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## Nestlé upskills global workforce

We continue our series of features examining the ways in which companies are introducing e-business technologies to deliver real business benefits. This month we take a look at the way in which Nestlé has implemented an e-learning platform to ensure that their staff around the world have access to a consistent global learning solution.

### The big picture

Founded in 1866, Nestlé is the world's largest food and beverage company. The company has an extensive global workforce of approximately 250,000 people employed in factories and offices in almost every country in the world.

Providing targeted and continuous training and development to Nestlé staff is critical to ensure the company maintains its market position globally, and that it can propel its business forward. However, with such a large global workforce, Nestlé faced a considerable challenge in implementing a consistent global learning solution. With regional variations in the Nestlé IT infrastructure, flexible deployment methods were fundamental, and for a company with a strong global presence, the availability of localised courses was key.

Nestlé has selected targeted online courses from Thomson NETg's Open Learning Solution in business, and professional development and IT skills, making over 900 courses accessible globally. These courses include:

- Communication;
- Leadership and team-working;
- End-user training in office automation tools;
- SAP training;
- Technical courses for IT staff, including certification courses such as the Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE).

Many of the courses are available in several languages in addition to English, including German, French, Dutch, Spanish and Italian. Furthermore Thomson NETg has offices in 65 countries globally, so is able to provide strong local support.

'The choice of delivery methods offered by the selected solution, together with the breadth and depth of its course library, is a huge advantage for us' says Dawn Waldron, Learning and Training Manager at Nestlé. 'We have to ensure that members of staff worldwide can access learning in the key skills we have pinpointed as fundamental to our success. The solution also has some other very attractive offerings such as online MBAs, IT bootcamps and authoring tools, which provides us with the option of expanding our learning programme in the future.'



**Learning must be a continual event and has to be a central part of an organisation's culture**

### The main event

For a company with offices in so many countries, the flexible deployment methods provided by the e-learning solution are a real advantage, ensuring that members of staff from Switzerland to Korea can access the same high-performance learning.

In many cases, the learning is available to Nestlé staff on the intranet via central servers. In other instances, the same courses are available via Thomson NETg's web-hosted learning solution, NETgLearning.com, allowing the easy and flexible delivery and management of a blend of instruction. The service provides Nestlé employees with continual access to a range of learning solutions, plus round-the-clock access to mentors for support and advice.

'We believe that the solution provides the perfect platform for continual learning, as it is highly accessible and flexible, which means we can accommodate everyone's needs - from those working at their desks, to executives who are on the move, to those working from home,' commented Dawn Waldron.

The Nestlé training team has gone one step further to ensure that continual learning is a central part of the organisation's culture. After discussion with, and agreement from their managers, employees have no restrictions on what courses they are able to take, i.e. someone in a production job could take the MCSE or Oracle certification. By opening up learning in this way, every member of staff, from factory workers to top level management, is given the opportunity to further their personal and professional development.

From the outset, the supplier's services team has worked hand-in-hand with Nestlé, from designing the right solution to meet its specific needs, to customising the learning interface to match Nestlé's internal branding.

In addition, the flexible structure of the courses has enabled company-specific graphics, text and files to be inserted. For example, Nestlé has used the Thomson NETg courses in the construction of training templates for job roles to assist with the implementation of SAP throughout the organisation. Nestlé has also been able to ensure learning time is optimised for staff, since the content architecture allows staff to by-pass specific parts of a course that do not fit with their skills needs, which allows staff to optimise their learning time.

'Because learning can be personalised to individual requirements, our staff can take control of their own learning, which has proved to be very motivating for employees,' commented Dawn Waldron.

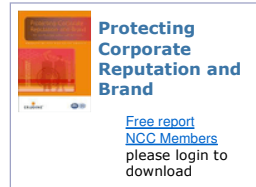
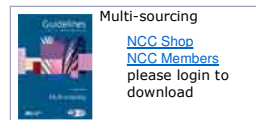
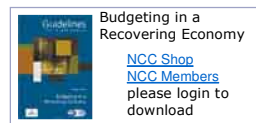
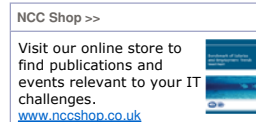
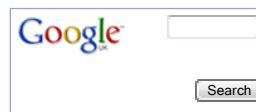
### The results

The e-learning programme implemented by Nestlé has helped to ensure that employees worldwide have the knowledge they need at their fingertips to perform to the maximum, and help the company remain a global leader.

A key catalyst in ensuring the success of Nestlé's learning programme is the intelligent structure of the e-learning programmes, which allows for fast, effective skills acquisition. All of the courses are broken down into manageable modules, which enable staff to dip in and out of the learning as required.

'Our staff have a real, just-in-time learning solution, which means they can now easily re-skill or up-skill at their desktops, enabling them to work faster and smarter and drive our business forward,' said Dawn Waldron.

She adds 'The challenge for all organisations is keeping their employees equipped with the vital skills required to ensure they excel in the workplace, and that their company meets key objectives and remains competitive. Today this means providing high performance and targeted learning to every member of staff in the specific skills they need, when they need them. We have developed a strategic learning programme in line with our business objectives and individual needs.'



**Lessons Learned**

1. Learning must be a continual event and has to be a central part of an organisation's culture.
2. When selecting a learning provider, ensure that the provider can offer support and advice following implementation. For example, Nestlé required advice on how to drive usage of its learning programme, especially as the company has a large and widely dispersed workforce around the world. In particular they needed to focus upon the successful integration of e-learning into the organisation's culture. Regular events and programmes are held to educate staff on the benefits of e-learning and Nestlé closely monitors usage. The message to staff is very clear 'use it or lose it!'
3. Think outside the box - look for other ways to use e-learning. A blended learning solution, where e-learning is used in conjunction with other delivery methods such as classroom-based training, is highly effective. For example, Nestlé uses e-learning sessions to ensure that all participants have the same level of skills prior to classroom-based training to help maximise the time in the classroom. This ensures that time spent in the classroom is focused on applying skills and theories directly to business needs and goals.

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