

thingi + Dulux



Case study

Dulux



# How Dulux Academy Hub revolutionised learning for the UK's decorating industry

In our latest success story, we explore how Dulux Academy responded to an industry in crisis – creating THE HUB, the UK decorating sector's first digital learning platform, and training 15,000 professionals in the process.



## Responding to an industry crisis with digital-first learning

The UK construction sector was staring down an existential threat. Up to 66% of decorators were due to retire within a decade. The workforce was ageing, predominantly male, and working in physically demanding roles with nowhere to transition. Thousands of businesses faced failure. Decades of craft expertise risked disappearing overnight.

For Dulux Academy, the challenge was clear: how do you reskill an entire industry when that industry has never embraced digital learning? How do you reach decorators who are geographically dispersed, time-poor, and outside the traditional learning ecosystem?

The team mapped out the full customer journey, identifying around 100 pain points and improvements needed. Requirements ranged from the simple – like issuing VAT receipts at booking – to the complex, like personalising content and enabling peer networking across a dispersed community. Time was short. They needed a platform where decorators could pay for courses, access live events, and consume on-demand content without friction.

But the biggest question remained: how do you engage people who've never learned digitally before?

## From pandemic pivot to platform launch



The answer came unexpectedly. When COVID hit and all face-to-face training stopped, the Dulux Academy team pivoted fast – launching Dulux Academy Live, a series of free, bite-sized online modules delivered by industry experts.

The response was overwhelming. Over 3,500 decorators attended during lockdown, with feedback flooding social media: “Thank you to all at Dulux for the time you have taken to deliver these free online courses. I don’t think you realise how inspiring these have been, especially now times are tough.”

The experiment proved something critical: decorators would embrace digital learning if it was accessible, relevant, and delivered by people they trusted. The pandemic hadn’t derailed progress – it had accelerated it.

With the business case established, Dulux Academy partnered with Thingi to build something more permanent. Launched in November 2022, THE HUB became the decorating industry’s first fully blended learning platform.

*“We’re revolutionising tradespeople’s access to training by making it accessible to them any place, any time,”*

*“We’re excited to be providing these new services to Dulux Academy customers, giving them even more depth to their learning with personalised experiences, plus the added benefit of online peer-to-peer engagement.”*

says Vickie Mather, Dulux Academy  
Lead at AkzoNobel





## Connecting physical and digital learning seamlessly

THE HUB isn't just an online platform – it's part of a fully integrated learning journey. Every delegate attending an in-person Dulux Academy course gets introduced to THE HUB by a Skills Development consultant. The message is clear: your learning doesn't end when you leave the session. It continues online through exclusive post-course content.

Content recommendations are personalised based on what users engage with. Live Academy workshops are broadcast through THE HUB, allowing real-time interaction between experts and decorators nationwide. And critically, the team listens – turning customer insights into new courses and strategies. Built by the trade, for the trade.

## Transforming an industry, one decorator at a time

The results speak for themselves. Since launch, 15,000 people have been trained – 66% above the original projection. The target? 25,000 by 2025.

