Assima
Innovate & Accelerate

Industrial Distributor Rapidly Deploys eLearning and Instructor-Led Training Using Assima Software

APPLIED
Industrial Technologies®

An industrial distribution company comprised of hundreds of small stores staffed with 3 to 15 employees covering the key operations of the location including: sales, purchasing, shipping/receiving and inventory management.

THE CHALLENGE

Applied undertook a large scale SAP Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) implementation. Within the company, regional clusters have a primary distribution center to source the majority of their product. Due to the number of system transactions that occur between locations and distribution centers, the solution was rolled out in waves (by distribution center). A total of eleven deployments across the US and Mexico were scheduled, with one occurring every two months.

A number of significant challenges faced Applied when it came to developing and delivering end-user training to support this effort:

- The realisation (or build) phase of the project was very short. The training team would only have 12 weeks to build, test and prepare for delivery.

- The rollout of the solution would occur over a long period of time (a

total of three releases and eleven deployments over a two-year span).

- Applied wanted to have as much of the training hosted at its own locations as possible to reduce delivery costs. However, Internet connectivity and bandwidth were poor at many of these locations.

- Given the number of users and the duration of the delivery window, overlapping training sessions would need to be conducted simultaneously across multiple locations.

> **"The simulations we created pretty much ran themselves. It [training delivery] went very smoothly"**

To address these challenges and help achieve its training expectations, Applied needed a training solution that could be developed and deployed quickly, sustained over a long period of time and not be dependent upon Internet connectivity.

With such constraints, a live training environment would be challenging to deliver. Even without connectivity issues, the maintenance and data updates

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

- 12 weeks to build, test and prepare for training delivery
- Minimise training delivery costs
- Conduct training sessions simultaneously across multiple locations

SOLUTION

- Assima Training Suite (ATS)
- Interactive simulations
- Transactions captured once for multiple uses

BENEFITS

- Sustainable, repeatable training solution for 3,500 end users
- Training costs reduced by eliminating the need for a training environment
- 160+ training simulations available

alone would require dedicated full-time resources for the duration of the training delivery window. The Systems Integrator's (SI) extensive experience and knowledge in the ERP training delivery space positioned it well to help Applied overcome these challenges.

SOLUTION

Given Applied's specific situation and requirements, Assima was identified as a viable system practice solution for training. Furthermore, the SI had successfully implemented large SAP ERP projects utilising Assima for training in the past.

Assima simulations are more than screen captures. They are clones of the actual system, allowing users to interact with the screens much like they would in the real SAP environment. For instance, users can enter data into fields, click on buttons, activate pull down menus and scroll horizontally and vertically to see an entire screen. Simulations can be built in a "straight line" to allow just one path to complete the transaction or they can be built with branch-offs, allowing users to take alternative paths through the transaction.

The Consultant was also able to leverage its relationship with Assima through its procurement arm in order to obtain the software. With this reduced investment, Applied was able to realise potential cost benefits in comparison to building a dedicated training environment and staffing offshore resources to maintain the environment over the lifecycle of the project.

Assima also helped Applied address the issues of rapid development / deployment and Internet connectivity in the field during instructor-led training (ILT).

The architecture of the Assima development software allows training developers to capture transactions in the live application once and to then produce multiple outputs from that single capture. This allowed the training development team to capture a transaction once and then use separate outputs for eLearning versus instructor-led training. This reduced the overall development time compared to other tools.

> " We [client's Organisational Development group] have done a lot of training over the years but never at this volume and speed. I'm amazed at how much we have developed and delivered and how quickly we have been able to do it. I don't know of another tool [besides Assima] that would allow us to develop quality systems training this quickly "

Assima simulations do not require any connectivity to the Internet. The published simulations are hypertext markup language (html) files that can be loaded directly onto participants' laptops and played through a standard Web browser. As a result, Applied could host training almost anywhere, including its own facilities. This helped reduce the overall cost of training delivery and, more importantly, it avoided the risk of an interruption in the end-user training experience due to unpredictable internet connectivity issues.

RESULTS & BENEFITS

By collaborating with Applied's developers and utilising the Assima software, the training team was able to successfully develop and deliver a sustainable, repeatable training solution to the end-user population at a reduced cost.

Moreover, the Assima simulations eliminated the need for Applied to maintain a live training environment and allowed it to use its own facilities to deliver training, further reducing delivery costs.

Due to Assima's single-capture, multi-output capability, training could be developed more efficiently. Given the abbreviated realisation phase for the solution, this was a crucial benefit of using Assima.

Some 3,500 end-users are benefiting from the 64 hours of training and 160 plus simulations developed.

Ultimately, it was the SI's experience in using the Assima software and its relationship with Assima in the marketplace that helped secure the delivery of a successful training solution for Applied—on time and on budget.

The Consultant could also easily transition the Assima simulation development to Applied. The tool requires an initial period of training and repetitive use before a user becomes truly comfortable. By balancing the development effort across both the SI and client resources during the initial training build, the Consulting team was able to build Applied's competence and put them in a good position to develop additional Assima simulations in the future.