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INDEPENDENT
Software Testing

WORLD CLASS IT
Destination Chennai

OFFSHORING eLEARNING

THE STRATEGIC MOVE...

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Global companies are gearing up to benefit from the strategic advantage of offshoring their training development budgets. Service providers in India are maturing while accommodating the staggering demand - **Vivek Agarwal** CEO, LIQVID

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EDITOR'S DESK

E learning products, solutions and Training Outsourcing are booming segments of the Offshore outsourcing industry which is expected to do a business of US\$50 billion worldwide over the next 5 years according to MMG Research Worldwide. India could tap this opportunity right from China to eastern Europe to Americas if it develops innovative and more interactive solutions for the global market.

The global software testing market is estimated to grow US \$25 billion over the next 5 years as Independent software vendors face many development and testing challenges unique to their business. Indian service providers have the edge in offering reduced system test cycles and bug free solutions on time within budget.

The State of Southern India - Tamil Nadu is fast growing to create the highest number of Tier-II IT destinations in India based on the Techno-environment and people skills availability projections. India needs 50 Tier-II IT destinations over the next 5 years to face the incoming traffic of Technology business.

Speed, Innovation and people skills availability are the mantra of the IT World! Lets move on.....

Regards



K N Rajan
 Publisher & Editor
 Outsourcing2India

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eLEARNING & TRAINING OUTSOURCING



WELCOME TO
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THE EVOLUTION OF Training Outsourcing

For decades, companies have used outsourcing strategies to achieve greater scale, efficiency and expertise in a wide array of business functions. Some of the functions organizations have outsourced include finance and accounting, human resources, procurement and customer service. More recently, however, a number of organizations have begun to apply the outsourcing model to their training function. There is still debate as to whether the training function can be successfully outsourced. Some learning professionals consider the function to be too embedded within a company's culture to be successfully outsourced to a third-party provider. Others freely acknowledge that it is not part of their company's core competency and seek to partner with a training provider whose expertise they can leverage.

Every other month IDC surveys the Chief Learning Officer magazine's Business Intelligence Board (BIB) on a variety of topics to measure the attitudes, issues and interests of senior learning executives. The recent issue looked at the evolution of blended learning. This month's article looks at the continuing evolution of training outsourcing and seeks to address such questions as: How widespread is training outsourcing? What is the nature of training outsourcing engagements? How satisfied are buyers with their outsourcing provider? Who are the key decision makers regarding training outsourcing?

Training outsourcing engagements typically fall into one of two camps, those engagements where select training activities are outsourced and those where the entire training function is outsourced altogether. The benefits of a successfully deployed outsourcing strategy are relatively obvious. In addition to being a potential means for reducing cost, training

outsourcing allows companies to access training delivery, content development, and technical expertise and scalability not available within their own organizations. An outsourcing solution also frees up training professionals to focus on more strategic issues such as better aligning training objectives with corporate goals. IDC sees the conversation around training outsourcing shifting from one about pure cost reduction to one of cost efficiency. It is less now about how much a company can save and more about how a company can spend its training budget more wisely.

Buyers Satisfied with Outsourcing Solutions

More than two-thirds of CLO BIB respondents indicated that their companies outsourced some portion of the training function. This is consistent with last year's survey where 62 percent of participants responded the same way, showing a 6 percent growth in outsourcing. Of this year's respondents that do outsource, 95 percent outsource selected training activities and 5 percent outsource their entire training outright. This suggests that most buyers of training outsourcing services are content leveraging their provider's expertise within specific areas of training, but are not yet interested in completely outsourcing the whole training function.

Eighty-six percent of the BIB indicated that they were satisfied with their company's outsourcing arrangement while another 48 percent indicated they were somewhat satisfied. Only 5 percent of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with their company's outsourcing situation. These results were consistent for both select and total training outsourcing, suggesting that an outsourcing strategy can be successfully deployed for either case.

Of those companies that do not currently outsource any of their training function, 20 percent said that they do expect to at some

point in the future. This is also consistent with the findings of last year's survey. However, 6 percent of those companies that currently outsource responded that they would not be looking to outsource in the future, despite stating they were either very or somewhat satisfied with their outsourcing provider. This suggests that there are other factors beyond client satisfaction that impact a company's decision to continue to outsource. In some cases, an outsourcing relationship might be tied to specific objectives and once those objectives have been met, the rationale for outsourcing is removed.

Delivery and Content Continue to Lead the Way

Survey participants revealed that training delivery and custom content development continue to be the two most commonly outsourced services. This continues to represent a shift from earlier years of training outsourcing when it was more common for back-office administrative activities such as learning technology management and enrollment management to be outsourced. Clearly, training professionals today have become more open to using an outside provider for some of the more crucial aspects of training.

Primary Reasons to Outsource

The pressures being put on today's training professionals are sizeable. A growing number of company executives realize the contribution training divisions can make to achieve business success, and as a result they put heavier expectations on training departments to keep their employees proficient and knowledgeable. In some cases, given the limited number of training personnel available, these companies might find it difficult to keep pace with their own expectations. Not surprisingly, when asked for the top three reasons for pursuing a training outsourcing solution, the response "To deliver more training than internal resources could provide" was selected most often. Twenty-seven percent of respondents

selected this as a top reason for looking to outsourcing.

The second most commonly selected response by the CLO BIB was “to gain access to better technical or training expertise.” It is a reality of today’s workplace that companies simply cannot afford the time for specific expertise to develop organically. Outsourcing affords a company the opportunity to access technical or training expertise immediately, helping companies to respond to their development needs in a timely fashion.

These responses indicate a shift in the BIB’s thinking from a year ago where cost reduction was one of the predominant reasons given for pursuing an outsourcing solution. This year cost reduction was preceded by four other responses as the top reasons for outsourcing.

Buyers Looking for a Business Partner

Training and subject-matter expertise rate as the two most important qualities buyers consider when selecting an outsourcing provider. Simply put, buyers want a provider who knows training and who knows their industry. These two qualities have essentially become the table stakes for competing in the training outsourcing market today. What has emerged from this year’s survey, however, is the importance buyers now place on finding an outsourcing provider who acts as a business partner. Buyers want a provider who remains engaged with them throughout the process, is continuously re-evaluating and assessing training needs and approaches, and customizes solutions specific to their business. The BIB find qualities such as financial stability, proven case studies and a prior work history with the company less influential to their selection.

Customers Becoming a Bigger Part of the Audience

As compared to last year’s survey, a growing number of companies are beginning to look to outsourcing providers to manage some component of their customer training. Although internal employees still comprise the majority of the training audience, there has been a significant increase in the

percentage of BIB respondents who target outsourced training to their customers. IDC anticipates that this trend will continue as more companies recognize the value of providing training to the entire value chain.

Why Some Opt Not to Outsource

A third of survey respondents indicated they do not outsource any of their training function. When this group was asked to provide the reasons for this position, their responses illustrate the growth the market still must make and provides insight to the vendor community on how they could better serve prospective clients. The primary reason given for why companies choose not to outsource is an obvious one: They are content with their internal training resources. Other reasons, however, speak to some of the conceptions perceived or otherwise that buyers have of outsourcing solutions. Issues involving loss of control, loss of intellectual property and the belief that outsourcing providers do not understand their company’s business still rank high as reasons for not pursuing outsourcing. The BIB indicates that less significant is the fear of loss of employment for trainers, lack of appropriate measures or that outsourcing is too expensive.

Who Are the Decision Makers?

Not surprisingly, within the majority of BIB companies, the key decision maker for all training outsourcing agreements is the same: the CLO or head of training. However, within some companies the BIB shows a shift in responsibility away from heads of business units for select training outsourcing engagements and toward the CEO and senior HR executive for decisions involving the outsourcing of the entire training function. Roughly 5 percent of respondents did not know who the decision maker would be within their company.

Many Vendors Competing for Buyers’ Mindshare

In an attempt to measure the awareness of vendors of training outsourcing services among the buying community, BIB participants were asked to provide the names of two companies they thought of when they heard the term “training

outsourcing provider.” The results from this question highlight the breadth of training providers that exist on the BIB’s radar as well as the fragmented nature of the training industry as a whole. In total, the BIB provided the names of 144 different vendors with 114 of these receiving a single mention. Accenture led the list of companies with 33 mentions, and IBM was second with 14, however, “None” or “No one” was given 18 times, making it the second most common response. In further examining the BIB’s responses, IDC found that similar to last year, the list contains a significant number of companies that do not specifically market themselves as training outsourcing providers. This suggests that a diverse understanding of the term training outsourcing still exists within the buyer and vendor communities. Some buyers might in fact equate the procurement of regular training services from a third-party vendor as outsourcing, when in fact it is not.

Still Room for Improvement

Training outsourcing remains a well-established practice within the ranks of the BIB. Seventy-percent of respondents to this month’s survey indicated that they will continue to use training outsourcing services going forward. Despite this positive outlook, the BIB did have advice for providers of outsourcing services on how they could better serve the learning market. Many respondents felt that the vendor community needs to do a better job of listening to their clients’ needs and crafting customized and flexible solutions that fit within existing processes rather than attempting to sell them a pre-packaged solution. As this market continues to mature, buyers and vendors alike will benefit from an ongoing discussion about how learning outsourcing services can be better tailored to fit the needs of today’s training professionals.

By Peter Mc Stravick - Senior research analyst for IDC’s Learning Services group, where he addresses the impact of training methodologies and business models on end-user organizations and tracks market growth and opportunities in the U.S. corporate training market

