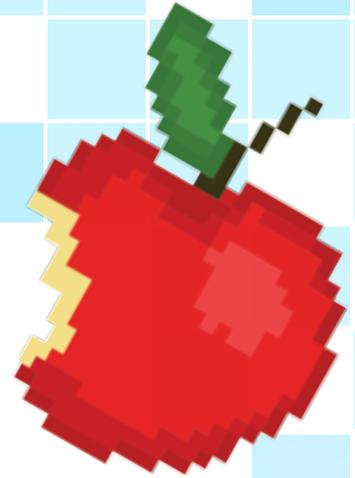
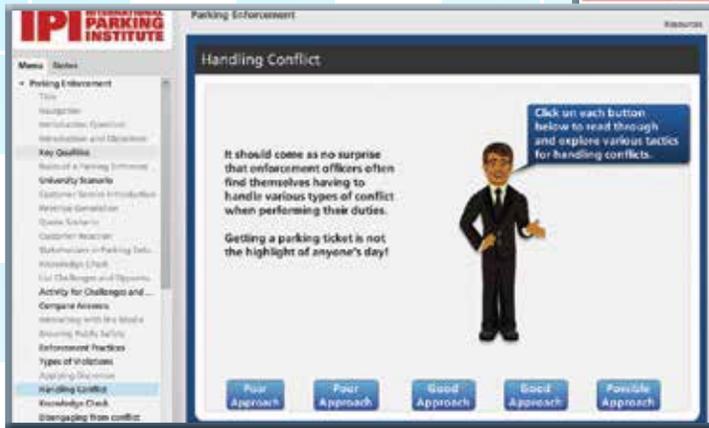
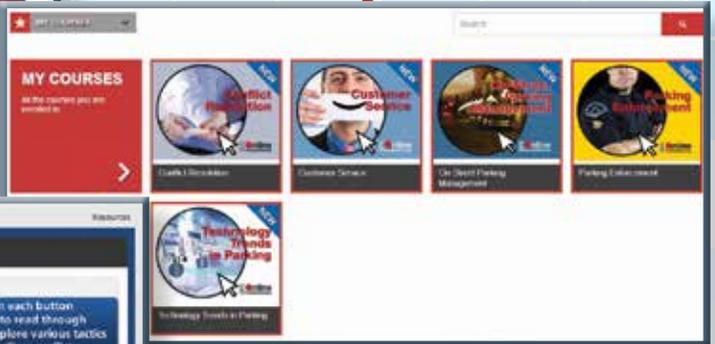


# Class is in.

# Session





# IPI introduces online learning for parking professionals.

By Kathleen Federici, M.Ed.

Organizations have a wide range of options from which to choose for employee training and education. Educational delivery methods include instructor-led, self-paced, online learning technologies, or a blended approach that includes instructor-led and online technologies. For convenience and budget purposes, many organizations are increasingly choosing technology to meet educational needs and organizational goals.

The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) defines e-learning as “the use of electronic technologies to deliver information and facilitate the development of skills and knowledge.” According to ASTD, technology-based learning methods account for 37.3 percent of formal educational hours available across all learning methods. Technology-based learning methods are continuing their rise in learning and education.

With the ability to view content on mobile devices such as iPads, e-learning offers increasing flexibility and convenience for the learner who experiences work and family in an increasingly connected world. The flexibility of e-learning breaks down time zone and international constraints, allowing learners to access content whenever is most convenient.

With mobile/cellular subscription numbers nearly totaling the world’s population, organizations have unprecedented opportunities to connect their employees with education wherever workers may be. Technology is challenging organizations to re-think content and education delivery.

**Kathleen M. Federici, M.Ed.**, IPI’s new director of professional development, has been involved in training and development for nearly 20 years in for-profit, not-for-profit, consulting, government, and academic institutions. Prior to working for IPI, Federici worked for the Project Management Institute (PMI) in a lead instructional designer role. There, she was afforded the opportunity not only to design training courses but also deliver them to international audiences at PMI Global Congresses and industry-related conferences.

Federici worked as a trainer for Horizon House, Inc., specifically working on the American College Testing (ACT) Work Keys initiative. There, she designed teamwork training with an 85 percent retention rate for more than 1,000 employees in three states and was interviewed for an article in the *New York Times*.

Federici was curriculum coordinator for the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice. She is a former commissioner for the International Association of Continuing Education and Training, where she served a six-year term. She is also a graduate of Millersville University of Pennsylvania, from which she holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology, business and industrial; she also holds a masters of education in training, design, and development and instructional systems from the Pennsylvania State University.

Analyzing a one-size-fits-all educational experience and deciding how to properly budget, choosing courses and training options, deciding how to effectively distribute the content, and working to develop a culture of learning and development is challenging. The International Parking Institute (IPI) has implemented a great online tool and resource for use by universities, parking authorities, organizations, and individual learners.

### **IPI’s Course Development**

IPI took the time to research and procure the one of the best learning management systems (LMS) as rated by *Training Magazine’s* “2012 Top 10 Cloud-Based LMSs.” An LMS is learning software designed to deliver, track, and certify online courses and training. Having a top-10-rated LMS will help us deliver the highest quality educational content.

IPI also procured the most up-to-date course design software possible. As in any industry, technological advances often occur rapidly. To keep up with the technological advances in education and training, beta testing was done for the first HTML 5 software, allowing IPI to deliver online courses to iPads. This mobility adds another level of convenience for our learners.

