



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

CISCO SYSTEMS

CASE STUDY #1

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

BACKGROUND

One key to Cisco System's success has been its ability to rapidly disseminate information, education and training through the Internet—a vehicle by which it can scale its training and development.

- ▶ Cisco uses its own Internet networking solutions to train and develop its employees.
- ▶ Cisco has done this by strategically leveraging its IT and network investments, and marrying them with core business systems and operational information.
- ▶ Cisco's use of the Web permeates nearly every aspect of its business, including e-commerce, product development and testing, mergers and acquisitions, public relations, human resources, and training online.

DRIVERS OF E-LEARNING AT CISCO

Cisco designs, develops, tests, markets and releases many new products each year. Relying solely on traditional classroom training as a method of getting employees up-to-speed on new products is ineffective and inefficient. With traditional training:

- ▶ newly hired sales persons were required to travel to corporate or regional sites for several five-day courses each year; and
- ▶ delivering a single product training course to the entire sales team through a traditional classroom model required up to 200 course offerings to reach everyone worldwide.

To optimize learning on a global basis, streamline professional development, eliminate repetition, and close personal and organizational learning gaps, Cisco designed and implemented a comprehensive e-learning strategy: The Cisco Learning Network (CLN). Through the Internet, Cisco has been able to deliver multimedia-based training to its global workforce more reliably, cost effectively, and quicker than ever before.

CISCO'S USE OF E-LEARNING

Frequently used delivery strategies within Cisco's Learning Network include:

- ▶ Content-on-demand training—allowing participants to access training whenever and wherever they want.



- ▶ Live Internet broadcasts and rebroadcasts to users in multiple sites—reaching many people at a small cost, at home or at work.
- ▶ CD-ROMs—allowing participants with incompatible technologies or no access to the Web to take training and learning modules.
- ▶ Online seminars—providing a cost-effective integrated audio/visual format with built-in accountability and measurability via front-end registration and back-end reporting.
- ▶ Virtual classrooms and remote labs—providing access to equipment, lab equipment, training environments and techniques too costly to replicate locally for every learner.
- ▶ Web-delivered simulations—for complex topics and subject matter.

KEY CHALLENGES

- ▶ Overcoming assumptions, attitudes and prejudices that training is not a real part of a business and that learning is only effective in classrooms.
- ▶ Ensuring that the materials posted on the Web are current.
- ▶ Having the proper infrastructure to make e-learning experiences effective.
- ▶ It takes a tremendous up-front resource (time, capital, equipment, and technology) to develop and implement e-learning tools, training modules and content.
- ▶ Millions of pages on Cisco's corporate Intranet makes it difficult to locate learning modules or products.

PRIMARY BENEFITS

E-learning unifies and centralizes the training needs of Cisco's business units and career tracks.

1. Content quality is consistent and can be updated quickly and easily.
2. Travel expenses and classroom scheduling and costs are greatly reduced or eliminated, cutting fixed training costs and freeing up training dollars for content and delivery development.
3. E-learning builds in accountability by tracking the training history of employees and ensuring standard levels of proficiency.
4. Learning and training modules can be re-used and reformatted quickly and easily, and a single training event can be repeated as often as required.

Online and on-demand multimedia training and development programs over the Web have:

- ▶ Increased performance and productivity.
- ▶ Reduced costs and eliminated traditional barriers like time, distance, and space.
- ▶ Developed learners who are better equipped to participate and succeed.
- ▶ Offered flexibility and choice so that the learning matches the pace and targeted skills acquisition plans of individuals.