Customer Success Story
Chevron Upstream Europe

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SAP® Training and Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

Harnessing Absoft's flexibility and knowledge to deepen the impact of training

A substantial SAP skills requirement

The business IT requirements of multinational companies tend to be complex, especially in fast moving industries like oil and gas. Chevron undoubtedly fits this mould, running a spread of applications, from Plant Maintenance and Project Systems to Supply Chain Management and Joint Venture Accounting. When combined with an SAP® user population of almost 400, this adds up to a very substantial requirement for skills to be maintained and developed by training and other means.

Two distinct training needs – with special challenges

Against this backdrop, Chevron identified a need for two distinct types of SAP training:

- Training in integrity and reliability processes relating to surface equipment at offshore locations
- Training in process changes within the Supply Chain Management module of SAP

The supply chain management trainees comprised over 40 staff, from warehouse clerks to contract buyers. The integrity and reliability training was mainly for frontline staff based offshore, with around 250 trainees in this area. As Chevron Upstream Europe's training advisor, Paul Izzett, points out, the IT awareness levels of offshore staff brought a special challenge: "The roles being trained included warehouse managers and maintenance staff, many of whom were not very comfortable using IT."

Building a complete picture of training

Chevron's objective in both areas of training was to improve the business – and not simply to develop competency in SAP. It followed that educating the trainees on pertinent business processes, as well as on SAP transactions, was a critical goal.

SAP Gold Partner

When the need for these training programmes was highlighted, Absoft was already working with Chevron on system configuration and other SAP related work – and therefore well positioned to assist in defining training needs. On the supply chain management side, for example, Absoft provided guidance on developing a competency matrix and defining supply chain roles. Scoring the competencies of individuals and setting thresholds across all the relevant areas of competency played a major part in identifying who should receive what training.

Innovative training delivery

Inspired by its insights from the TNA, Absoft proposed a distinct training approach for the supply chain management side. Paul Izzett recalls: "Absoft came up with the idea of gathering together, in one room, the whole chain of people who would be affected by 'pressing the button'. Then, by running through each type of event in the process, everyone could see how that affected not only themselves, but also everyone else. They all understood the process, the software and each other's viewpoints."

This all-embracing solution illustrates perfectly Absoft's credo that software and process go hand-in-hand. It also demonstrates the company's conviction that a flexible approach is essential. Peter Mason, Absoft's Training Manager, explains: "Using 'one size fits all' training materials can get the basics across quite efficiently. Relevance is fundamental to memory retention, however, and so what makes training really stick is building on the customer's own situation and needs."

Objectives met, problems solved

By the end of the training programme, Chevron's original objectives had been met in full.

Perhaps more tellingly, this training has led to a change in policy on how Chevron handles SAP issues and requirements as they arise. Having previously deployed only in-house SAP resources, the company now uses Absoft whenever its capabilities match Chevron's needs. Two examples have been:

- Improvements to maintenance planning
- Enhancements to how Chevron processes items returned from offshore for repair or scrap

Importantly, the trainees themselves were happy with Absoft's performance:

- Of the 92 Chevron staff who received integrity and reliability training onshore, for example, 87 (95%) gave the training an overall rating of at least "good", while 49 (53%) rated it as "very good" or "excellent".
- Over 200 staff trained offshore gave similarly high ratings. Comments here included: "No nonsense approach – almost all queries answered at the time" and "The course gave an excellent overview and allowed us to understand what was required in the coming months".

New levels of clarity, productivity and SAP payback

Among the benefits that Paul feels the company has gained is renewed clarity in the business processes underpinning the training: "The detailed scrutiny inherent in Absoft's methods has shone fresh light on those processes. Some processes have been streamlined as a result, and others have had ambiguities ironed out."

Since the training was completed, Absoft's responsiveness to issues arising has continued to contribute towards Chevron's progress in getting the most out of its SAP system.

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