CHANNEL TRAINING

Survey Results

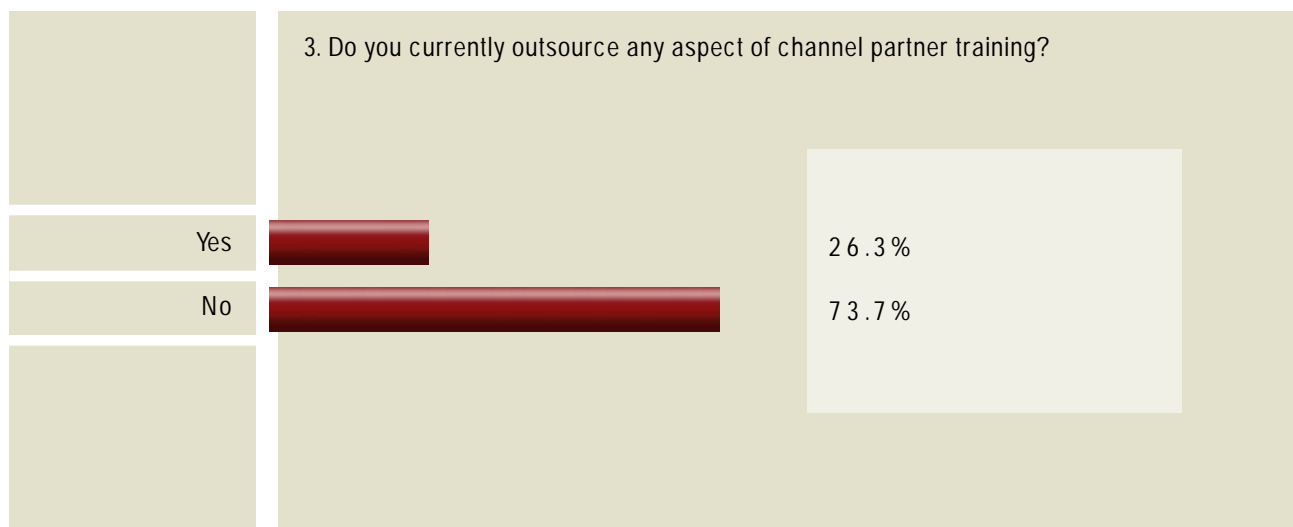
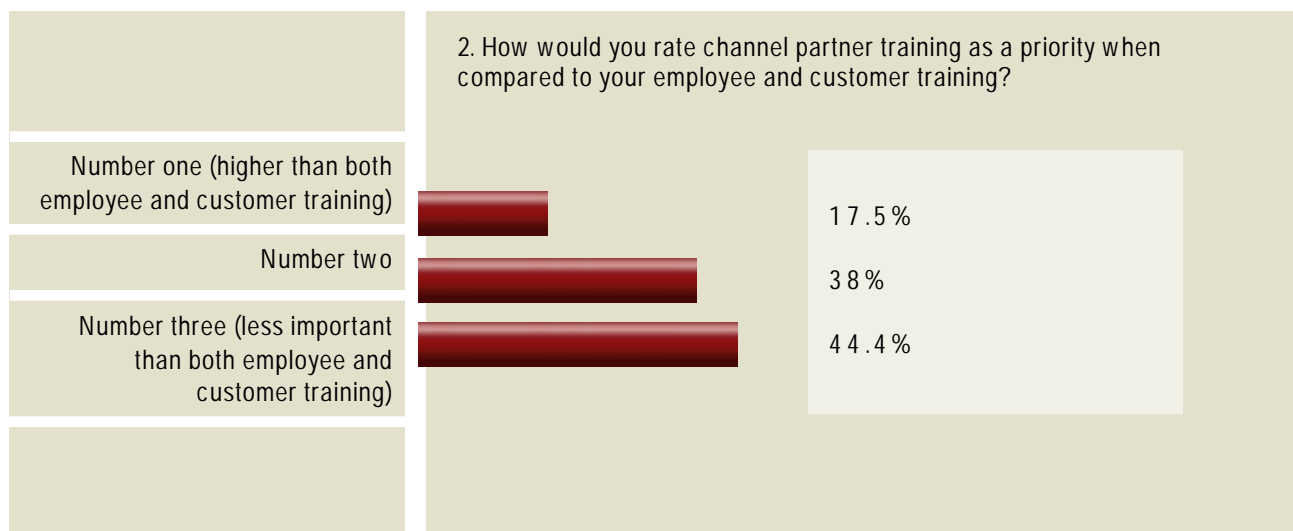
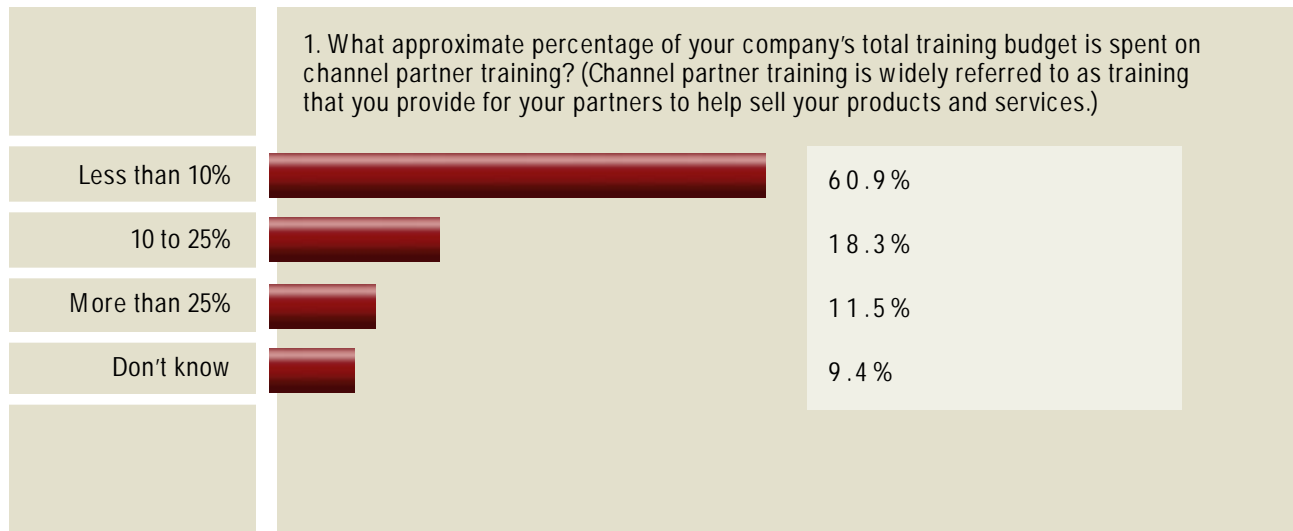
The first survey in the Training Challenges Survey Series, conducted by Expertus and TrainingOutsourcing.com, focused on channel partner training - the training conducted by companies to assist third-party partners in selling their products or services.

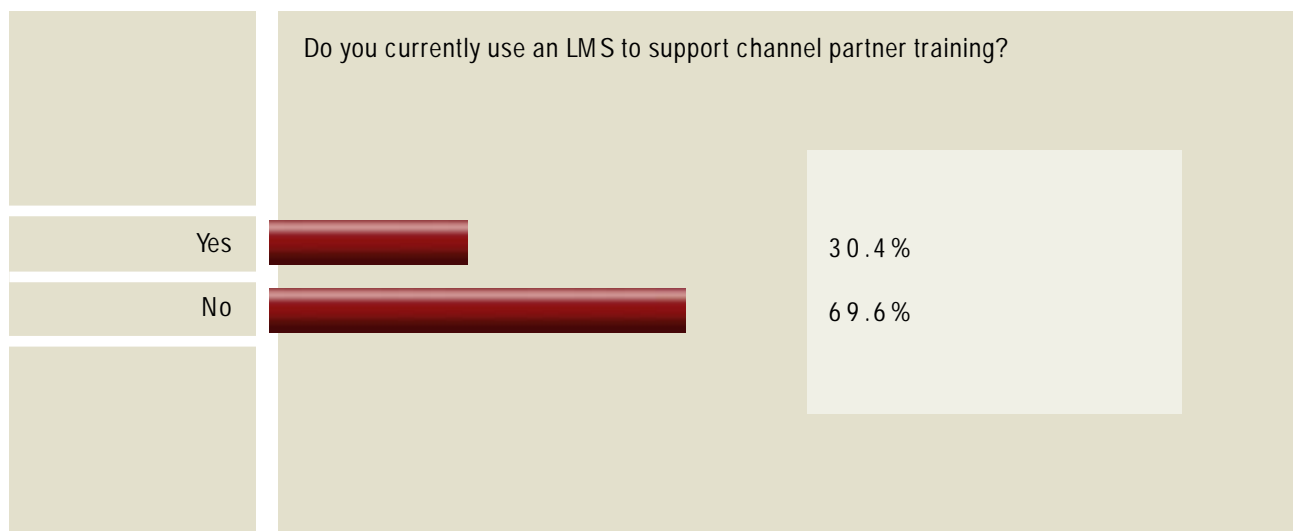
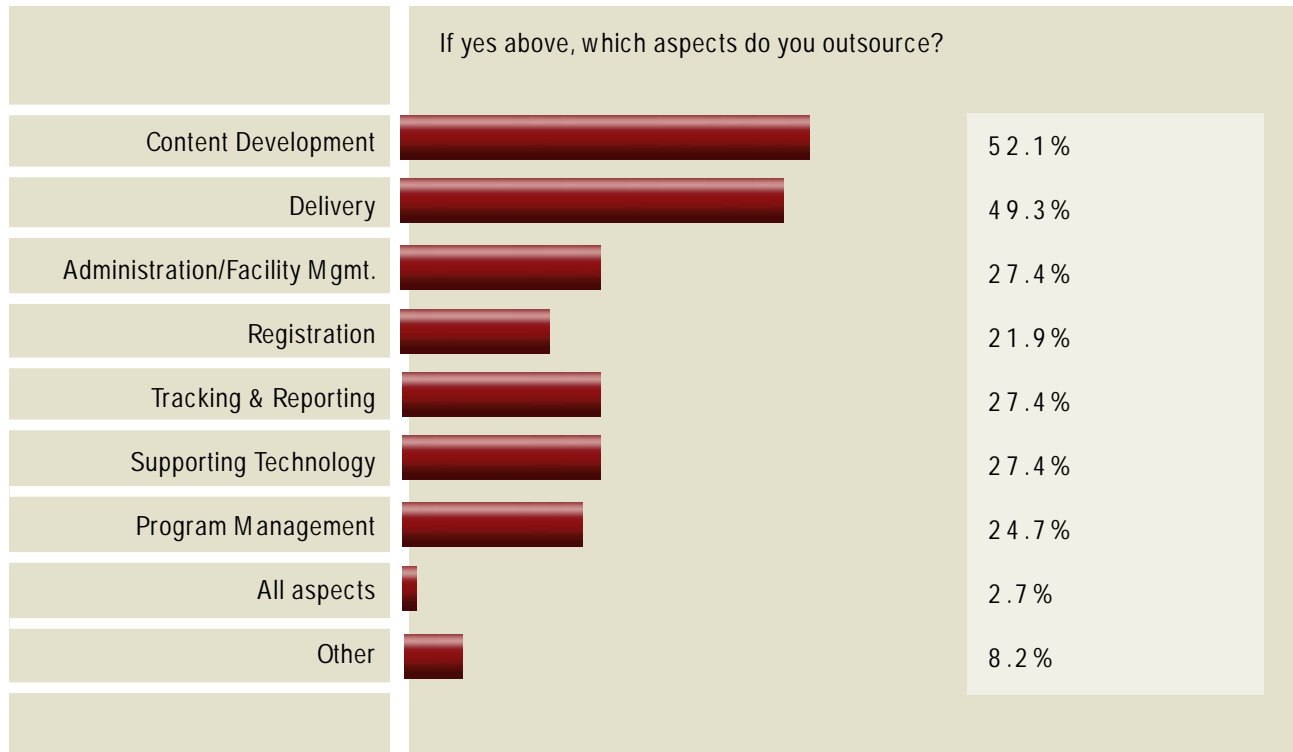
Survey Highlights