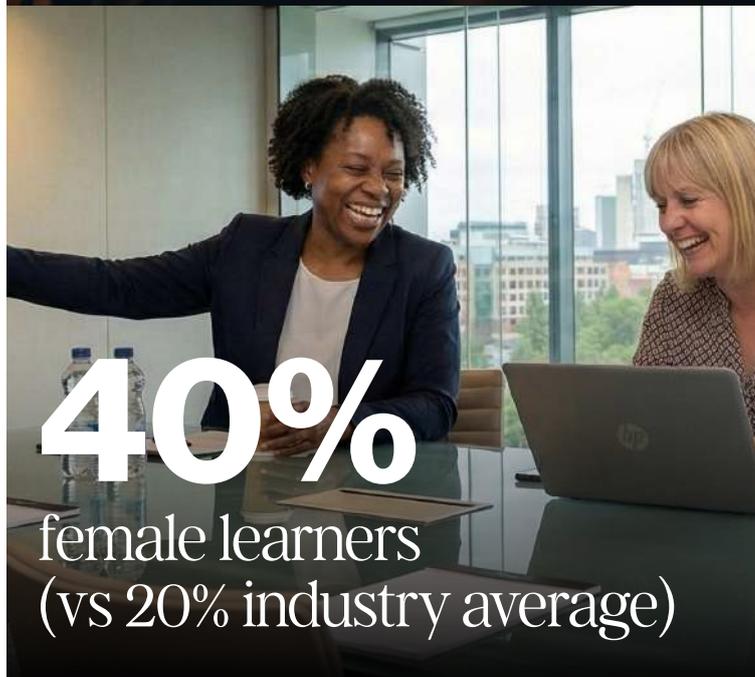
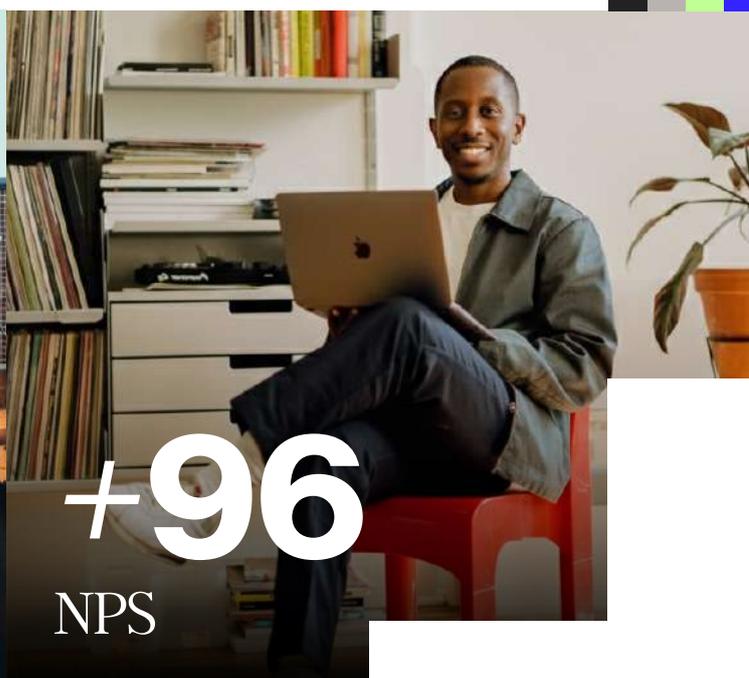
But the most striking impact is demographic. Where only 20% of the traditional workforce is female, 40% of all online learners on THE HUB are women. The platform's flexible, accessible nature is actively rebalancing the profession, opening pathways to those who might have been excluded by traditional face-to-face constraints.

Quality has grown alongside the numbers. City and Guilds certified courses in design and professional decorating are now available through THE HUB, with formal badges and certificates that carry genuine industry weight. This progression from free lockdown content to accredited professional qualifications shows how THE HUB has matured into genuine career infrastructure.

Customer feedback drives everything forward, with a Net Promoter Score of +96. The launch campaign achieved a 57.3% engagement rate – 32% above KPIs – proving that even hard-to-reach audiences will engage when learning is relevant, trusted, and accessible.

The sector has noticed. Dulux Academy has been nominated for the National Federation of Builders' Top 100 Most Influential in Construction, On The Tools' Training Excellence Award, and the British Coatings Federation's Excellence in Training Award.





## A partnership built on solving real problems

At Thingi, we're proud to work with teams like Dulux Academy – those willing to lead with learning, respond to genuine industry challenges, and put hard-to-reach learners first. THE HUB is more than a platform – it's infrastructure that's saving an entire sector from skills crisis.

The results so far have been exceptional, but we're most excited about what's next. With 25,000 learners targeted by 2025 and an increasingly diverse community of professionals upskilling through THE HUB, the UK decorating industry has gone from crisis to transformation in just three years.