

case study

Acergy

Acergy attracts, develops and retains key talent across its global business with the help of Saba

Solution Overview

Industry

Oil and Gas

Challenge

Implement global learning and development infrastructure as part of overarching strategy to share inherent Acergy 'know-how' and attract new talent to the organisation from different industries to meet aggressive growth objectives

Benefits

- A single, consistent approach to promote specialist know-how across the organisation
- Ability to operate as one global group but retain locally focused infrastructure
- Support the overall strategy for attracting talented staff through promotion of Acergy's learning and development
- Supports a knowledge-driven organisation that requires all staff to be competent to perform their role
- Improved management reporting

Solution

Saba Learning Suite

Acergy is a seabed-to-surface engineering and construction contractor for the offshore oil and gas industry worldwide. Founded in the early 1970s, the group initially began work in the emerging North Sea oilfields as Comex and Stolt-Nielsen Seaway. In the four decades since then, the organisation has grown, both organically and through acquisition, to employ over 7,000 staff in Europe, West Africa, Asia and North and South America, both offshore and on.

“ Business growth puts the challenges of attracting and retaining talented people at centre stage. While the talent pool we've conventionally worked in has remained consistent, our own need for recruitment has grown and grown. We realise that our organisation is only as good as our people, and attracting the best talent to Acergy, and then retaining them through acknowledging their potential and developing them, is paramount. ”

Keith Tipson, Vice President Human Resources Acergy

Increasing demand for energy and diminishing supply from mature reserves of oil and gas mean Acergy's clients are now developing their offshore frontiers further. As a leader in connecting the seabed to the surface in harsh marine environments, this means that Acergy's business continues to grow significantly. In 2006 alone, the organisation grew its workforce by over 20%, adding approximately 1,500 new employees, with a similar target set for 2007.

The seabed-to-surface engineering and construction industry is, however, a specialist sector of the oil and gas business and, traditionally, the pool of potential employees entering the workforce has always been relatively small. Due to the significant growth of the business, and the industry as a whole, the pool of skilled people is now not large enough to cover the targeted staff intake. This situation has meant the entire industry has had to develop different strategies to attract new starters and retain key talent.

“ At Acergy, we know that long-term investment in our people is essential. The experience of our people, their know-how and passion, are assets that differentiate us. It's a necessary part of our organisation's future growth to create an infrastructure that delivers on our development promise. This is a commitment to attract the best and retain that talent at the company. It is that talent who are the future of Acergy. ”

Sharon Varney, Group Learning & Communications
Manager Acergy

One specific approach Acergy has taken to address this problem was the decision to recruit new staff from alternative industries. Often these recruits would enter Acergy without a background in marine engineering, bringing two distinct challenges for the group. The first is making sure that Acergy is known to these potential workers, and is seen as an attractive prospect to them. The second is once these people have been recruited, they must be comprehensively trained in all areas of Acergy's business, from basic industry information to the essential skills required to perform a variety of specialised roles.

Acergy decided to solve the first of these problems by cultivating a reputation for developing talent within its organisation, one of the benefits being the company would consequently attract the best available talent from outside markets. This commitment to developing internal resources was one part of a groupwide strategy, and was supported at all levels of the business. This entailed a wide-ranging change in behaviour for the group, bringing learning and training to the fore. Today, Acergy is recognised as the best in the industry for its people-centric culture.

Acergy also identified that it needed to invest in technology to successfully support this strategy. Due to the nature of the work and the locations in which they operate, Acergy people had built up a huge repository of local

experience across the world. Whether it is the know-how of international experts on engineering design or seabed-to-surface installation, there has been a huge demand for those specialists to share their expertise more easily. This information was spread across the group and the challenge has been to share knowledge globally and consistently. This specialism and local intelligence is hugely important to Acergy — they are its differentiators, and its key to effectively training and developing its new staff, and so promoting its talent.

For some time, the group has offered a rich mix of generic training, such as leadership development, project management and safety training. Now the newly launched 'Acergy Academy' offers technical and functional training based on organisation-specific expertise and know-how for the whole group's benefit. This knowledge sharing has effectively enabled new Acergy recruits to be able to gain the benefit of all of the company's expertise worldwide.

In December 2006, Acergy rolled out Saba Learning Suite 5.2 to help deliver its new strategy. The installation was initially confined to the group's UK and Norwegian onshore staff — around 1,500 of Acergy's 7,000 employees — although the technology will be expanded globally, both on and offshore, over the next 12 months.

The decision to implement learning management provides an opportunity to tap into internal expertise which has been developed over many years, and cannot be brought in from outside sources. Acergy Learning is the group's one-stop shop for learning, while also helping to track information consistently across the globe.

Acergy selected Saba software because of the company's prior track record of providing global solutions to large and complex organisations, its proven scalability, and the company vision around Human Capital Management (HCM), with a solid, fully integrated software suite to support it. Acergy wanted a trusted learning management solution, but with the knowledge that it didn't sit in isolation — that

new areas and facets, such as talent management and performance tools, could be added and fully integrated at a later date.

“We looked at a range of different providers, but we chose Saba because we knew they were people we could work with. We didn’t want just a learning management system or just an e-learning suite, but something we could scale across the business worldwide that was flexible enough to grow or add features to suit us at any given time,” said Varney.

The implementation of the software, in accordance with Acergy’s commitment to attracting and retaining talent through learning and development across their business, has been seen at all levels of the organisation. Everyone from engineers, project managers, operational and support staff, to the senior executives, will be able to benefit from Saba’s solutions.

One of the key success factors for the company was to ensure that the implementation was not seen as ‘technology for technology’s sake,’ but as an integral part of a long-term strategy for developing its people as a key part of its infrastructure. It was key that the learning management system was not seen as an end, but as a means.

Saba has enabled users at all levels in the UK and Norway to be at the heart of their own learning, easing access to a whole world of local and specialist expertise. Moving forward, Acergy will be looking to roll out Saba software and its own ‘Acergy Learning’ and ‘Acergy Academy’ solutions across the rest of its worldwide operations, including offshore locations that have very different working patterns and needs.

Information regarding Saba Learning Suite

Saba delivers the industry’s most open, scalable and comprehensive enterprise learning suite providing a centralised management system for the critical learning needs across the extended enterprise of employees, customers, partners and suppliers.

Built on the foundation of Saba’s successes with more than 1,100 organisations worldwide, the Saba Learning Suite speeds time-to-value with easy yet extensive configurability, lowers total cost of ownership through broad interoperability and leveraging key standards, and increases user adoption so that learning becomes part of your learners’ and their managers’ daily lives.