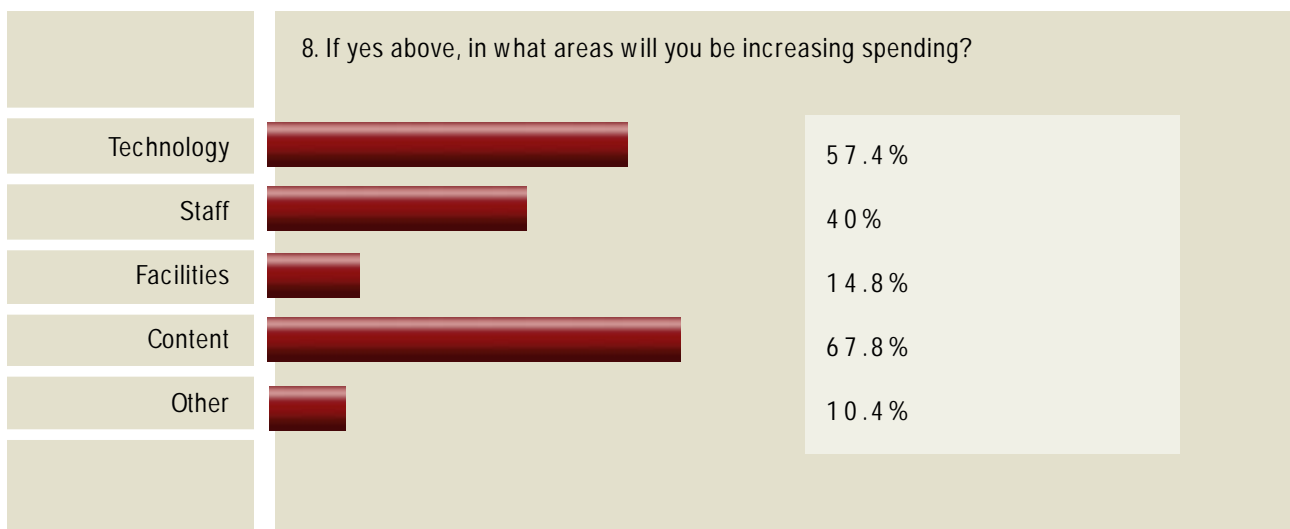
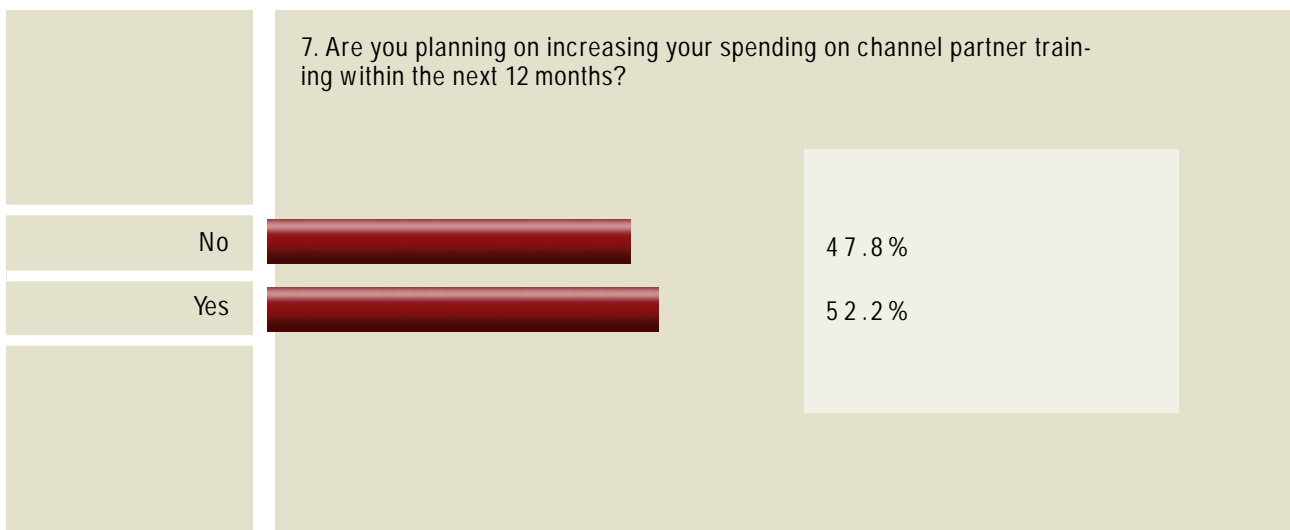
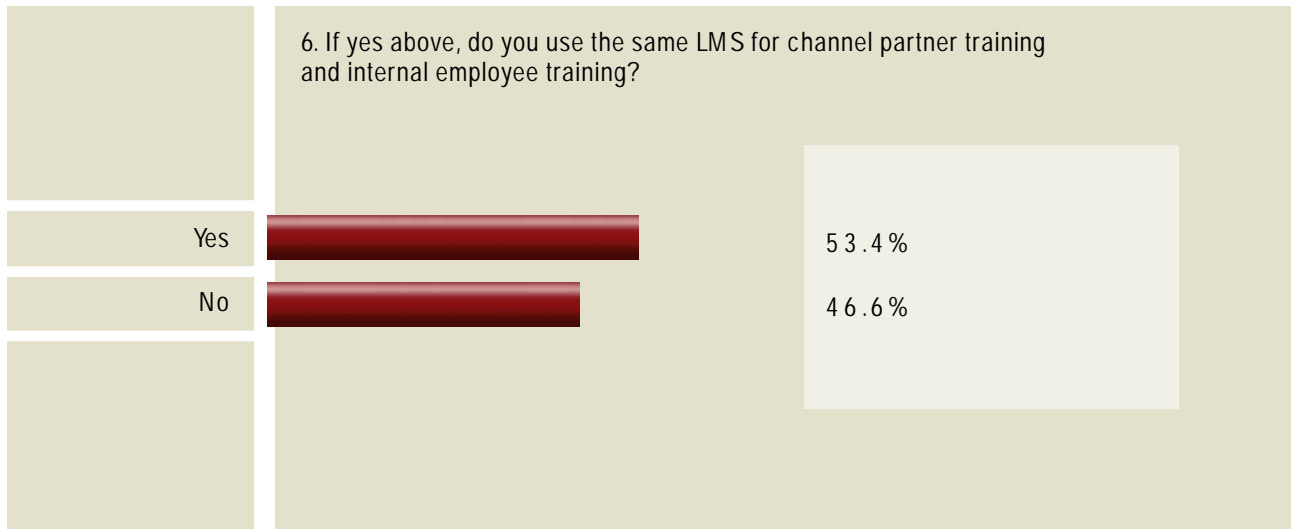
- 25.8% of companies with more than 5,000 employees plan on spending more than \$500,000 on channel training in the next 12 months. 53.1% of companies plan on spending more than \$100,000 in the next year. Biggest spenders among respondents are computer technology companies; 35% of respondents from computer technology companies say they will spend more than \$500,000 within the next year.
- 30.4% of responding companies use an LMS to support channel training. Computer technology companies have a significantly higher adoption rate; 65% of these respondents use an LMS for channel training. Interestingly, of those companies using an LMS for channel training, 46.6% use a different LMS for employee training.
- Small and mid-sized companies place a higher priority on channel training than large companies - likely because they are more heavily reliant on channel partners for revenue. 21.3% of companies with fewer than 1,000 employees ranked channel training as a top priority; 20.8% of companies with between 1,000 and 5,000 also gave channel training top ranking. Only 9.9% of companies with more than 5,000 employees ranked channel training as the highest training priority. But, as noted above, even though large companies place less emphasis on channel training, they spend more money on channel training programs because their overall training budgets are bigger than those of small and mid-sized companies.
- Respondents identified the major challenges related to channel training as: budget constraints (50.5%), lack of control (46.3%), distributed locations (42.1%), and staffing constraints (33.2%).
- Most respondents (73.9%) do not outsource any part of channel training. Of those who do outsource, content development (52.1%), delivery (49.3%), and training administration/facility management (27.4%) are the functions most often outsourced.

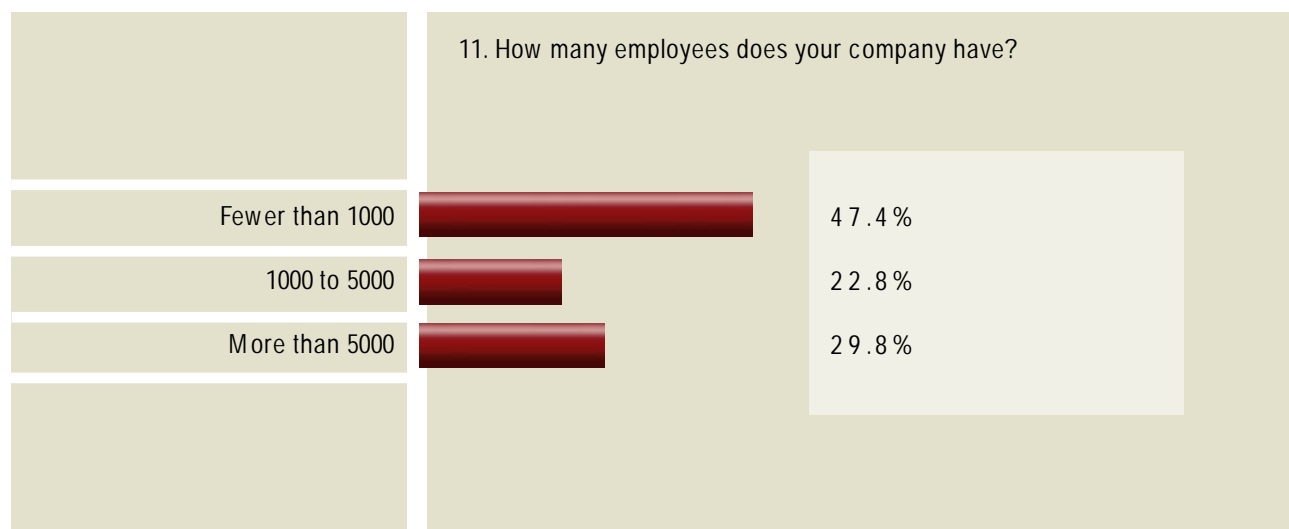
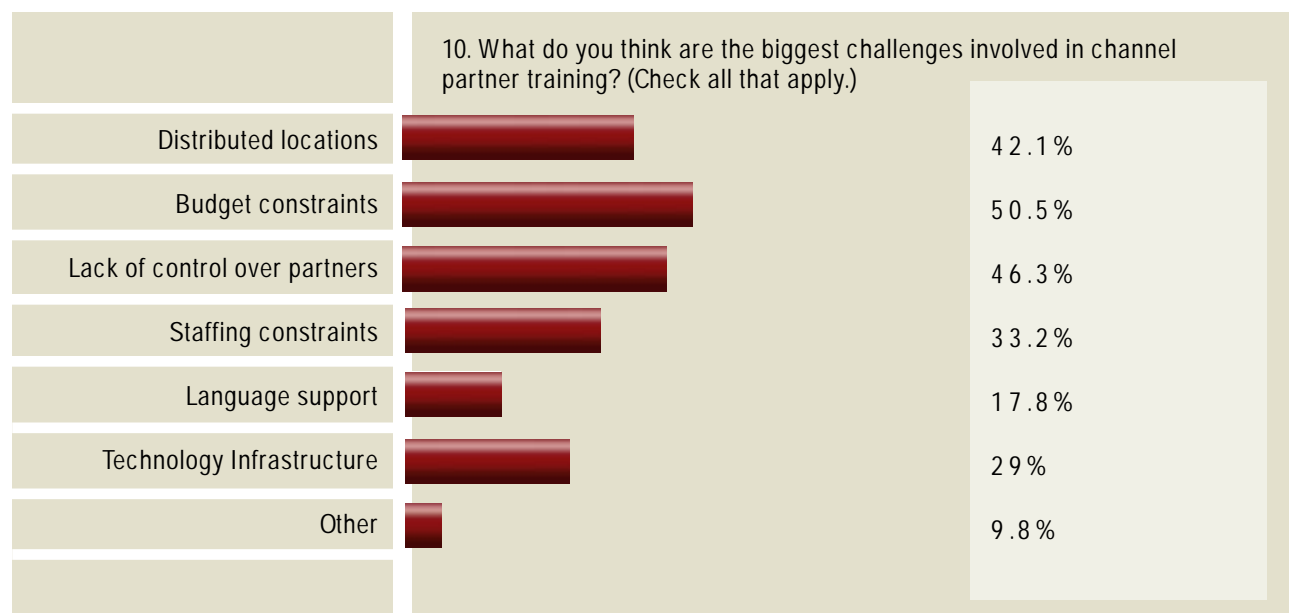
CHANNEL TRAINING

Survey Results









Further Analysis

The chart below shows how responses to four key questions are broken down by organization size (number of employees). The chart also shows how respondents from computer-related companies, the largest vertical niche among survey respondents, answered these questions.

