



E-LEARNING FOR THE WORKPLACE: CREATING CANADA'S LIFELONG LEARNERS

BANK OF CANADA

CASE STUDY #9

SEPTEMBER 2001

Effective practices in developing and supporting Internet-based corporate learning, training and development initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The Bank of Canada—an autonomous crown corporation—promotes the economic and financial welfare of the Canadian economy by fostering confidence in the value of money, supplying bank notes, and promoting the safety and efficiency of Canada's financial system. It is a place where research fosters innovation, where independent thinking is nurtured, and where staff are encouraged to continually learn, acquire knowledge, and develop skills.

DRIVERS OF E-LEARNING AT THE BANK OF CANADA

E-learning is used by the Bank of Canada as a way to engage employees in learning activities from their workstations, and at a time and pace that suits their convenience. The electronic delivery of content is a substantial gain in efficiency because it offers easier access to resources and immediate feedback on exercises, and it serves as a permanent and ever-green database of job-related learning exercises. Finally, e-learning provides the Bank of Canada with an efficient mechanism for keeping in touch with users and responding to their learning needs in a timely manner.

BANK OF CANADA'S USE OF E-LEARNING

The Bank of Canada uses information and communications technologies for a range of e-learning initiatives. One of the Bank's online applications is its Second Language Café—an e-language learning site. The Bank of Canada developed the Second Language Café because most of today's software and Web-based language materials for French as a Second Language (FSL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) is not aimed at adults working in a Canadian context. What started as a small initiative by two staff trainers quickly drew the attention of the Bank's managers and directors and is now a bank-wide electronic application.

The Second Language Café is an interactive language learning resource universally accessible to all Bank of Canada employees, across the country, 24-hours a day. The Second Language Café is made up of a series of learning modules that contain tips, information on Bank policies and resources, interactive exercises, and games that challenge the learner's knowledge of important grammar structures and work related vocabulary. As well, there are French and English listening and reading modules designed to expose employees to authentic dialect.

- ▶ The Second Language Café's learning modules are designed in such a way to give employees immediate feedback.



- ▶ An additional component of the Second Language Café is the Quiz of the Month—a web-enabled interactive quiz sent to Second Language Café subscribers via e-mail.

KEY CHALLENGES

- ▶ The day-to-day pressures of work and life outside of work often limit the amount of time that the company and employees can devote to learning activities.
- ▶ The cost of investing time and capital into customized learning activities.
- ▶ Keeping the content up-to-date and fresh.

PRIMARY BENEFITS

1. The Second Language Café contributes to the Bank's capacity to do good work. It keeps employees motivated and engaged in the learning process.
2. The work-specific e-learning language tool, designed to meet work-related language requirements, helps employees and the organization work in Canada's two official languages.
3. The Second Language Café provides an efficient and cost-effective medium through which learning activities can be delivered and accessed by all employees.
4. The Second Language Café is accessible from all workstations at the Bank's Head Office and in the regions—an important asset in some regions where language resources and training activities are otherwise difficult to access.
5. The Second Language Café is available to employees who may not be identified as priority candidates for Bank sponsored language training.