

Customer Success Story

ConocoPhillips UK Ltd



SAP® Training Services

Setting a precedent: Successful outsourcing of SAP training by a leading oil and gas operator

SAP training challenges

When the Supply Chain Management function of one of the world's leading oil and gas operators reviewed its strategy and resources for SAP® training, the review highlighted a demanding range of training requirements. In common with other oil majors, this Absoft customer runs multiple IT applications, including specialist oil sector modules such as Joint Venture Accounting and Remote Logistics Management. It came as no surprise, therefore, that its training requirements should be challenging.

Two particular conclusions posed a dilemma:

- It was evident that some key business goals could only be met if the SAP skills of certain staff were developed more comprehensively, and to a uniform standard.
- At the same time, due to a range of business pressures, providing training in SAP could not be deemed a high priority use of the department's resources.

This presented the operator with a challenge, because SAP training had historically been kept in-house as a matter of policy.

A switch to outsourced delivery

After some deliberation, a pragmatic switch of policy opened the door to outsourced SAP training delivery. This paved the way for the much needed skills development programme. The initial requirement within the new regime was to provide around 60 people with general business training in procurement, covering SAP transactions such as:

- Creation of requisitions
- Receipt of services
- Approval of services

Absoft was already well known and well regarded in SAP circles within the North Sea oil and gas sector, which made it the logical company for the oil and gas major to approach with its new training requirements.

Training the trainers

The brief was to emulate the customer's own SAP training. Absoft's trainers therefore sat in on some of the internal training sessions in preparation for delivery. Peter Mason, Absoft's Training Manager, explains: "Absorbing our client company's particular way of delivering the training was central to Absoft's mission. Studying the scope, purpose, methodology and content of the training was also fundamental."



Satisfying the critics

Absoft's trainers had to prove they were capable of delivering training to the same level as their counterparts in-house. As a result, a small pilot class was set up, involving key users who would be stern critics if anything was not up to scratch.

Absoft passed with flying colours and six further training sessions followed over the next nine months.

Mimicking trainees' own environments

As the customer's own training facilities were relatively limited, the entire programme was based at Absoft's SAP training suite in Aberdeen. Peter Mason, Absoft's Training Manager, describes the suite's facilities: "We're equipped with a full set of the latest releases of SAP application modules, as well as state-of-the-art training workstations. Our connectivity is designed to provide trainees with direct access to the customer's own systems and data. That way, it precisely mimics the SAP environment that they use at work."

Throughout this training programme, the customer also made use of Absoft's training suite to hold internal workshops, independent of Absoft's SAP training. Peter Mason explains why: "One of Absoft's key guiding principles is flexibility beyond expectation. It's one way of making it easy for clients to work with us. Our training facilities are in constant demand as a vehicle for our training services, but in this case our guiding principles decreed that we should help our client resolve a problem."



Absoft's training facility

**For more information please call Absoft on +44 (0)1224 707088
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Business benefits

Outsourcing SAP training to Absoft had the immediate effect of freeing internal resources in the customer company for core business activities.

Absoft not only met the customer's requirements efficiently, but was also able to use its well-rounded SAP knowledge and diverse customer experience to suggest a range of additional actions. These were designed to improve both the SAP system and the skills of the users with minimal cost and effort.

Proactively looking to the future

With training on business processes and more tailored training both on the agenda, Absoft's escalating involvement aligns precisely with the oil major's North Sea SAP strategy. Peter Mason comments: "Our client's SAP systems and processes never stand still. Because of that, a key element of their strategy is to develop a more comprehensive training programme. This will combine training in business processes with training in SAP software."

On a final note, Peter adds: "In common with all the oil majors, evolving best practice is fundamental to our client's business. The open, honest relationship we have with them is the best possible basis for helping them fulfil that mission."



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