

Leveraging collaborative e-learning to support international growth
A Mohive customer case study

Case Study



Already established as one of the world's most respected management, engineering and development consultancies, Mott MacDonald is undergoing a period of international growth that will see employee numbers exceed 15,000 by 2011 – an increase of some 3,000 on the business' headcount today. With growing interests in the world's fastest developing economy, of Eastern Europe, North America, India, UAE and China the company is bringing an increasingly global dimension to the Mott MacDonald character.

As the process of change accelerates, Mott MacDonald's Group e-Learning Manager Peter Gomm knows that the learning and development infrastructure required to support the business' vision for tomorrow, will need to be pretty

visionary in itself. "Mott MacDonald is growing fast and recruiting locally in all of the world's key developing areas," explains Peter. "Early in 2007, as new materials were being developed for operations in Czech Republic, Bulgaria and

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Poland it became clear that our existing infrastructure was ill-equipped to cope with the new demand for localization. We needed facilities that could cope with the new set of emerging languages coming to the fore.



We needed a level of sophistication that could support us as we rolled out training to countries like UAE, Thailand and China where cultural differences can be as important as language.



The solution for Peter's team has been to re-engineer the business' e-learning facilities from the ground up. At the heart of the new architecture is an e-learning Publishing System (eLPS) designed by Mohive. It's a procurement choice that won the business' confidence only after rigorous road testing.



Trust and feeling secure in the system's ability to accurately track the progress our people were making via e-learning was probably the decisive factor that put the Mohive eLPS at the top of our procurement list.



"As is the case for any large enterprise that needs to be able to constantly demonstrate competence in critical areas of health and safety, solid, dependable trackability is mission critical to our business. Not being 100% confident that the reporting visibility offered by our existing infrastructure was accurate and could be trusted was holding us back says Peter."

Mott MacDonald is not new to e-learning concepts: the business first introduced its people to online training five years ago via an initial pilot portfolio of 21 ready-made (off-the-shelf) courses. Quick take-up within the company's workforce secured e-learning's place in the training mix and now, on any given workday, nearly 50 courses support the learning and development needs of more than half of Mott MacDonald's people.

But as international demands see the business expanding geographically, it's the new advanced learning and development processes that will bond its people together in the working environment that develops for the 21st century, maintains Peter.



Knowledge sharing and transfer sit at the heart of any modern training programme but as the make-up of our workforce grows internationally, ensuring effective transfer from one culture to another will become one of our greatest challenges.



Simple gestures routinely used in one region can cause grievous offence in another and our new e-training infrastructure needs to be sophisticated enough to easily accommodate this degree of detail. Ultimately, as our business changes, it's not unrealistic to presume that content could originate in Mandarin and be localized for European use says Peter. When that degree of diversity needs to sit at the heart of your training infrastructure, being able to balance flexibility and quality control within the workflow process is critical.

"From a purely technical perspective, one of the biggest issues with localization is the difficulties that can exist when content

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is exported from the authoring system into another format that's acceptable to the local company, then ultimately imported again into the system. The multiple technical and formatting processes required create real scope for errors or file corruption. By using Mohive's the fully integrated Translation Link service, all these technical difficulties become redundant."

Turning experts into natural course developers

With highly granular checks and balances integrated into Mohive's workflow, Peter expects to be able to open up the process of course development across the company quickly. By exposing large audiences to the new courses, concepts of knowledge sharing and self generated content will spread quickly across our operation. "Our experts are used to conducting live classroom training or lunchtime

seminars, but turning them into full content developers or Subject Matter Experts for e-learning courses will be new to them," says Peter.



During the early days of roll out we'll make best use of the new workflow processes built into the Mohive system and focus on a selected number of big ticket projects that have a large target audience.



Transferring existing content into the new Mohive system has began already and should be complete by the end of 2007. New skins are currently being developed for courses which will start being rolled out to Mott MacDonald's people this autumn.