



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

NORSKECANADA

CASE STUDY #6

SEPTEMBER 2001

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

BACKGROUND

With over 4,000 employees, NorskeCanada is one of the largest groundwood paper companies in North America, producing pulp, paper and container-board at four sites in British Columbia. One way that NorskeCanada achieves business success is by encouraging learning and the sharing of knowledge and expertise among all of its employees. Through workplace learning the company has realized improved efficiencies, better safety records and longevity of capital and machinery.

The company's training group mission statement sums up its ongoing commitment to training: *To develop and deliver quality training which will enhance the skills and safety awareness of all employees and meet the needs of our company and our customers.* Recently, NorskeCanada undertook a radical change to its training program—in an effort to realize better returns and results—by dropping much of its instructor-led training programs and investing in information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure.

DRIVERS OF E-LEARNING AT NORSKECANADA

- ▶ NorskeCanada's executive team wanted the company to get up-to-speed within a six-month period on regulatory and compliance training. It earmarked e-learning as the means to get them there.
- ▶ E-learning offered NorskeCanada a more cost-effective and efficient process for learning and skills development than realized through traditional training initiatives.

NORSKECANADA'S USE OF E-LEARNING

- ▶ NorskeCanada purchased a separate server dedicated entirely for its e-learning platform. By using a state-of-the-art fibre-optic network, the company is now able to deliver a wide range of learning applications anywhere, anytime.
- ▶ Using the skills and knowledge of its own staff, NorskeCanada built its own e-learning solution. The company is now in a position to sell the content, technology and systems for its e-learning platform beyond their own organization.
- ▶ The company uses an employee from each of its process areas to help develop content.
- ▶ At NorskeCanada, managers are responsible for all employee training targets. By linking e-learning activities with accountability measurements—through a "training tracks" database in



which all employees have a training profile and user map—the company has integrated its learning platform into the day-to-day operations.

E-learning courses offered at NorskeCanada consist primarily of safety and compliance activities whereby employees are required to complete online learning modules followed by a short online quiz. The Workmen's Compensation Board (WCB), for example, requires all employees to pass courses on working around machinery, safe work-sites, and worker rights and responsibilities. Other online courses offered at NorskeCanada include:

- ▶ Training on personal protective equipment.
- ▶ Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training.
- ▶ All contractors are given an online orientation training session.
- ▶ Training on nuclear awareness for radio active measuring devices.
- ▶ Asbestos awareness training.
- ▶ Heat stress training.
- ▶ Training on the transportation of dangerous goods.

KEY CHALLENGES

1. Inadequate time to learn is a barrier to e-learning success at NorskeCanada.
2. Irregular work schedules.
3. Costs to oneself or one's business unit.
4. A lack of funding.
5. Difficulties trying to establish the benefits of an online training initiative.

PRIMARY BENEFITS

1. Improved work quality.
2. More efficient and productive employees.
3. Improved attitudes toward work—including greater job satisfaction levels.
4. Enhanced ability to understand and use information, leading to enhanced critical-thinking and problem-solving abilities.
5. Improvements in the use of technology, tools, machinery and systems.