### **What’s Offered**

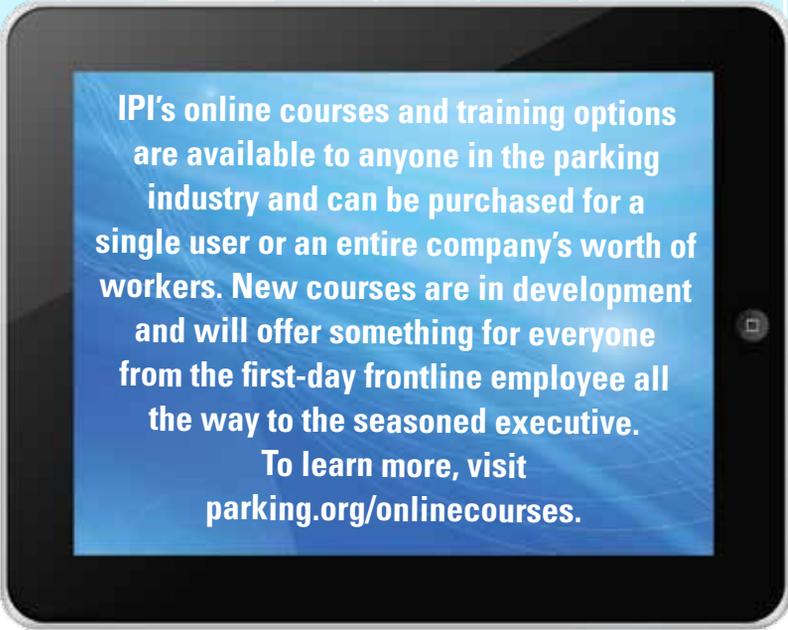
IPI’s philosophy on education and training is that learners at all levels are entitled to quality educational opportunities to improve their competence and meet organizational goals. We launched foundational-level courses with the intention of creating intermediate and advanced level courses in the future. Subject matter experts, including the IPI Educational Development Committee and the IPI Parking Technology Committee, have developed and reviewed relevant and current content for use in IPI’s courses.

The courses are intended to provide a framework to assist organizations in satisfying continuous education and training goals. The foundation-level courses currently offered are:

- Parking Enforcement
- On-Street Parking
- Customer Service
- Conflict Resolution
- Technology Trends in Parking.

### **Results**

Advancing the profession is just what we are doing with our online learning program. IPI’s online courses and training program launched mid-September and have been quite successful. We have had one large organizational bulk purchase of more than 50 courses,

A tablet with a black bezel is centered at the top of the page. The screen displays white text on a blue background. The text reads: "IPI's online courses and training options are available to anyone in the parking industry and can be purchased for a single user or an entire company's worth of workers. New courses are in development and will offer something for everyone from the first-day frontline employee all the way to the seasoned executive. To learn more, visit parking.org/onlinecourses." The background of the entire page is a light blue and white checkered pattern.

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smaller bulk purchases, and many individual purchases, including international purchases. Organizational bulk purchasing is a fast and easy way to train entire departments, and we offer a discounted pricing structure for those situations.

The online learning system currently has several hundred active users. The feedback is tremendously positive and professionals are enjoying both the online learning environment and the interactive content of the courses.

We are ecstatic about the excitement that this program has generated. Each day, we see an increasing number of requests for bulk purchases, ranging from five registrants to 52. Especially popular courses include parking enforcement, customer service, and conflict resolution.

A common vocabulary is used throughout the courses, which will translate to a common vocabulary being used on the job. All our courses complement one another. The content learned is certainly different for each course as indicated by the course objectives, but the vocabulary used throughout each is a common thread for learning, communication, and team building.

### **How it Works**

Each course consists of knowledge checks, various types of learner interactions, and an end-of-course quiz to determine mastery of the course objectives. Demonstrating the cutting-edge technology used, learners will find that some courses are facilitated by animated characters called avatars.

Prior to beginning the online learning experience, each learner has the option to complete a system tutorial. The system tutorial is a two-minute video on how to navigate the online learning platform (the LMS). Upon purchasing an online course, this tutorial is automatically assigned to each learner at no cost. Our goal is for each learner to have a successful learning experience. To date, 92 percent of users have completed the system tutorial prior to beginning their learning experience.

The logistics of the course include availability for six months from the date of purchase. The courses

bookmark, meaning that if the learner does not have the time to complete a course in one sitting, he can close the course without having to start all over. When the learner is ready to return to the course, he will be asked if they want to resume the course where it left off. When the learner resumes, he will start on the same page they left off or can choose to start at the beginning of the course. If a course is completed on the date of purchase, the learner may go in and out of the course as frequently as necessary until the six-month timeframe expires. Regardless of status in the course, each learner will have access for the entire six months.

Successful course completion requires a score of 70 percent or greater on the end-of-course, 10-question quiz. Once successfully completed, the course will grant access to a completion certificate. If a learner completes the course and gains access to his certificate but does not have a printer available, he can return to the course at any time to download and print the certificate at any time up to six months from the date of purchase.

### **Feedback**

IPI strives to deliver current, relevant and engaging content. However, we need the assistance, feedback, and guidance of the learners completing our courses. Upon completion of each course, students are asked to participate in an end-of-course survey. Our goal of offering high quality content is dependent on learner feedback. I encourage each learner to complete the survey and keep us informed of your needs. We are here to help you meet your professional development goals and commitments.

Educational experiences and solid foundational content are keys to maintaining a high-performing organization. IPI courses and training exist to assist organizations in meeting such goals. Please look for our newest course, Introduction to Parking—coming soon. This course is designed for individuals who are new to the parking industry and would benefit from an orientation or introduction to this dynamic field. 



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