E–LEARNING FOR THE WORKPLACE:

CREATING CANADA'S LIFELONG LEARNERS

KEYSPAN ENERGY CANADA

CASE STUDY #10

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

BACKGROUND

KeySpan Energy Canada is a gas processing company made up of 14 gas place facilities and pipelines in Alberta. To operate safely and efficiently, and to produce quality products KeySpan's workers need to be well trained, and capable of adapting to new technologies and new regulations. New ownership has provided the company with a clean slate to reinvent its approach to work and training.

DRIVERS OF E–LEARNING AT KEYSPAN

Unmet training needs—including the need for quality assurance programs, due diligence, and a environmental awareness—along with an aging workforce and the resulting loss of "experiential knowledge" had pushed employee development to a new level of significance at KeySpan Energy. With many employees living and working in remote sites, conventional classroom and seminar learning techniques are not overly efficient or effective—getting a significant number of people together to participate in training is not practical.

With the advent of new and continuously more sophisticated information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as the Internet, KeySpan has been able to offer cost–effective and innovative learning delivery solutions to its employees. KeySpan still recognizes the worth of instructor– and mentor–led learning activities, however, the company feels that offering a combination of instructor-led courses with electronic solutions is the way of the future in the petroleum industry.

KEYSPAN'S USE OF E–LEARNING

In 1998, KeySpan developed its first competency–based and skills–oriented online training system. The system, dubbed the Capability Development System, or CDS, consisted of a software assessment tool—sanctioned by the Canadian Technologies Human Resources Board (CTHRB)—a number skills profiles for various occupations, and a curriculum repository that provided technical information on the gas processing industry.

Today, KeySpan employees can address their training gaps through online courses, or access just–in–time e–learning wherever they are working. KeySpan focuses its e–learning initiatives on specific projects or business units to better manage its training outcomes. Compliance and regulatory training was the driver of e–learning, and ultimately formed the basis of KeySpan's e–learning business case.

- Rather than having to rely on in–house expertise and knowledge, KeySpan has leveraged its external business relationships to add value to its training programs.
- KeySpan has partnered with equipment suppliers to acquire needed training content and e–learning modules. As well, outside certification adds value to the training, and attaches credibility to the validation process.

KEY CHALLENGES

► The system is dependent on having the proper technology and bandwidth in place in order to deliver web–based training to remote sites.

► Time is of the essence at KeySpan—and when one's day is packed with critical work, finding the time to do formal training is the biggest challenge faced by most employees.

► It is often challenging for employees and management to find the right balance between getting the job done and taking training.

PRIMARY BENEFITS

KeySpan uses its e–learning system to track learning gaps, and learning activities of employees. By linking the progress of employees to the company's broader performance management system, it can also better align its learning programs, reward learning development and determine what learning modules are most effective.

► By focusing training on company–critical processes, services, products, and functions, KeySpan is better able to support its customers' and clients' needs—which translates into enhanced customer satisfaction, repeat business, and increased profits.

► Employees are more efficient in their jobs and are better able to solve work–related problems because training is tied to job competencies and is available "just–in–time, all–the–time".

► Employees who participate in training feel a part of the team. As well, they have a positive attitude toward work and they exhibit greater confidence in their abilities.

► The QuickTest International Assessment system uses prior learning assessment techniques to evaluate the competency levels of all employees.

► The skill inventory of employees is portable throughout the company's business units and facilities.

► Time–sensitive competencies at KeySpan are automatically flagged on the online system for re–certification.

► The training system at KeySpan is designed to bring in content and accreditation partners. As such, consortiums have been formed in the pipeline and plant operator areas to pool knowledge and improve industry–wide recognition and certification.