Case study: Introduction of the e-Scola Training Service at an SME

How should a small or medium enterprise (SME) use the e-Scola Training Service for its internal trainings, why did they choose this solution, how was it introduced, and what are the benefits of the training program?!

Briefly about the company

MagiCom Ltd., the flagship of MagiCom Group, was founded by three individuals in the Spring 2001. Operating in the same ownership structure since its foundation, the company focuses on IT outsourcing activities from the beginning, and also provides accompanying services as consulting on information security management, or the professional management of IT projects.

Associates of the company – almost 70 people – work under very different working conditions: almost thirty of them work at various sites of a multinational enterprise, at distant geographical points (Budaörs, Cardiff, London, Singapore…), in the summer there are students employed in Padua, many work at the headquarters of the company at Kőbánya (Budapest), and also there are actual remote employees, who operate critical IT infrastructures from home, or visit clients for consulting or auditing purposes.

The management of MagiCom Kft. is committed towards the operation and constant development of an integrated management system, that conforms to the ISO 9001:2000, ISO 14001:2004, ISO 27001:2005, and the ISO 20000-1 standards. Compliance to the first three of these standards is assessed every year by an external, certification body (SGS).

Their HR system has been the first one amongst Hungarian IT companies to win the "Investors in People Standard" award.

Training needs

Within the management system of the company, there are external audits every year, when the certification body assesses whether the company conforms to the relevant standards (ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001:2004, ISO 27001:2005). These certifying audits are often accompanied by client revisions. It is quite a challenge considering the preparation of associates to audits, when they are physically in a distance and are working in very unique schedules (time lag, national holidays in various parts of the world).

In such an environment, classic classroom trainings are non-applicable, and what's more, most colleagues cannot be addressed this traditional way, since in a world of unlimited computer mobility, the attention of these highly qualified persons cannot be engaged by conventional methods.

At the same time, procedures of the company have advanced dynamically by the requests of clients, and even a simple task – to be notified about the modification of an existing method in due time – is a source of several troubles.

The solution: Active (blended) learning – e-Scola Training Service

IT culture was such popular within the company that everyone used computers routinely, modern group work software were also known, and also there was an internal portal where current rules and information were accessible.

In spite of this, there was a significant lack of knowledge, therefore the management of the company decided to introduce an e-learning based complex learning system.

The management expected from e-Scola Training Service to become a tool that not only provides interesting curriculums, but also creates the actual structure of internal training activities.

They immediately understood that a technical solution itself does not make order, the technology should be promoted within the company, and traditional human discussions are also necessary.

Accordingly, the company decided to choose active (blended) learning, which means that understanding e-learning curriculums is only one element of the whole process, and computer experiences are accompanied by discussions, consultations with persons responsible for each curriculum, even using today's highly popular instant messaging services.

The pilot project

In order to decrease the risk of the project, as the first step the company introduced the blended learning service package by e-Scola Training Service to only a well-defined group of associates.

In summer months, MagiCom hires young people for seasonal jobs in Italy. These students become employees of the company for only a couple of months, however during this period, elements of the integrated management system are also applied to them just as to other employees, therefore the required level of knowledge is also very similar.

Consequently, after the hiring interviews, before signing the agreement, all candidates received a brief introduction of the company and about its systems, rules, and also a username and a password, with which they could access the training module specially created for employees in Italy. Then, their task was to log in through the internet from home, to go through the course created for them, and to pass an exam at the end (!), and also to fill out a questionnaire about their satisfaction related to the course.

The learning process and the students' activity was easily followed in the e-Scola Training system by the tutor (special field leader) responsible for the course: they saw how much time students spent with the course, which questions did they found difficult at the exam, and also which parts of the course proved to be satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

To finish the hiring procedure, the candidate showed up one more time in the Kőbánya office of MagiCom, where together with the HR manager (with the test results in hand) they went through the process and cleared up missing or misunderstood parts. After they signed the employment contract, and the employee traveled to the place of the job in Italy, and during the term of the employment, the access to the curriculum was granted, therefore they could go through the information published there any time. This information also supported the everyday life of employees, since the "curriculum" included useful information related to sights of the town, traffic info or important telephone numbers.

Since questions of the electronic test included key points of the employment contract (e.g.: terms of termination), litigations and legal issues, which frequently emerge in case of such summer jobs, could be prevented.

Extending good practice to the whole organization

Positive experiences of the pilot project lead to the decision of the management of the company to extend the e-Scola Training Service: besides employees working in Italy, curriculum mutations were created, to fit for associates in the Kőbánya headquarters, or for engineers, financial experts working all over the world.

Training of all workers (about 70 persons) introducing ISO and renewing knowledge are carried out through the e-Scola Training Service, maintaining blended learning and its elements.

Results / benefits

Applying the e-Scola Training Service provides many, unexpected benefits for a company:

- **Labor saving:** it consumes less working time of special field leaders (quality management, environment protection and information security leaders) to deal with the training of newcomers, and also employers will be provided a flexible opportunity to learn required materials.

- **User experience:** according to the evaluation, on a classic scale of one to 5 (5 is the highest mark!), employees rated the e-Scola Training System averagely between 4.0 and 4.6. The features measured:
    - the originality and suitability of this new form of information provision
    - usefulness
    - opportunity for gathering information individually
    - transparency
    - visual experience, display

- **Client satisfaction:** Clients of the company sense that associates of MagiCom are familiar with various methods and standards, either related to the Client or to MagiCom.

- **Being up-to-date with standards and procedures:** modifications in procedures and standards are easy to communicate with people, within the e-Scola Training Service, users receive messages about modifications, and also there are ways to make sure that these modifications have been viewed and understood.

- **Development of training administration:** within the System, it is easy to follow events, actions related to the training (logins, exam activities, satisfaction results etc.)

- **Development of the culture of acquiring IT services:** since this tool requires the frequent and conscious utilization of IT infrastructure, it is able to create positive changes even in case of a company with a relatively high IT culture (e.g.: password using or learning habits).

- **Economical:** savings are measurable in terms of time and money, both for employer and employee as well (in case of a company model with various geographical sites, just consider the now unnecessary traveling costs).

- **Accountability:** the company is a frequent and successful bidder in EU related projects. Aspirations towards e-learning systems bring favorable conditions for being eligible costs.

- **Sustainability:** the IT infrastructure required for the e-Scola system is not that complicated, the only key is reliable internet access. Safety backups are easily created out of the content of courses, and in case of a potential disaster, recovery is simple, therefore continuous operation can be maintained with only minimal service intervals.

- **Availability:** the availability of e-Scola Training Service is above 99,99%, practically the only technical barrier is the availability of the internet provider.

- **Conformity:** the e-Scola Training Service supports conformity on regular external audits, and also auditors sense the high level of preparedness of employees during personal interviews.

The active usage of e-Scola Training Service supports the operation of the company from many aspects, it is one of those returnable investments that are of key importance for responsible company leaders.

Representatives of MagiCom and Observans Kft. are certainly at your service, to introduce to you the e-Scola Training Service even "live", at a pre-scheduled time!

Contact

Should you be interested in the above service, please, contact our colleagues who are at your service for personal consultation even on site!

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