Comparison of Employee size versus questions 1, 2, 5, & 9

		11. How many employees does your company have?				Comp Tech Companies
		Fewer than 1000	1000 to 5000	More than 5000	All	
1. What approximate percentage of your company's total training budget is spent on channel partner training?	Less than 10%	59.3%	58.5%	64.8%	60.7%	65.0%
	10 to 25%	20.4%	26.4%	9.9%	18.4%	5.0%
	More than 25%	11.1%	11.1%	14.1%	11.7%	20.0%
	Don't know	9.3%	9.3%	11.3%	9.2%	10.0%
2. How would you rate channel partner training as a priority when compared to your employee and customer training?	Number one	21.3%	20.8%	9.9%	17.2%	20.0%
	Number two	43.5%	30.2%	36.6%	38.2%	40.0%
	Number three	35.2%	49.1%	53.5%	44.5%	40.0%
5. Do you currently use an LMS to support channel partner training?	Yes	21.0%	35.8%	42.3%	30.3%	65.0%
	No	79.0%	64.2%	57.7%	69.7%	35.0%
9. Overall, how much do you think you'll spend on channel partner training within the next twelve months?	Less than \$100,000	89.3%	59.6%	47.0%	70.0%	35.0%
	\$100,000 to \$300,000	7.8%	7.8%	19.7%	15.7%	20.0%
	\$300,000 to \$500,000	1.9%	1.9%	7.6%	4.9%	10.0%
	More than \$500,000	1.0%	1.0%	25.8%	9.4%	35.0%

Offshoring eLearning The Strategic Move

OPPORTUNITY:

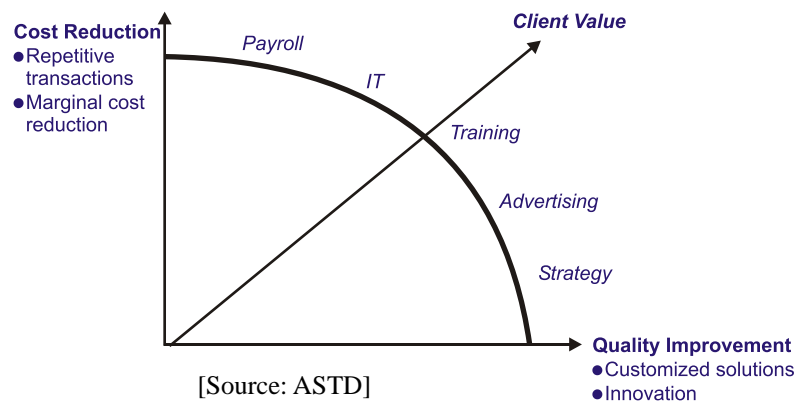
Research firm IDC forecasts that ongoing compliance training efforts will spur 27% compound annual growth in the e-learning systems market over the next four years, with e-learning product sales growing from \$6.5bn in 2003 to more than \$21bn by 2008 [Source: Computer Business Review Online]. Training consulting company Bersin & Associates has estimated that the need for compliance with regulatory guidelines accounts for 30% of training-related technology expenditures. There are signs in 2006 that e-learning may have finally come of age. The need to rapidly roll out company-wide training programs has intensified on the back of regulations such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, while globalization and the trend towards home-working mean that Companies are finding it tougher to get their geographically dispersed workforces into a classroom. At the same time, improved bandwidth has made web-based training courses utilizing Flash graphics and expert presenters a more attractive and user-friendly proposition.

There seems to be a stampede of U.S. companies rushing to outsource their operations to offshore partners. As a result, the economies of India and China are booming. What is fueling the trend is the desire to gain access to 'lower cost, high quality' labor. Top business functions for offshoring include customer service, IT and technology services, and now corporate training. With increasing pressures to provide more return on investment for their training initiatives, many organizations are taking a more strategic view of vendor relationships and outsourcing. Synonymous primarily with software services and back-office processing, companies have increasingly begun offshoring learning, mainly content development, to companies with offshore facilities in countries such as India and others. In the previous year, corporations outsourced an estimated \$2bn worth of e-learning to offshore development companies.

The reasons for offshoring learning initiatives are the same as those for other business functions. First and foremost, companies want to take advantage of lower

labor costs overseas. In a study by the World Outsourcing Summit, nearly 48% of outsourcing decisions are made to reduce operational costs. [Source: Learning Circuits]. But cost savings is no longer the sole driver of offshoring. Increasingly, firms are recognizing that offshoring provides improved business performance by focusing internal efforts on core competencies and strategic activities. Offshoring also enables learning teams to maintain a lean in-house staff and still meet business demands during peak times.

Outsourced Training Leverages Both Cost And Quality

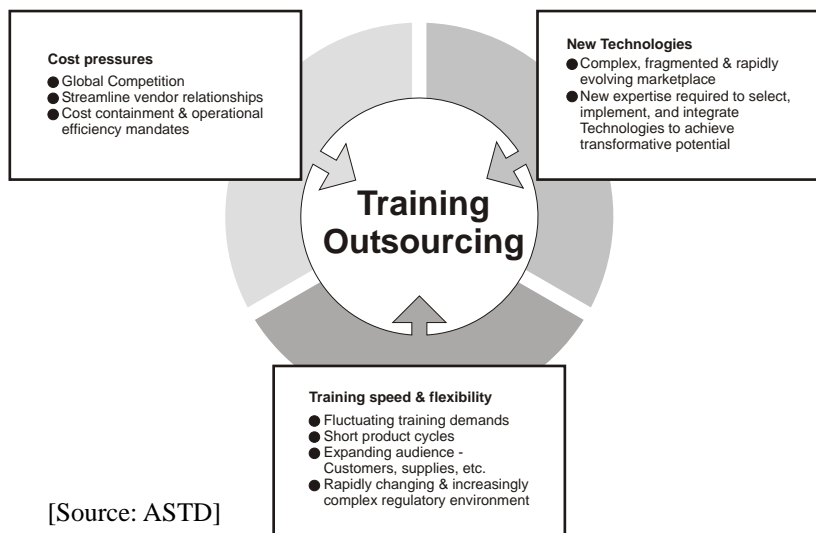


Benefits of Offshoring: As in other business functions, training managers are under pressure to reduce expenses and demonstrate their value to the corporation. Maintaining a large internal team of content developers, instructional designers, administrators, and instructors is expensive. More U.S. training departments are looking overseas to provide resources for their training initiatives. Bersin & Associates had interviewed one U.S. conglomerate which has been offshoring its e-learning content development to Indian firms for the past few years. According to a learning professional at the company, the total savings from offshoring amounted to approximately \$500,000 last year, roughly 40% below what they would have paid to U.S.-based suppliers. This is consistent with the experience of other firms as well. A \$10,000-\$50,000 content development project in the U.S. may cost anywhere from 20% to 40% less in India. [Source: Bersin & Associates]

Of course, cost saving is not the only factor to consider. A

vendor's internal skills, processes, and service and support capabilities are all important to a project's success. And, as another learning executive in the above company noted, "The real measure of success is whether the courses are meeting their objectives." They measured the effectiveness of their learning programs through knowledge assessments and business impact measures, such as reduction in defects and reduction in help desk calls. The company found that the courses developed by its offshore partners were meeting the same standards as its U.S. suppliers in effective transfer of knowledge as well as business impact.

Strategic Value of Offshoring: Training executives experienced with offshoring also point to the strategic



benefits. Indeed, one of the key benefits of offshoring (and outsourcing in general) revolves around enabling the firm to focus on its core competencies and strategic issues. Research has found that many training teams struggle to stay focused and look to offshoring as a way to increase their strategic value to the company. Typical strategic activities for training managers include aligning training with business priorities, tracking and benchmarking the effectiveness of training programs, and evaluating new training methods and technologies. Offshoring enables managers to spend more time on these issues. Prime areas for consideration while strategizing offshoring include content development, localization and translation services, and learning management system (LMS) hosting and implementation service.

Simultaneously, companies keen to offshore need to be conscious about the pitfalls in general and the state of the local industry in order to make the best vendor selection choice.

FEAR FACTOR:

Generic Concerns over Offshore Outsourcing of Training Functions: While it is easy to visualize the benefits of offshore outsourcing around criteria involving costs, resources, and speed, there are some very real concerns that need to be examined when considering entering into an offshore relationship:

Intellectual Property (IP) - The rules and enforcement of intellectual property laws tend to vary between countries and should be carefully examined before entering into an offshore arrangement that requires protection of IP. Countries that standardize and vigorously enforce international and intellectual property laws understand the need to protect IP and the need to establish strict guidelines to leverage outsourcing opportunities. Caution should prevail when considering outsourcing training operations to countries with a reputation of less than stringent adherence to intellectual property safeguards.

Security and Confidentiality - Data and information security and confidentiality may be more susceptible to exposure in an offshore outsourcing environment. Before entering into an offshore relationship, organizations must thoroughly examine the integrity of the processes to be employed to ensure security and confidentiality of any information, data, and IP. In addition, it is mandatory to thoroughly check the references of any outsourcing provider company before entering into an agreement.

Language and Culture - Language and cultural issues play a more important role in certain business processes than others. Training, especially content development involving soft skills like business communication and marketing tends to be more vulnerable to language and cultural issues. For example, scenario- or situational-based learning methodologies often use specialized language or terminology that requires close scrutiny during review stages when working with offshore organizations. Be certain to consider the possibility of problems that may occur for specific training projects or functions that may be affected by language or cultural differences when considering offshore outsourcing.

Lack of Face-to-Face Interactions - Training processes often require extensive human interaction to achieve quality results, especially when compared with

technology or administrative functions. For example, interactions between business leaders, subject matter experts, instructors, instructional designers, media specialists, and other learning professionals are necessary to achieve efficiencies and quality programs during development and delivery of learning. A thorough assessment of the need for personal interaction should be made before entering into any offshore outsourcing relationship.

Time Differences - Having an offshore center that is awake and churning on learning process outputs while the local office team is asleep can be a benefit for some tasks especially in the program development tasks, but there are times when close proximity and immediate turn-around or communication is needed among project stakeholders to achieve operational excellence.

