



## Coordinating Training for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police

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*- Officer Brian Russell*

*CMPD In-Service Training Coordinator*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Company Challenge

- Scheduling training for 1,500 employees was done via pen and paper and extremely difficult to administer.
- State and national regulators require close tracking of officer’s training with records available as needed if there is an audit.
- Department administrators’ time was being used to manually manage managing 6,000 firing range training sessions a year.

#### Plateau’s Solution

- Plateau’s LMS gave the employees web access enabling them to enroll for training on the web and manage their personal development plans.
- The system provides a time/date stamped audit trail of each officer’s training which can be made available to state regulators if requested.
- The administrative staff time needed to register and reschedule training has been reduced by more than 50 percent and is maintained on a single platform.

To the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., Police Department, firearms training is one of the most critical functions of any law enforcement training program and one of the most difficult to administer. With a broad jurisdiction that includes the city of Charlotte and surrounding Mecklenburg County, CMPD has 1,500 officers and investigators operating in 12 districts.

#### Training Protocol

Every one of these officers has to take firearms training four times a year to retain their state certification. CMPD training administrators schedule 6,000 training sessions each year, for a firing range that only has 20 open slots. The department also has to schedule and deliver training for soft skills, hazardous materials, radar certification, OSHA instruction, diversity, and a number of other cyclical courses. State and national regulators require that the learning history of every officer is tracked and records must be immediately retrievable if training is raised as an issue.

CMPD tried to handle this task manually, with officers signing up for training on bulletin boards or via email and telephoning administrators if they had to cancel. The department’s training staff was awash in marked-up paper rosters, phone messages, and email notes. They were unable to dynamically manage the schedule in a way that allowed officers to cancel training, enroll at the last minute, or be alerted to other scheduling changes.

#### Automated Scheduling

CMPD selected Plateau Learning Management System (LMS) to meet all these requirements. In its first month of operation, 1,000 officers used Plateau to enroll in mandatory firearms training. The officers can view the entire firing range training schedule from their browser and register for a slot on the range. The central calendar is automatically updated once they register. In addition, CMPD’s officers are able to check their personal development plans and enroll in other training through the Web. Because the learning system is hooked into the department’s email and human resources systems, officers are notified with an email message when scheduled sessions or certification deadlines come up. The officer’s training home page also allows them to review all procedural changes in realtime and enroll in a variety of courses offered online or in a classroom.

If officers need to cancel because of a subsequent conflict, they can do so without calling a training administrator. For officers who are preoccupied with the day-to-day tasks of police work, these features come in handy. “Using Plateau LMS, we’ve been able to fully automate our firearms training regimen, allowing our officers to make much better use of their time,” said Officer Brian Russell, In-Service Training Coordinator for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department

### **Precise Tracking**

The LMS makes it simple for the department’s administrators and training staff to manage the central course-registration system, and to precisely track the status of the department’s overall firearms training program. “We can get a quick portrait of our overall proficiency—a ‘competency assessment’ of how the department’s 1,500 officers stand as a whole, with any skill gaps clearly shown—or narrow the picture down to the progress of individual officers, if necessary,” said Russell. “We can also administer tests and surveys for textbook-style courses that don’t require officers to be present in a classroom or on a firing range.”

Additionally, Plateau LMS is providing a bulletproof audit trail of all training events. Every time an officer, investigator, or detective takes a course or reviews a training revision online, Plateau LMS registers the event and puts it into their development plan and training history. The system maintains a time-stamped archive of all training for each person. CMPD can generate a comprehensive electronic “audit trail” of all training for state regulators, proving that each officer has received the needed firearms training. Security features prevent the files from being altered.

### **Realizing Value**

CMPD’s online learning management system was implemented and live within a few weeks. Officer feedback has been very positive with many commenting on how much easier it is to schedule their firearms certification via their laptops.

“In just two months since Plateau’s LMS was implemented at CMPD, the administrative staff time needed to register and re-schedule training has been reduced by more than 50 percent,” stated Russell. CMPD’s training administrators are now able to comprehensively manage all learning events on a single platform. “Plateau LMS creates a much more intuitive learning program for the officers, and because it’s Web-based it provides much greater availability and access.”

CMPD expects to add to that ROI by using Plateau LMS’ career planning tools to help officers proactively develop career tracks and help supervisors pick the most qualified personnel for new positions. Plateau’s LMS has also greatly reduced the time and effort the department once spent ensuring that the right number of officers are patrolling all districts. They have been able to trade stacks of paper and thumbtacks for an automated firearms training regimen has allowed officers to make much better use of their time.

### **Future Plans**

Going forward, CMPD plans to put a number of its courses online, from soft skills training, such as management courses, hazardous materials, radar certification, OSHA instruction, and diversity training. The department also plans to give officers access to their development plans and courseware in their patrol cars, so they can schedule training or review a new procedure while in the field. The goal is to use technology to create a more mobile, knowledgeable force that can take “just-in-time” training wherever they are, whenever they need it.