offers the public assurance that the professionals who offer services are up to date with the latest training, and therefore certified and equipped to do so. However, due to social distancing and the halting of in-person training, this could be called into question. With this in mind, Impression rolled out its e-signature solution in the education space, ensuring CPD progress is not stifled. The solution can also be used for other signatory requirements, such as member voting.

“The beauty of this solution is that it allows CPD programme facilitators to continue working as they always have – from Excel. It is incredibly simple to use, allowing documents to be sent for signature from existing spreadsheets directly to the intended recipient’s cellphone, via USSD or their email,” confirms Peter.

The USSD functionality gives the recipient the freedom to participate in a digitised society, even if they don’t have a smartphone or available mobile data. The sender receives real-time confirmation on their Excel spreadsheet as soon as a message is delivered/read – with a warning appearing if the message is not delivered.

In addition to ease of use, these e-signatures offer a reliable, trackable guarantee that an electronic document is authentic. Relying on an innovative consent engine, identity, consent and context are all verifiable. As such, a non-repudiable chain of evidence is created. With advanced tracking capabilities, professionals participating in CPD programmes can accurately sign off on hours spent training, which is a crucial requirement for earning the relevant points.

“In the back-end the solution is highly complex, leveraging intricate security, technology, tracking and auditing capabilities. The application programming interface and intelligence are built-in. Yet on the front end, it’s as simple as selecting a list of names and clicking ‘send’,” adds Peter.

As the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI) commenced on 1 July 2020, CPD providers are even more hard-pressed to maintain compliance standards. With global security accreditation in place, and with the provision of a chain of custody certificate for every signature, these eSignatures are in many ways considered more reliable than a traditional wet signature.

Even as people begin returning to traditional workspaces, this solution will continue to offer health and safety benefits, helping organisations to avoid sharing pens or papers. “This is a solution that will last going forward, gaining momentum as people become more aware of the ease with which technology can be used,” concludes Peter.

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