

How Integrity Advocate Transformed Smart Serve Ontario's Proctoring Experience From 'Invasive and Impersonal' to Industry-Leading

>99.9% of users complete proctoring without requiring support

150,000 people trained annually



Before partnering with Integrity Advocate in 2019, Smart Serve Ontario—Canada's leading responsible alcohol service training provider—faced significant challenges with their proctoring solution. The previous system was "invasive and impersonal," requiring burdensome installations, creating technical headaches, and delivering a poor user experience that left both administrators and learners frustrated.

Richard Anderson, Executive Director at Smart Serve Ontario, knew there had to be a better way. With over 3 million people trained since 1995 and 130,000-150,000 new certifications annually, Smart Serve needed a proctoring solution that could scale while maintaining the integrity that makes them the only Canadian certification provider to proctor their exams.

The reality was clear—the old system had reached the end of its useful life. Learners had to endure 15-20 minute onboarding processes, prove no one else was in the room, and deal with constant technical challenges. Meanwhile, Smart Serve's support team was overwhelmed with calls from frustrated users who couldn't access their exams.

For Jody Palubiski, CEO of Charcoal Group of Restaurants and Smart Serve Ontario board member, the stakes couldn't be higher. Managing 1,300 team members across 18 restaurants and serving 50,000 guests weekly, he understood the critical importance of proper certification.

"In our previous life, you know, there would be many calls to the toll free number with no answers. We have such ease in how it connects to our course that when we review the numbers with Integrity Advocate, I think it's like 0.01% of the users actually have to call Integrity Advocate if they're having a challenge with the proctoring."

Richard Anderson
Executive Director, Smart Serve Ontario

"The responsibility of alcohol service and the impact it has on the community in which you're in is no different than having a driver's license and understanding the horrific downside of what can happen if somebody doesn't truly understand what they're doing behind the wheel. And so can you imagine if everyone just got their card by going online and nothing was proctored?"

Jody Palubiski
CEO of Charcoal Group of Restaurants

THE SOLUTION

Privacy-First, Mobile-Friendly Proctoring

Smart Serve Ontario selected Integrity Advocate after a comprehensive RFP process, choosing them for several critical factors:



No Installation Required:

Unlike previous solutions, learners could access proctoring directly through their browser.



Canadian Data Hosting:

All data stored in Canada and deleted within 24 hours, addressing growing privacy concerns.



Seamless Integration:

Direct connection from course completion to proctored exam.



Mobile Device Support:

Enables certification on smartphones and tablets—essential for Smart Serve's 18–24 audience.



AI + Human Review:

Advanced technology flagging potential issues, with human reviewers making final decisions.

The transformation was immediate. What previously took 15-20 minutes of invasive setup now required just two photos—one of the learner and one of their ID. The entire process became so intuitive that support calls virtually disappeared.

"Having the data stored in Canada, having it destroyed within 24 hours—certainly in these times we were getting many more questions about privacy and storage of personal information. When we're able to run through the process with one of our users who asks questions, they certainly are much more comfortable than all this information just sitting in a database."

Richard Anderson
Executive Director, Smart Serve Ontario

RESULTS

From Support Nightmare to Industry Leadership

The partnership with Integrity Advocate delivered measurable improvements across every metric:



Dramatic Reduction in Support Issues:

From "many calls to the toll free number with no answers" to just 0.01% of users requiring any assistance—roughly a dozen contacts per month out of 12,000+ monthly users.



Faster Processing:

Results now delivered in 10-12 minutes, sometimes less, compared to lengthy delays with the previous system.



Enhanced User Experience:

Joel Young, Technical Support Representative, reports that students approach the process with greater seriousness and pride, knowing their certification is truly earned.

"The technology and artificial intelligence—I don't want to say changes daily, but I'd be joking if I didn't say it wasn't. And the Integrity Advocate team is responsive, is good at teaching us the ropes about what to look for, is constantly updating their system."

Richard Anderson
Executive Director, Smart Serve Ontario

The ongoing partnership has evolved beyond just technology implementation. Integrity Advocate's team regularly educates Smart Serve's customer service and technology staff on emerging risks, including AI-powered cheating attempts and the latest fraudulent techniques.

"I think most students have studied it and are able to do it on their own... I like to say they're very serious about it too, knowing that it's proctored. They're very serious about getting their certificate, taking the exam, getting a good grade, and I guess proud at the end of it all that they have a Smart Serve certification."

Joel Young
Technical Support Representative, Smart Serve Ontario

Setting the Standard for Alcohol Certification Integrity

Smart Serve Ontario stands as the only alcohol certification provider in Canada that proctors their exams—a leadership position that demonstrates their unwavering commitment to public safety and professional standards. This dedication to integrity has earned recognition from federal organizations, including the Canadian Armed Forces, Via Rail, and Air Canada, who choose Smart Serve as their trusted training partner despite having multiple program options.

"We are still the only one in Canada that proctors. With artificial intelligence and all the ways to cheat the system, without proctoring, I wouldn't have any comfort as a licensee knowing if the individual actually took the program."

Richard Anderson

Executive Director, Smart Serve Ontario

For licensees like Jody Palubiski, this assurance is invaluable:

"As a licensee, there's a great deal of liability, a great deal of responsibility. I know that that's mitigated largely because of Smart Serve, and I know that Smart Serve is as functional as it is because of Integrity Advocate."

Jody Palubiski

CEO of Charcoal Group of Restaurants



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Certification Organizations

Based on Smart Serve Ontario's transformation, other certification providers should consider:

- ✓ **Prioritize User Experience:**
Eliminate installation requirements and support mobile devices where your audience expects them.
- ✓ **Choose Responsive Partners:**
Select providers who proactively educate your team on emerging threats and continuously update their systems.
- ✓ **Maintain Integrity Standards:**
In an age of increasing AI capabilities, proctored certification becomes more valuable, not less.
- ✓ **Invest in Privacy Protection:**
Canadian data hosting and rapid data deletion build user confidence and regulatory compliance.
- ✓ **Combine AI with Human Judgment:**
Technology flags potential issues, but human reviewers ensure fair and accurate decisions.

"As we started in 2019 and have evolved, we are confident in our partnership with Integrity Advocate, and the technology and the customer support. We firmly believe that Integrity Advocate understands this space better than most."

Richard Anderson

Executive Director, Smart Serve Ontario

Today, Smart Serve Ontario processes 130,000-150,000 certifications annually with unprecedented efficiency and user satisfaction. Their partnership with Integrity Advocate has not only solved their immediate technical challenges but positioned them as the gold standard for certification integrity in Canada.