Local Industry Issues: It is true that e-learning in India has come of age. Two decades, and the nation already cherishes several global e-learning players on its soil. This can be attributed to some basic reasons like low-cost human resources, a large pool of English-speaking workforce, and 'business discounts' offered by the central and state governments. Although exact figures of the size of the industry is not available, a conservative estimate shows the offshore e-learning industry at about \$150 million in 2004-05, up almost by 200% in the last two years. [Source: e-learnindia]

In spite of such impressive figures, the e-learning industry in India remains mired with a plethora of issues. Some of these issues include lack of uniform e-learning standards and workplace practices, and the lack of adequate human resources to power the spiraling upward growth. These concerns apart, fly-by-night e-learning entrepreneurs eye quick bucks and increasingly deliver 'learning garbage' to a global clientele. Standards apart, the industry hangs on the edge where processes and players are dubious and have typically a "Low cost, low quality" modus operandi. These kinds of vendors in India have setup e-learning business houses with paltry investments of a few thousand dollars in the hope of getting a sizeable pie of the global e-learning business. The basic quality that behooves a standard e-learning company is absent in these companies.

The state of e-learning in India can become a serious concern for the industry due to proliferation of such fly-by-night operators. As in the U.S., there are a myriad of learning service providers in India, and new ones are popping up every day. Some will be out of business in a few years (or less). If an organization is looking at offshoring as a long-term partnership (as it should), it'll want to choose a solid partner with a high potential for

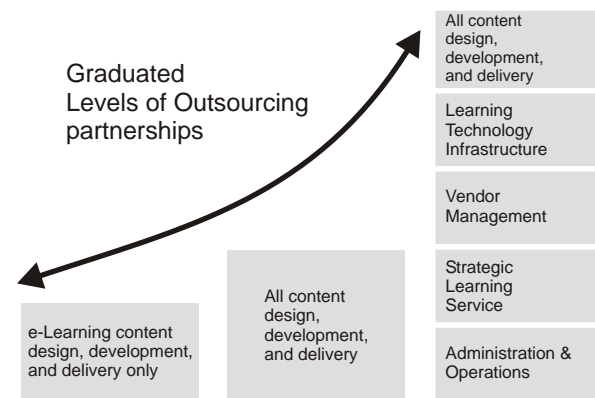
longevity. While by no means a guarantee, established providers already have significant customer bases and are a safer bet than some of the newer entrants. While a smaller provider may offer a cheaper price, the offshoring organization should make sure to be comfortable with its long-term potential.

THE RIGHT WAY:

Offshoring is not for everybody. A proper assessment of the company's situation and goals should be made if the project to be offshored must be carried out 'on budget' and 'on time'. For this purpose, it is essential to attain a certain level of clarity as to what the objectives are, or otherwise to be willing to invest on narrowing down these objectives. In other words, upon the initiation of a project, an assessment is required.

Many companies have a definite notion of what they need, thus making it possible to provide accurate cost estimates in a rather short period of time and to conduct the project along the same guidelines. Other companies however, have not properly established what they need to offshore or what their internal processes are, so they are forced to invest on the assessment that will eventually lead to some definitions on how they want to organize the work.

The offshoring company's response depends largely on the internal organization of the company willing to offshore its project. Consider for instance, a publishing house lacking information on delivery deadlines, text layout, and further need for editing or graphic design. Chances are that the publishing process will turn out to be a failure.



[Source: ASTD]

These definitions must be established before offshoring. Otherwise, the company looking to offshore its project should be willing to work on establishing them together

with the specialized partner in charge. That is to say, the company should be willing to invest on both the actual project and the preliminary assessment.

The determination to offshore should have some degree of projection in time. Companies do not simply resolve to offshore a 100 person hour project all of a sudden. For this kind of investment to be profitable, it is necessary to get acquainted with the provider, to build a relationship, and set communication policies and work procedures.

The idea is to consider medium to long-term plans, which will allow the sub-hiring company to see its investment repaid. This could be a restriction to some extent, since not all companies are prepared to make long-term commitments.

Size Does Matter: Offshoring can lead to tremendous cost savings. However, organizations must remember that cost savings actually build up over time. The potential for cost saving in the early part of the offshoring initiative is offset by one-time relationship establishment costs, initial time lags in development and the possibility of rework until the relationship between the organization and the vendor matures. Short-term engagements that are less than six months in duration or less than \$150,000 annually may fail to achieve any major cost benefits.

Obviously, the benefit lies in offshoring medium-to-large contracts. Size matters because it's mutually beneficial for the organization and the vendor. The organization wields a higher buyer bargain, and the vendor gains production efficiencies by reusing resources, passing the efficiency on to the customer.

Organizational readiness: Organizations with a clear definition of finished deliverables (the output), well-aligned resource responsibilities (the process), and requirement acquisition (the input) has been shown to outsource more effectively than those without a reliable and consistent work plan that includes elements of all three the output, the input, and the processes. Input maturity is a measure of how well the information (e.g., input content) required to develop the output (e.g., WBT) is documented and available for the vendor. Tacit requirements, such as acquiring content from the subject-matter expert on an application that is under development, are harder to capture and can result in requirement mismatch. Output maturity is measured by the definition of repeatable units of production. The better the articulation of repeatable units, the less likely the expectation mismatch is. Also, repeatable units help improve the quality of the finished deliverable and reduce cost in the long run through continual and incremental improvement to the production process.

Road Map for Successful Offshoring: In addition to careful selection of the offshoring partner, internal

training organizations need to discipline the work plan the input, the output, and the processes prior to offshoring. Even then, this transition from internal development to outsourced development is fraught with hazards. Client organizations can take several steps to minimize, if not completely eliminate, the hazards on the path to offshoring. For first-time offshore outsourcing clients, reorientation of the internal training organization and selective and/or dual-shore development models are two ways to mitigate the risks.

Success Factors: Offshoring initiatives largely depend upon successful requirements management and standardization of output. This helps minimize conflict between the expectation and realization of benefit. Here, the internal training organization plays an important part in supporting the outsourcing operations by effectively managing client and vendor processes. In the absence of offshoring partners, the role of the internal training organization has been one of the supplier to the businesses it supports. To ensure a successful outsourcing relationship, training organizations need to play two roles interchangeably one of a supplier to the business users, and another of a customer to the outsourcing partner.

IDEAL PARTNER PROFILE:

The key to offshoring is more closely associated to flexibility and scalability than to exclusive reliance on a specific team. Even when a service provider might effectively handle a regular flow of course digitization, it might need to increase or decrease its work by managing scalability effectively. Flexibility, specialization, scale, and the best technologies available are the key factors in these currently proliferating processes in the virtual learning sector. Recent surveys carried out by IDC show that more than 60% of e-learning solution providers believe project outsourcing offers deeply transforming benefits for this expanding industry.

Content providers offer a combination of pre-packaged and custom-built training content. Packaged courses cover training requirements with mass appeal, such as technical guides on how to upgrade Microsoft Outlook, while custom-built content can have a very niche focus. However, the big trend in the content space is the rise of Indian vendors such as LIQVID, which are using their low-cost development centers on the sub-continent to offer packaged and custom-built content to Western clients at aggressive prices.

As James, Cook, business development director at IBM's 3,000-strong HCM division, says: "*The ability of offshore content developers to offer better cost profiles is another sign of the maturing of the marketplace.*"

[Source: Computer Business Review Online]

Company Profile: Companies like LIQVID e-Learning Services (www.liqvid.com) make important investments on internal processes, methodology, induction, and training. The key lies in industrialized processes. With Fortune 500 Clients and top Training Institutions across the world as its Partners, LIQVID is fast becoming a leading integrated e-Learning content solutions company from India. It has world class infrastructure that delivers quality learning services including Custom Content Development, Training Design Services, Technology Services, and Learning Support Services for Corporations, Academic Institutions, and Government Organizations across the world.

LIQVID is a venture launched by key members of egurucool.com, which had established itself as India's foremost e-Learning brands that had created over 8,000 hours of e-Learning content for K12 segment in India.



It prides itself on having gained reputation of being an e-Learning company which matches global benchmarks and delivers rapid e-Learning through cost-effective solutions. LIQVID is perhaps the only e-Learning company in India with a dedicated research team.

Infrastructure: LIQVID's 20,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art Development

Centre hosts its clients' offshore development projects. This facility is capable of meeting clients' current and growing needs in a flexible manner. LIQVID takes special care to maintain the safety and security of the confidential information and project data. The facility is designed to the very last detail to optimize learning, creativity and collaboration. The layout of the facility, the design, configuration, and resources are all chosen so that our professionals get the maximum engagement.

Scalability: LIQVID provides PROFESSIONAL, RESPONSIVE, INNOVATIVE, and COST EFFECTIVE learning solutions and devises scalable resource strategies unique to a client's industry and needs. If an organization is planning to offshore a significant number of projects or

operations, scalability will be a key factor. Here, LIQVID's workload management systems provide insights into project requirements & forecasting. That's why if the project-demands vary over time, LIQVID will be able to handle (and be satisfied with) 1 or 2 projects this quarter, and 20 in the next. LIQVID as an offshore partner has the capacity to scale with the client's business.

Talent: A vendor's internal skills, processes, and service and support capabilities are all important to a project's success. LIQVID, on a constant quest for excellence, has employed a skilled workforce and has equipped them with the best support systems to realize their ideas. Here's how:

- ▶ Basic qualifications of employees meet industry norms
- ▶ Strong HR policy on promoting certifications like PMI®
- ▶ Competent internal training methods
- ▶ Wide range of tools & technologies used
- ▶ Training focus on new standards, tools & technologies
- ▶ Exposure to diverse LMS/LCMS
- ▶ Encourage building of Client vertical specific domain knowledge
- ▶ Business skill transformation (domain knowledge, functional expertise, and consulting)
- ▶ Culture transformation (Language learning, neuro-linguistic sessions, and cross-cultural sensitiveness)
Behavioral skill transformation (Communication, inter-personal, and relationship management skills)

Consequently, LIQVID's "employee retention rate" is way above industry standard thus enabling it to retain top talent that ensures quality & consistency for clients.

Process-Driven: The key element of service delivery is an integrated approach towards providing increasing value over the entire course of client relationships. This involves a phased approach towards process standardization, process optimization, and process re-engineering. LIQVID believes in disciplined execution of its duties. And that's possible only if the vendor is process-driven. With strong communication and aligned processes, LIQVID finds it very easy to accomplish the intended results. This orientation flows from strengths such as:

- ▶ Tools, methodologies, and management expertise for providing services to clients across

- geographies
- ▶ On-time project completion rate 93.8%
- ▶ Repeatable processes to ensure 'quality', every time Online project monitoring capabilities
- ▶ Processes equipped to handle scalability
- ▶ Workload management plan resource planning for variable workload
- ▶ Turnaround as required by client
- ▶ Dedicated team / project management structure Client support through Local office (North America)
- ▶ Onsite Project Manager/Account Manager
- ▶ Transition management

Stability: LIQVID is a perfect choice to partner an organization as it boasts of.

