

CASE STUDY: ROBELI INSTITUTE

EdTech Platform & Multi-Product GTM Strategy

Project Type: Comprehensive learning project

Duration: 9 months (April – December 2025)

Objective: Develop practitioner-level understanding of EdTech products, customer challenges, recruitment systems, and go-to-market strategies through hands-on platform development

OVERVIEW

Most EdTech marketers promote learning platforms through surface-level understanding—technical authority is missing, positioning feels generic, and campaigns don't address real implementation challenges buyers face. I designed a different approach: **Build a complete EdTech platform from scratch to understand what I wish to market.**

PLATFORM COMPONENTS

1. Open EdX LMS (Learning Management System)

Complete learning management infrastructure with course creation, student enrollment workflows, progress tracking, adaptive learning paths, assessment engine with automated grading, certification generation, mobile-responsive learner interface, and instructor dashboards with analytics.

Insight: Understanding technical constraints, hosting costs, scalability limitations, and why feature claims matter when marketing LMS solutions.

2. Horilla HRMS Integration

Employee/learner profile management, performance tracking and competency assessment, skill inventory database with gap analysis, career development planning with learning path assignment, automatic course enrollment based on role requirements, and LMS integration for seamless data flow.

Insight: How organizational structure, role hierarchy, and skill management affect product adoption and ROI calculations.

3. AI-Powered Recruitment Ecosystem (Innovation)

The Problem: Traditional ATS systems operate on binary logic—candidate meets specs or gets rejected. This wastes talent and damages employer brand.

The Solution: AI-powered system identifying WHY candidates don't qualify and creating personalized learning paths to help them bridge skill gaps.

How It Works:

- Job specification analysis: Parses requirements and creates competency frameworks
- Candidate assessment: Maps existing skills against job requirements
- Gap analysis: Calculates exact competency gaps preventing qualification
- Learning path generation: Creates personalized courses addressing specific gaps
- Candidate engagement: Instead of rejection, candidate receives "Here's how to get qualified" email sequence
- Tracking: Automatic re-evaluation when learning milestones complete

Business Application: B2B SaaS for training institutions, corporate L&D for internal talent pipelines, staffing agencies, and professional associations.

Why This Matters: Solves real pain—employers can't find qualified candidates, candidates feel rejected by automated systems. Positioning addresses emotional need (empathy) + practical business need (talent pipeline).

GO-TO-MARKET STRATEGY

Product Line 1: Custom Learning Solutions (B2B Services)

- **Target:** Training institutions, corporate L&D departments, professional associations
- **Value Prop:** Integrated LMS + HRMS + recruitment ecosystem eliminating need for multiple vendors
- **Pricing Model:** Annual licensing (R150K–R450K) + implementation services
- **Key Decision Criteria:** Regulatory compliance, implementation timeline (60–90 days), total cost of ownership, ongoing support availability

Product Line 2: AI Skills Training Programs (B2C + B2B)

- **Target:** Individual learning designers, corporate L&D teams, career changers

- **Value Prop:** Hands-on AI integration skills taught by someone who trained models professionally
- **Pricing Model:** Cohort-based (10–20 participants), R8,500 individual / R7,000 group
- **Differentiation:** "Learn from someone who trained AI models at OpenAI, not from theoretical instructors"

Product Line 3: SaaS Platform (B2B Subscription)

- **Target:** SME training providers, consulting firms, professional associations
 - **Value Prop:** Turnkey learning infrastructure without technical expertise or capital investment
 - **Pricing Model:** Tiered SaaS (R3,500–R15,000/month based on learner volume)
 - **Sales Approach:** Product-led growth with freemium model and weekly demo webinars
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KEY INSIGHTS FROM PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT

1. Resource Constraints Drive Purchasing More Than Feature Lists

Learning: Hosting costs, technical support capacity, ongoing maintenance overhead, and staff training requirements drive purchasing decisions more than feature comparison charts.

Application: Position products based on operational efficiency and resource optimization, not feature checklists.

