

Case Study - PLI Canada



PLI wanted to remain a market leader in the ESOL education industry so they embarked on a project with Vital English to deliver added value to their students by engaging and exciting them before they even left home.

The Customer

Pacific Language Institute (PLI) is a leading private education centre in Canada focusing on English language training. With schools in Toronto and Vancouver they have a reputation for high academic standards and an innovative approach to learning.

The Challenge

PLI knew the importance of engaging with their students before they arrive on campus. Since there is often a lag between students enrolling with the school and actually arriving on campus students initial enthusiasm and motivation for study can dwindle. PLI had developed a process to give students assessments prior to arriving and based on their result, enrolled them into a class for when they arrive on campus. However, this process was a manual and cumbersome one so PLI sought solutions to improve this engagement through better use of technology.

The Journey

PLI, in partnership with Vital English and Intuto Canada embarked on a project to create an integrated system to manage and actively engage students prior to arrival. This involved working with learners already at the school to determine what more information PLI could have provided prior to their arrival. It also involved working closely with both administration staff at PLI, particularly in the homestay and student care departments and teaching with staff to get their perspectives on what more could be done for students prior to their arrival.

The Solution

The product that resulted from this partnership is called Pre-Arrival Learning or PAL. Through this system students receive a package of material including:

- An online placement test to assess the student's level of English skill.
- Automatic enrolment into an online pre-course based on test result. The student can begin learning immediately.
- A customised orientation tour, introducing PLI and life in Canada and the institute.
- Certificate of course completion on arrival at the school if 75% or more of the online course is completed.

Feedback

PLI have had some fantastic feedback from their student base. For example:

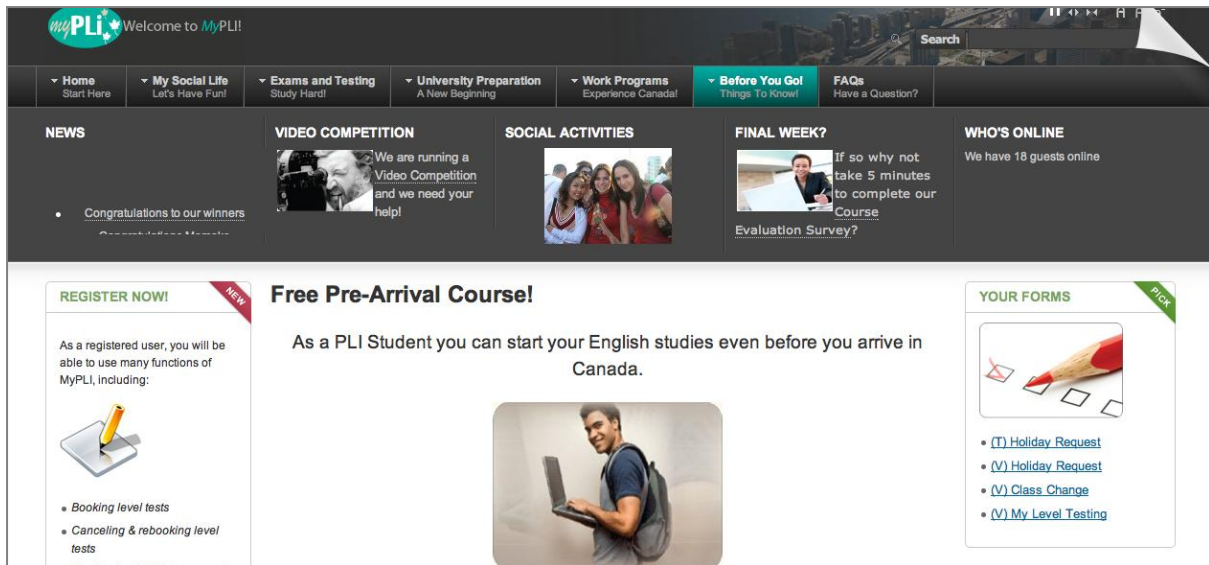
"The whole program was good especially the mini course that I had before coming to Vancouver!"

- PLI student

"Thank you for letting me know about the online Orientation. I found a lot of information in there. Am leaving for Canada shortly and filled with joyful expectations!"

- Maki Ayaka, PLI student feedback on the PAL Orientation

The Implementation



The screenshot shows the MyPLI website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with categories: Home (Start Here), My Social Life (Let's Have Fun!), Exams and Testing (Study Hard!), University Preparation (A New Beginning), Work Programs (Experience Canada!), Before You Go! (Things To Know!), and FAQs (Have a Question?). Below the navigation is a main content area with several sections: NEWS (with a link to 'Congratulations to our winners'), VIDEO COMPETITION (with a video thumbnail and text 'We are running a Video Competition and we need your help!'), SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (with a group photo), FINAL WEEK? (with a video thumbnail and text 'If so why not take 5 minutes to complete our Course Evaluation Survey?'), and WHO'S ONLINE (with text 'We have 18 guests online').

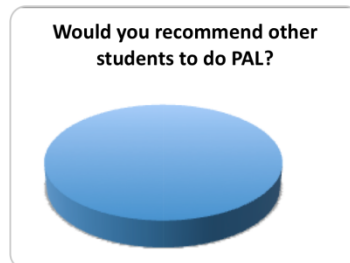
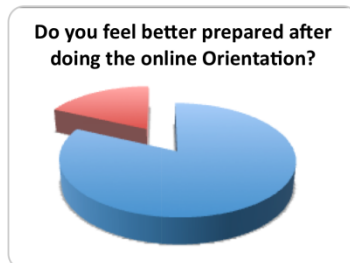
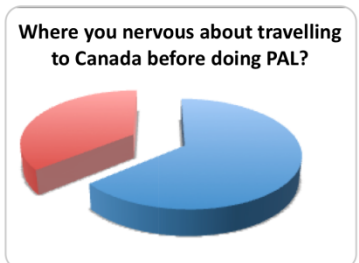
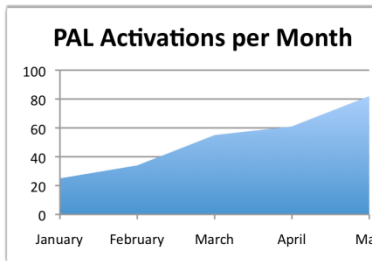
The main content area features a large banner for a 'Free Pre-Arrival Course!' with the text 'As a PLI Student you can start your English studies even before you arrive in Canada.' To the left of the banner is a 'REGISTER NOW!' section with a 'NEW' badge, stating 'As a registered user, you will be able to use many functions of MyPLI, including:' and listing 'Booking level tests' and 'Canceling & rebooking level tests'. To the right of the banner is a 'YOUR FORMS' section with a 'PICK' badge, listing links for 'Holiday Request' and 'My Level Testing'.

When a new student is enrolled at PLI they are sent a welcome email, in their native language, providing them with information on how to access PAL using their unique code. This code is the key to the entire PAL system. It gives the student access to the online material and allows PLI to track the student's progress.

PLI combined the PAL system with effective marketing and promotional techniques, such as a monthly prize draw for participants, to make the most of the opportunity to actively engage with students.

The Results

PAL Case Study May 2010	YES
	NO



Through the use of the PAL product PLI are:

- Building strong customer loyalty and positive attitudes to their brand
- Helping their students to feel connected to the school right away
- Motivating their students towards their learning
- Encouraging effective integration into campus life by breaking down barriers of the unknown.

Streamlining and automating their pre-arrival engagement is certainly an administrative saving as is the ability to pre-test students and provide teachers with the likely competency levels of their students.