- ▶ High potential for longevity
- ▶ Profitability
- ▶ Steady cash flow
- ▶ Resource ramp-up capacity
- ▶ Selective and reputed Customer base; 14 clients currently including 6 Fortune 500 companies that are industry leaders in their domain
- ▶ Average duration of customer association more than two years

Process: In business, nobody likes surprises, especially when they come in the form of schedule and cost overruns. So an e-Learning supplier's most critical qualification lies in its development process and project management discipline. A supplier's ability to effectively and efficiently run a project affects schedules, budgets, and ultimately your satisfaction with its work. LIQVID is a supplier that can provide:

A Proven Development Process: Its development process is proven, stringent, demonstrable, predictable, repeatable, and documented. The processes hinge on collaboration, communication, and clear expectations

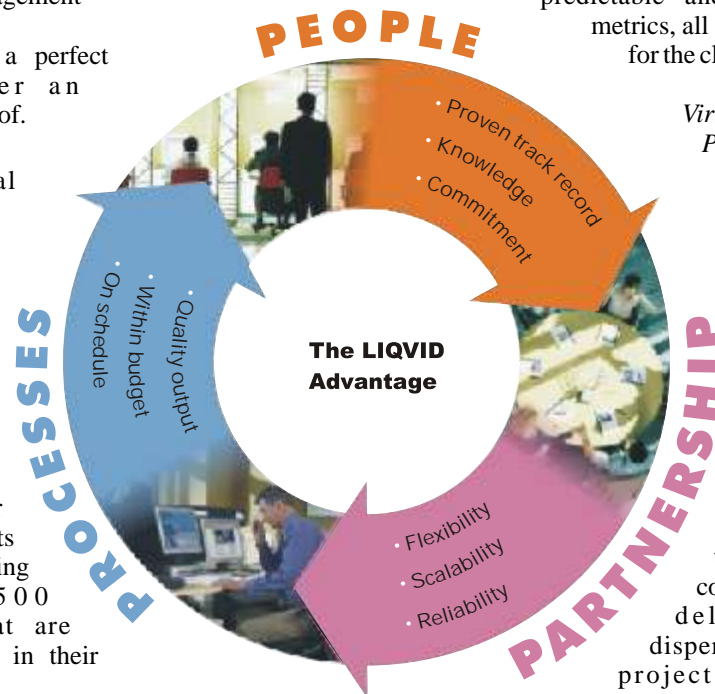
throughout the project, and include the client's incremental sign-off on deliverables throughout the development cycle. The customers get their custom courses built according to a predictable process with predictable costs.

An Automated Workflow: LIQVID has a solid development process supported by automated process, or project workflow, in its technical development environment. LIQVID's automated workflow tools route work to the right people at the right time, automate business rules, incorporate template-driven design, monitor development metrics, and streamline development efforts. The results are tangible: consistent processes, efficient use of time and resources, and predictable and reliable development metrics, all of which result in less risk for the client.

Virtual and, Collaborative Project Management: The development environment at LIQVID allow for dispersed, collaborative development and project management. It's able to manage projects virtually, with only occasional face-to-face meetings. LIQVID provides an online project management tool where the client can review, comment, and sign off on deliverables. Virtual, dispersed development and project management allow customers to overcome geographic boundaries, enable co-development, and facilitate immediate deliverable reviews.

The Right People: People skills are the critical ingredient to success. A large in-house development resource pool skilled in a wide variety of content development and delivery technologies enable LIQVID to offer solutions on varied platforms. Its development resource pool represents the complete mix of skills required for content development.

Research: LIQVID is perhaps the only e-Learning company in India with a dedicated research team. All aspects of its business come from a combination of innovative forward-thinking ideas and current expectations established in research. It shares this



information to help clients learn about the endless possibilities of running an efficient and effective training organization. To achieve this, LIQVID has set up a research initiative. Named **CSRG (Corporate Solutions Research Group)**, this group's work addresses multiple aspects of learning with activities falling within two main categories:

- i. The development of technologies to more efficiently produce and manage learning resources (this is mostly an industry alignment: technologies to reduce development time for creating "learning resources")
- ii. The development of teaching methodologies adapted to the learner's cognitive and social behaviours to enable more efficient means of learning (this is more closely aligned with academic and learner-specific settings: technologies and resources to enhance learning outcomes)

Within the first category, CSRG's activities and competencies revolve around learning objects, repositories, specifications and standards for meta-data, quality metrics and evaluation, workflow and process enhancements, digital rights management, interoperability of learning resources / systems, learning resource management for enhanced discoverability / retrieval, and automation processes.

In the second category, CSRG's focus revolves around human aspects to knowledge building through the development of technologies to support evolving social paradigms (for instance, transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge through social networking shifts and technologies). This can involve building the shortest learning paths for learners to change knowledge states while adapting the learning experience to learner needs, preferences, and patterns. Means used to enable such an approach include collaborative filtering, knowledge sharing / communities / mapping, user profiling for learning environment adaptation, collaboration tools / technologies, and gaming / simulations for learning.

Learning is not just about information gathering, but also

about filtering, contextualizing, analyzing, and internalizing. Historically, technological frameworks have failed to properly address this (modelling themselves after traditional educational frameworks), so future activities of CSRG will focus on the development of technological frameworks to enable new and emerging "learning paradigms".

Experience: LIQVID has a rich and varied experience in developing e-Learning solutions for various businesses. It develops and provides state-of-the-art solutions in training content, performance improvement, enterprise learning, and e-Learning technology for companies in a wide array of industries and around the world. From Fortune 100 companies to emerging and mid-market enterprises, clients recognize LIQVID as their offshore solutions provider of choice. LIQVID's critical success factors are its deep domain experience in meeting industry-specific needs and ability to contribute directly to clients' financial results.

LIQVID focuses not only on a client's current competitive needs, but also on the client-specific industry's direction for the future, client's goals, products, processes, and people. And it knows how to keep the client in front of the competitive curve.

LIQVID's industry-expertise includes domains such as Information Technology (IT), Telecom, Publishing, and English Language Training (ELT).

CONCLUSION:

Outsourcing is certainly the flavor of the day. However to ensure that it does not remain a mere buzzword, it is important that organizations select a provider that matches its needs and requirements, and is a partner in the true sense of the word; not a mere vendor. LIQVID has always believed in aligning itself to its customers' goals and objectives. LIQVID has all the requisites to be a strong outsourcing partner with its focus on Innovation, Research, and e-Learning Engineering.



A Q&A feedback from Mr. Vivek Agarwal, CEO of LIQVID eLearning Services, India reveals the company's core strength and strategic growth plans worldwide

Service offerings across Industry



LIQVID offers eLearning content development and solutions across the globe to a wide range of industries. We have structured our capabilities to be able to deliver services across all customer segments from global 'Fortune 100' companies to academic institutions and NGOs working in rural India, all user segments from young children to young adults to seasoned professional and across different channels and platforms ranging from web, CD/ computer-based, satellite to mobile learning and pod casting. Services include creating web-based training, instructor-led training material and highly interactive and advanced simulation based training.

Brief your expertise in offering eLearning Solutions for Global customers.

LIQVID has several years of experience in offering world class eLearning solutions to customers globally. LIQVID has arguably the best team in the industry, has a set of deep and robust processes and a track record of delivering to the largest and the best companies in the world. LIQVID is also perhaps the only eLearning company in India with a dedicated research team.

Instances of how you built up a value chain for a specific service/process related course development, technology, and support etc

We have an approach we call "eLearning engineering". We have reworked this concept from the manufacturing and particularly the auto industry. The objective is to improve productivity or reduce cycle time by 2 or 3 times, not just 5% or 10%. In this concept, we have a repository of technology and content learning objects tools, templates, processes, that are re-usable. A highly trained and talented team leverages these to deliver customer requirements in a highly efficient and timely manner.

We have applied this approach to the services in the Technology Industry, English Language Training, and Software Application Simulation areas.

Brief.... Your evolving global delivery model

We are committed to delivering the best to our clients around the world. Many times this means that we have to work across several continents and time zones. We have robust processes that have enabled us to achieve this. We also have partnerships across the globe that give us access to resources and delivery capabilities across the world.

Advantages of your Onshore / Nearshore locations (USA and Europe Asia pacific perspective) if any...How do you leverage each locationclient perspective!

The main advantage of having an onshore presence is accessibility to the customer because of common time zone and shorter distances. The flip side, however is that if the model is not implemented carefully, it can increase costs disproportionately and reduce the attractiveness of the off-shoring model.

Specific nearshore / onsite support offered for your clients and you find them crucial to build up a long term relationship

The specific areas where onsite support works best are: account management, requirements gathering, and some specialist requirements or expertise that may not be available in a remote country. We work on a combination of modes like full time, contractual, and travel to address the various requirements.

List of International certifications granted if any ...and brief on how they have been boosting up your business prospects ...

The key benefit of certifications is the certainty / visible proof they provide of the ability to deliver to a specific requirement. Therefore, it gives customers a great deal of comfort if the people they are dealing with have a certification that they can identify with.

We do a range of internal and external certifications for our people. These include internationally recognized ones such as 'Brainbench', 'PMI', etc. In addition there are certificate programs for instruction design, and internal certifications mapped to specific customer requirements.



List of major clients globally.

While we are unable to disclose the names of the customers we work with, we can say that we work with several large and prestigious organizations around the globe, including 'Fortune 100' companies.

Where do you feel your competitive strength is concentrated on.. which drives your growth!

Our strength comes from our deep knowledge and commitment to the area of eLearning and the process, the team, and the track record that we have been able to build in a short period of time. We are today probably the only eLearning company in India with a dedicated research team. All these features have made us into one of the fastest growing eLearning companies in India.

How do you plan to position yourself in Asia pacific over the next 5 years in eLearning segment

Asia pacific is an important segment of the market. We already work with customers in countries like Singapore and Australia. We expect to continue to boost our presence in this area in the next few years.

How important are SLAs in your firm's relationship with your clients and how much are you engaged in a client's outsourcing plan?

SLAs are an integral part of any relationship because it

helps establish the expectations from the client. These are important documents to fall back on in case there is any uncertainty over scope and terms of delivery.

Our engagement differs from client to client. But we try to get involved with the customer at a business problem stage, and work with them to see how outsourcing can contribute to that.

Advantages of being located at India.

India is clearly the country to choice for outsourcing. It is common wisdom that customers *come here for costs, stay for quality, and grow for innovation*. No other country in the world has been able to establish that.

When India is leveraging its strength and location to become a global outsourcing hub, how does LIQVID plan to evolve itself in the new and globally competitive environment?

LIQVID is a dynamic, fast growing company that has built up very strong foundation and is now in a great position of capitalize on the changing landscape. For us, the evolving landscape offers a great opportunity because it enables us to unseat the incumbents. LIQVID is continually evolving its strategy, people and processes to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the environment.

Background

The Client

A Fortune 50 Technology Solutions and Services Company with Worldwide Operations

The Situation

The client has implemented a customized version of ERP software in several of its offices spread all over the world. The system was expected to be used by about 10,000 employees worldwide, and this number would continuously increase over a period of time.

The Challenges

Unavailability of Ready Training Materials

Given the high-level of customization, there was no ready-made training material available for users to go through or refer on a regular basis.