Example Messaging:

-  Generic: "Our platform has 500 features including..."
-  Effective: "Reduce vendor management from 5 systems to 1 integrated platform, eliminating 15–20 hours monthly of data reconciliation, reducing IT support tickets by 40%, and cutting total cost of ownership by R180K annually."

2. Compliance-First Design Differentiates

Learning: POPIA compliance built into architecture (not added later) is competitive advantage. Most competitors add compliance as afterthought.

Application: Market compliance as foundational differentiator, not checkbox feature.

3. Multi-Sided Platform Complexity Requires Clear Positioning

Learning: Multiple business lines (B2B custom, B2C certification, SaaS) require distinct positioning for each audience segment. Can't use single message.

Application: Develop separate buyer personas, decision criteria, and ROI narratives for each business line. Use product-led growth differently for each model.

4. Candidate Recycling Innovation Resonates Emotionally + Practically

Learning: Positioning based solely on ROI underperforms. Adding emotional resonance (empathy for rejected job seekers) strengthens messaging.

Application: "We don't throw away unqualified candidates. We help them qualify." This emotional narrative + rational business benefit = powerful positioning.

5. AI Claims Require Practitioner Credibility

Learning: "AI-powered" claims feel hollow without technical understanding. Having actually trained AI models builds authentic authority.

Application: When marketing AI certification programs or AI-powered learning tools, speak from lived experience, not theoretical knowledge.

TECHNICAL SKILLS ACQUIRED

LMS Administration: Open EdX platform configuration, course design workflows, user role management, progress tracking, certification rules

HRMS Integration: API connectivity patterns, data synchronization strategies, workflow automation, employee lifecycle management

AI Implementation: Model deployment, prompt engineering, feature engineering, performance optimization, ethical AI frameworks

Systems Architecture: Infrastructure planning, scalability modeling, cost optimization, security protocols, disaster recovery

Database Design: Schema development, query optimization, index strategies, data integrity, backup procedures

STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES DEVELOPED

- Multi-product GTM strategy balancing B2B services, B2C certification, and SaaS simultaneously
 - Revenue model design (SaaS tiering, licensing structures, freemium strategies, enterprise agreements)
 - Competitive positioning, market analysis frameworks, differentiation strategies
 - Sales collateral creation (buyer personas, value propositions, ROI calculators)
 - Organic growth tactics (founder-led branding, content strategy, thought leadership)
 - Partnership development and channel strategy
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PROJECT STATUS & TRANSITION

Learning Phase: Complete

Platform Development: Functional (serves demonstration/portfolio purposes)

Professional Development: Mission accomplished

Commercial Pursuit: Not pursuing as business venture

What I'm NOT doing:

- Seeking funding or investment
- Building active customer base or ongoing revenue
- Maintaining product development roadmap
- Keeping this as side project during employment

What I AM doing:

- Seeking full-time Marketing role at established EdTech or B2B SaaS company
 - Using platform depth as credential and competitive differentiator
 - Offering practitioner-level product knowledge gained from this learning investment
 - Dedicating exclusively to employer's marketing operations (40 hours/week, no side projects)
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WHY THIS LEARNING APPROACH MATTERS TO HIRING MANAGERS

You're NOT hiring someone who will:

- Leave when their startup gets funded or gains traction
- Use company resources for side project development
- Have divided attention between full-time job and business pursuit
- View this role as bridge employment while building own venture

You're hiring someone who has:

- Invested full year learning your customers' world at practitioner level
 - Completed learning phase and ready to apply insights professionally
 - Deeper product understanding than traditional marketers
 - Technical credibility that builds customer trust and shortens sales cycles
 - Proven ability to build marketing systems and infrastructure from zero
 - Understanding of complex multi-sided platforms
 - Recruitment innovation thinking beyond traditional marketing
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PORFOLIO MATERIALS AVAILABLE

Upon request for interview process:

- Complete technical architecture documentation with system diagrams
- Market analysis Excel models (competitive intelligence)
- Sales collateral examples (ROI calculators, comparison matrices, value propositions)
- Buyer persona research documentation
- LinkedIn growth strategy playbook
- Go-to-market strategy presentations for all three product lines
- Recruitment ecosystem innovation documentation

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