Complex Content

Because ERP systems attempt to integrate all data pertaining to a company, they are by nature complex. In this case, the situation was further complicated by the large number of customizations implemented to the system. And not all customizations needed to be known by all users. For example, an Agent in the Accounts Receivable Department will not need to know the nuances of the Accounts module, and may not need anything from the Human Resources module.

Training Duration

Due to the size of the implementation and the amount of customization, an individual would have needed to spend

as much as a whole month getting trained in a classroom, and an additional month on-the-job. Multiply this across all the departments, and you have a massive training duration almost one and a half years including classroom and on-the-job.

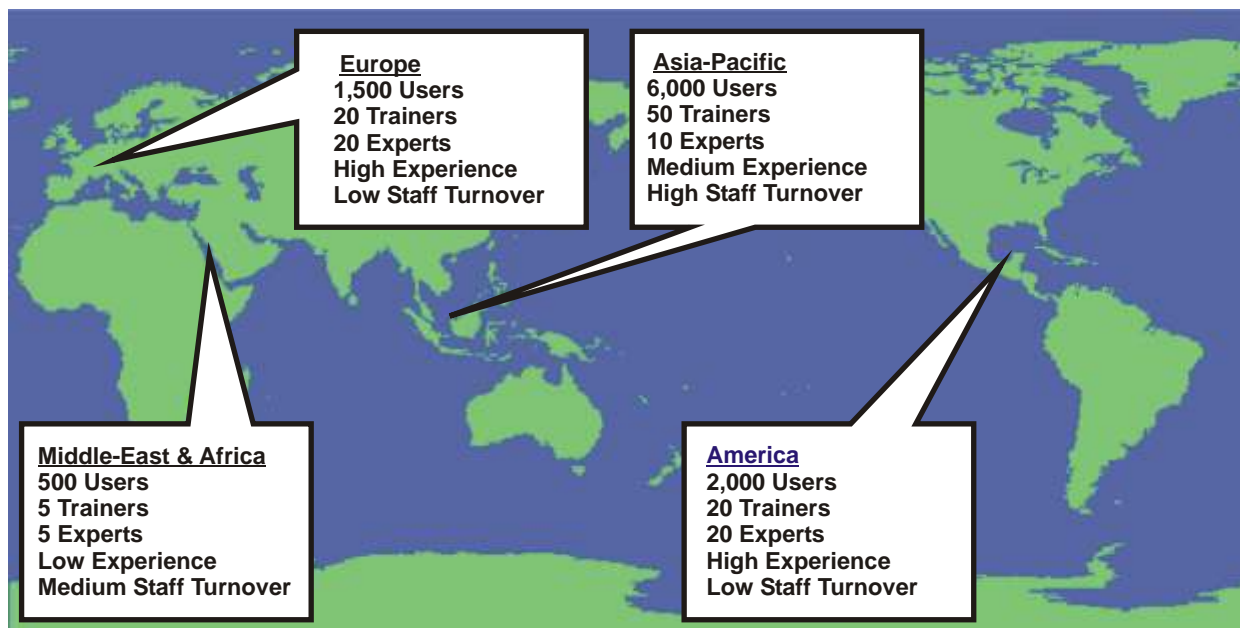
Phased Live Implementation

Because the scale of implementation was so huge, the systems were being implemented in bits. For example, while the Finance department in Singapore needed the Finance module implemented first, the Customer Support department in Mexico needed the CRM module implemented at the same time. This meant that a lot of varied training material needed to be ready at the same time for different regions.

User Diversity

The users for the system were very diverse in nature. The diversity was in terms of Geographies, Roles and Experience.

- ▶ **Geographical Spread:** They were spread across geographies in over 50 countries across America, Europe, Middle-East and Africa, and Asia-Pacific
- ▶ **Job Roles:** The users belonged to varied departments and performed varied roles including but not limited to Accounting, Finance, Inventory, Human Resources, and Administration
- ▶ **Experience Levels:** Users were also varied in terms of their experience levels and seniority. The spectrum of users varied right from fresh college graduates to senior-level experienced managers with over ten years of experience



Limited Trainers and Experts

Given all the complexities, there were very limited number of trainers and experts available who knew the subject and could spare time to train other people. Also, not all experts could train.

Large Number of People to be Trained

The sheer numbers to be trained were very large. They were in the 10,000 plus range. Not only did these people need training when they came in, they also needed regular updates and refresher sessions.

Large Number of People Joining the Team on a Regular Basis

With the company expanding rapidly, the number of people joining was growing rapidly, and new people needed to be trained regularly.

LIQVID's Solution**Methodology**

- ▶ When the client approached LIQVID with this situation, LIQVID got into the act quickly. A high-powered core team was formed consisting of:
 - ▶ Senior Instructional Designers
 - ▶ Senior Project Managers
 - ▶ ERPExperts

This team conducted rigorous analyses on the various aspects concerning the situation:

Audience Analysis

A representative sample of users was selected, and questionnaires were administered.

From the questionnaires, preliminary findings were established, which were further consolidated by face-to-face interviews.

The end result was a clear understanding of the audience profile. It became evident from the audience profile that a single solution will not fit all. It was imperative that whatever training solution was suggested needed to address the diversity in the audience. This clearly meant modularizing the entire content into easily available and readily “consumable” chunks of learning.

Environment Analysis

The entire circumstances under which the learning had to take place was reviewed by the team.

It was evident that due to the wide geographic spread, and

the fact that not every user will be working out of an office, the solution will have to be easily pliable on different types of environments from high-tech office environments to low-tech home-office environments. This meant that the solution would necessarily need an offline option, and perhaps even a paper solution.

Trainer and Expert Interviews

The team also interviewed some identified trainers in the area in order to understand the challenges faced while training users on the subject. The experts helped the team identify areas where most problems were faced once the trained users were put on the job.

These interviews highlighted the fact that there too few trainers for the number of users that needed training, that the logistics of setting up a training session was very cumbersome, that the experts were not able to handle the one-month long mentoring period because they had their own primary jobs, and that there were too many critical mistakes being made on the live system by the new employees in the system.

The above findings led the LIQVID team to suggest that all procedural applications be taught by the use of software simulations.

Overall Solution

Given the results of the thorough analysis, the LIQVID team suggested a blended-learning model solution.

Stand-up Training

This would consist of:

- ▶ Basic training about the overall systems being used
- ▶ General introduction to all the modules present in the system

This training would last 1 day, and would address areas that were common to all applicable users.

Virtual Training

In regions where there were very few learners, or the travel expenses would be very high, a virtual training session would be conducted via a virtual meeting application. This would again serve the same purpose as the stand-up training.

This training would also be recorded so that users who joined at a time when there were no scheduled trainings need not wait for a scheduled session.

Web-Based Training

This would consist of:

- ▶ Detailed concepts being taught through interactive strategies
- ▶ Software application being taught by using simulations. Each simulation would consist of:
 - ▶ **Show Me:** A demonstration mode where the user can watch the steps being performed
 - ▶ **Guide Me:** A guided mode where the user can try the steps with assistance from the WBT
 - ▶ **Try It:** A test mode where the user needs to complete the steps without any assistance from the WBT
- ▶ Real-life and relevant scenarios to establish relevance
- ▶ Inline interactivities to engage the users
- ▶ Questions to test the learning

The training will last about 1-1.5 weeks, and would address all the specialized and specific knowledge that a certain profile of users needs. The training modules would be categorized in a manner that content relevant to users only needs to be taken by that user.

On-the-Job Training

This would consist of:

- ▶ An on-the-job training plan where the users will be exposed to all aspects of the system relevant to them in a systematic manner
- ▶ An assigned mentor who would guide the users on real-life transactions
- ▶ Job aids and reference material that the users can refer to whenever they need

Certification Test

This would consist of:

- ▶ A series of questions both conceptual and procedural to test the learners understanding of the content.

At the end of the certification, successful candidates would be given a certificate of completion.

Benefits of the Solution

Convenience

Users were able to access the courses at their own convenience and pace. They were not dependent on anyone else for the learning to occur

Conclusion

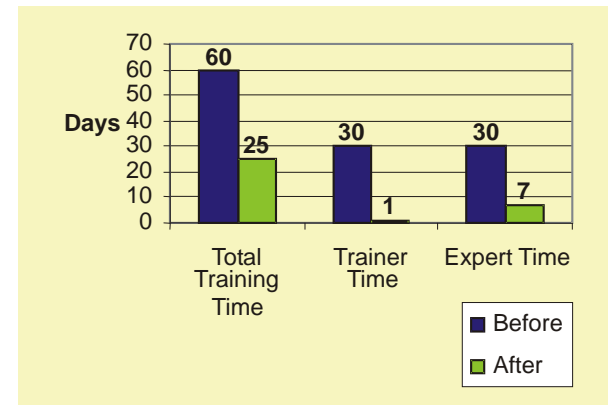
The implementation was greatly appreciated by the client. They see the following results:

- ▶ Enhanced Productivity
- ▶ Less Errors
- ▶ Cost Recovery in Less Than a Yearz

Financial

There were several financial factors that scored as benefits:

Reduction in Time



- ▶ Overall learning time was reduced from 2 months to less than a month. This was a direct saving of 50%.
- ▶ Time of trainers was cut down from one month per batch to one day per batch.
- ▶ Time of experts (mentors) was also cut down from one month per batch to one week per batch. Travel expenses were reduced by almost 75%. There was very minimal travel required.

Real-Life Learning

Due to the use of simulations, users were able to experiment with the software without actually causing any damage to the real system.

Time

The users were able to start doing their actual work in a much quicker time-frame. As mentioned earlier, there was a reduction of almost a month and new hires were able to start at their jobs in less than a month of joining.

Productivity

As a result of availability of software simulations, users could do all their practice on the simulated systems and were more confident when they started working on the real systems. This increased their productivity by almost 20%.

GLOBAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

Finding solutions for multilingual and multicultural training

Scenario 1: Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) based in Norfolk, VA is mandated to design and deliver training to NATO troops and to the troops of NATO countries, which entails providing training in several languages: English, French, German, Spanish, and Russian, to name a few. What is required is not a mere translation of language: it also involves assessing how graphics, metaphors, and examples would work in a different culture.

What does it mean to transplant training into a different culture? How do you address both linguistic and cultural diversity?

Scenario 2: A large Indian auto manufacturing company needs to upgrade the competency levels of its aftermarket service workforce across India. The cultural context remains quite similar but the linguistic diversity is mind-boggling.

What does it mean to deliver training in the context of wide linguistic diversity?

The scenarios demonstrate the challenge of working with geo-cultural diversity of globalized work places. While technology-based training addresses needs of scale and global reach, new challenges spring up as companies grow geographically. Offering multilingual courses that are consistent, on target, timely, relevant, and cost effective is a major managerial issue.

The challenge goes beyond translation. Spanish language training needs to be *localized* for Spanish variants in the U.S., Spain, Mexico, etc. The problem is compounded by tactical considerations such as validation, availability and suitability of fonts, etc. Machine translation has not reached a level where all these variables are accounted for and can produce an acceptable output.

There is another challenge. Often clients, subject matter experts, and vendors are also geographically dispersed, so staffing up translators in multiple languages is not cost effective.

At Adayana, we have developed courseware in English and Indian languages and translate English courseware into several languages including French, German, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, and Hindi. This paper discusses some of the insights gained through Adayana's experience with multilingual courseware development for multinational clients.

Models for Global Courseware

There are, broadly, four models for multilingual courseware production.

1. **Model A:** Courseware developed in English is translated into other languages.
2. **Model B:** Client content in English is translated to create courseware in different languages.
3. **Model C:** Client content in another language is translated into English to handle development work up to scripting, and then production-ready scripts (in English) are re-translated back into original language for production.
4. **Model D:** Courseware is directly built in the language of final delivery.

Challenges in Translation and Localization

Translation today implies localization and technological adaptation:

The Challenge of Dialects

The target learning audience for the courseware may not use the *standard* dialect of that language. Today the large numbers of English-language speakers in India, the U.S., Canada and Australia have their own variation of English. Unless the appropriate dialect is used, we risk losing important learner segments.

The Challenge of Neologisms

Another key problem is the tendency to use neologisms when a course is translated from English into another language which has a limited technical vocabulary. For example, many Hindi translators invent vocabulary from the Sanskrit root words that most learners in Hindi do not understand.

The Challenge of Media

Translation impacts audio and text, as well as visuals, narratives, and sequences. For example, what happens to an audio-synced animation when the sentence structure of the audio is altered during translation? Often visuals are as much in need of "translation."

The Challenge of Navigational Terms

In an English course, the word "highlighted" used in the instructions "Click the highlighted points to learn more" could be translated as "rekhankit" in Hindi, which actually means "underlined." The word then needs to actually *be* underlined, rather than highlighted in a different color. The translation, while accurate, renders navigation inoperable. Page navigation prompts, media prompts, functionality labels, headings, synchronized audio, are some of the things that are highly context sensitive.

The Challenge of Validation

Accuracy of translation is a key issue. While there may sometimes be internal resources to translate and validate the translation, often we have to rely on external resources, which rarely have sufficient knowledge of the subject-matter context or various constraints imposed by training programs.

The Challenge of Suitable Fonts

Related to translation is the issue of font suitability and ease of use, especially in languages which use non-Roman scripts, and font standardization is minimal. Often fonts are composed differently: some take a letter as a unit, some a syllable and some a fraction of a letter thus making changes to a more suitable font quite difficult. Again, development software may or may not support such fonts. Furthermore, various scripts have different suitable font sizes for legibility. This limits the amount of text that can appear on the screen after translation.

The Challenge of Audio Talent

Due to text constraints and in order to make the courses more translatable, often an audio-intensive approach is adopted. This minimizes the risks associated with text display on the screen.

However, this imposes the additional problem of finding the appropriate talent for recording the audio in the translated language(s), which can sometimes be more difficult than finding translators.

Developing Context-Sensitive Multilingual Courseware

Apart from the myriad challenges of a technical nature, effective localization requires that multilingual courses be sensitive to several contexts:

1. **Learning Context:** Localization must enable the end user to learn correctly from the courseware, rather than hinder learning.
2. **E-Learning Context:** Localization should be suited to the course delivery technologies and courseware product design.
3. **Subject-Matter Context:** Localization should ensure that all subject-matter changes—language, graphics, examples, metaphors—driven by culture and location requirements are included in the translation.
4. **Audience Context:** Localization needs to match the learner profile.
5. **Media Context:** Localization needs to be tailored to the context in which language is used in the courseware media. For example, how would a translation in Mandarin impact media elements in the course?

Methods for Multilingual Production

Based on our experience, we have developed various methods for handling multilingual production. They are:

Creation in the Target Language

Creation of courseware directly in the target language has proven to be effective in reducing the costs of both translating content into English and re-translating production scripts into the target language. Direct production in multiple languages offers another advantage—the audio and text is context sensitive by default. This does away with the problems mentioned earlier.

Catalog of Terms

An effective practice is to catalog possible translatable objects for which "literal translation" is likely to be problematic and educate translators and validators about them. A similar catalog of terms/phrases that can be translated in standard ways along with their translations can also be used to complement this approach.

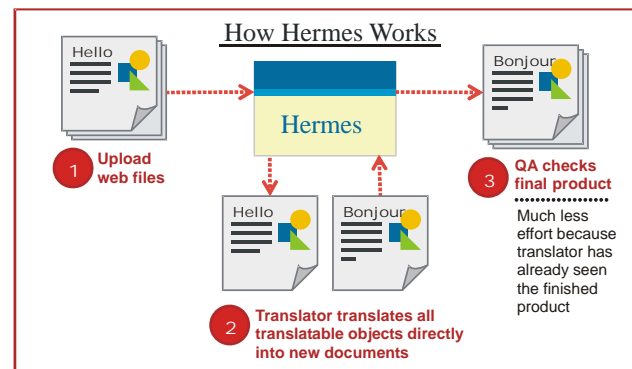
Use of Tools

While there are many tools for machine translating technical content available in the marketplace, we find them unsuitable in a learning context where translation needs to be 100% accurate and relevant, the best machine translation guarantees is less than 90%. This seemingly small difference can completely mar learning experience. Adayana's philosophy is therefore oriented toward the use of tools for collaboration rather than translation.

Hermes: A Translation Collaboration Tool

Adayana has developed Hermes, a tool that focuses on

translation collaboration rather than machine translation. *Hermes is capable of addressing context-sensitive changes for both language and culture.* It can be used for translating courseware, editing content, replacing media and supports languages using Roman, Arabic, Kanji, and Devnagri scripts. Hermes is web-based and can be accessed by geographical dispersed translators, editors, or visual designers to collaborate on updating a course for another language/culture. Hermes defines a translatable object as a text content or media file that requires changes to meet the requirements of an intended audience. Its access control mechanisms ensure that translatable objects checked out by one collaborator for making changes are locked for editing. Because the translations are made directly to the course, the resulting translations are sensitive to the five contexts mentioned above a decisive advantage.



An administrator may assign specific translatable objects to translators or editors for updating. Different translatable objects of the same learning product can be assigned to different translators, based on their subject-matter expertise to ensure greater accuracy in translation. In addition, the administrator or validator can track changes back to the specific individuals in order to monitor translator performance.

Companies' needs for translation vary from simple to very complex. Irrespective of the degree of complexity, the need to assess the degree of localization required for an effective translation is imperative, and the quality and the speed with which translated courses can be provided to the learner audience have become important considerations when companies implement their learning strategies.

About Adayana

Adayana (www.adayana.com) is a performance-solutions company focused on providing learning programs that increase human performance in industry segments such as agriculture and food, defense, automotive, financial services and knowledge processing. Adayana specializes in distance and e-Learning solutions as well as blended training, assessment, and content development. Adayana is a global leader in technology and processes used to develop large volume of distance-ready learning solutions with great efficiency. The author can be reached at rtandon@adayana.com.

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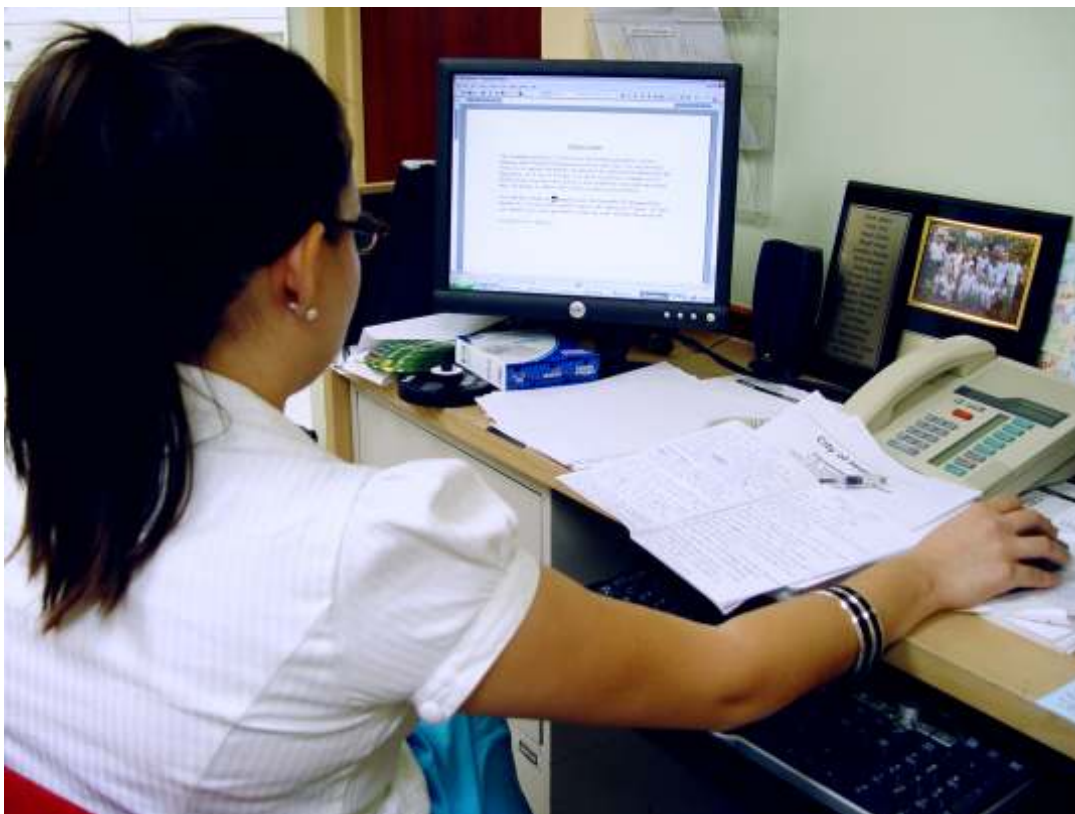
INDEPENDENT Software Testing



WELCOME TO
INDIA
A GLOBAL
OUTSOURCING HUB

Global Software Testing Market Trends

Software testing has emerged from the shadows in the IT space to claim its rightful place. The Global software Testing market is estimated to be \$13 billion dollars. The market opportunity for the Indian offshore testing companies is currently \$2 billion, estimated to rise to \$8 billion in 2008. The software-testing arena would require 16,000 18,000 professional in the next one year as per the IDC report. Job opportunities are abundant in the testing scene.



"Many business applications are not tested properly before being released into market. As a result companies suffer due to application downtime. This becomes a key concern in companies.

"Most organizations are also realizing that software testing is becoming an independent professional discipline. It not only brings objectivity and transparency to defect reporting process, but also improves the core business strategy."

Customers are ready to get their software tested by a company that has not played a part in the

development process. Moreover it reduces costs by deploying cost-effective models and perceived risk of outsourcing testing is low, he remarked.

Independent Software Vendors(ISV)

Independent Software Vendors (ISV's) face many development and testing challenges unique to their business. The ability to envision, design, test and deliver high quality software products can be scary. And further more necessity to meet aggressive time to market pressures. After analyzing and understanding the needs of ISV's and focusing on proven rapid development techniques, vendors create a suite of best practices and processes. These processes not only allow for the development of high quality software, but also enables us to respond quickly to the ever-changing market-driven needs of our ISV clients be it is Early Stage, mid stage or Large ISV.

Advantages of collaborating with Indian vendors

- Reduced Time to market
- Reduce Risk
- Focus on overall business and Marketing
- Reducing development cost over 40-50%

