



npower reduces SAP training costs by £3 million with Assima

“ We’ve reduced on boarding times for new contact center staff from 33 days with traditional classroom training to just 18 days with blended Assima training ”
Andy Hurren, Head of Learning

CHALLENGES

When leading UK energy company npower migrated its mission-critical enterprise systems to SAP, a major training challenge ensued. The organization, which supplies electricity and gas to 5.1 million business and residential customers, needed to train 4,500 people on the new system quickly and efficiently, including key customer-facing teams at the contact center.

Andy Hurren, Head of Learning at npower, says, “At the time, we had no digital training capabilities and no functional learning management system, which meant all our people had to be trained in classrooms using a traditional training client.”

Using this traditional approach, training costs were very high for the SAP deployment. “The training client cost millions to build and maintain, and we had a team of more than 140 trainers at one point, which was also a major cost center for the project,” says Andy.

“ Here was a system that would allow me to train new staff on SAP without the astronomical cost of building and maintaining a SAP training client. Assima really was the answer to our prayers. ”

Although the SAP training project was eventually completed successfully, Andy and his team knew that future training projects couldn’t be undertaken in the same way. “We never wanted to go through that again,” he says. “We knew we needed to find a new, more efficient, cost-effective way to deliver systems training on an ongoing basis, while also delivering a better training experience for new members of staff.”

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

- Empower staff to use SAP to deliver great customer experiences
- Minimize high costs related to the training client and classroom training methods
- Reduce onboarding times for new starters

SOLUTION

- Assima Training Suite
- Clones of the live SAP system replace costly training clients
- SAP training materials developed rapidly and at low cost
- Blended eLearning and classroom training

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Cost savings of £3 million vs. traditional training client
- New starter onboarding reduced from 33 days to 18 days
- New training programs delivered with 80% less staff
- Enhanced learning experience with blended eLearning and classroom training
- Training updated quickly and easily to reflect changes in the live system

SOLUTION

While attending a major training technology event in the UK, Andy was introduced to the Assima Training Suite. "Here was a system that would allow me to train new staff on SAP without the astronomical cost of building and maintaining a SAP training client," he says. "Assima really was the answer to our prayers."

“ **Assima has helped us to reduce our staffing requirements for new projects by 80%, which equates to a major cost saving for the business** ”

The Assima Training Suite works by cloning the core SAP applications and building training modules that guide end-users through key tasks and processes. "Assima training modules look and feel exactly the same as the live SAP application, which means team members can learn by doing," says Andy. "There's no need to maintain the clones with live data from our SAP systems, which saves a lot of time, and we can update training materials quickly and easily to reflect any changes in the live system. The ease of ongoing maintenance and the value of lessons being available 24/7 throughout the training period and during Business as Usual is a considerable time saver compared to the old way of training where classes and refreshers had to be run frequently with a training environment always available."

The Assima training clones were fast and simple to develop with support from Assima. "Two or three of our developers attended an Assima training session and they were then able to create all the training materials we needed," says Andy. "Training is broken down into bite-sized chunks, and integrated with video clips and other training content that helps employees gain the skills they need."



Andy Hurren, Head of Learning, npower

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

By replacing traditional classroom training with The Assima Training Suite, npower has dramatically reduced training costs and times, while also enhancing the learning experience for staff and providing internal development opportunities.

£3 million cost saving

The cost of developing a SAP training client and maintaining it over three years is around £3 million more than the cost of the Assima Training Suite. "We've saved £3 million by replacing our SAP training

client with Assima, and that figure doesn't even account for the fact that we need far fewer trainers now and that training is faster and more efficient."

Onboarding times reduced by 50%

Assima Training Suite has helped npower to reduce on boarding times for new staff members by around 50%. "Now that we can blend classroom training with eLearning, we can train employees much more effectively and in less time," says Andy. "As a result, we've reduced on boarding times for new contact center staff from 33 days with traditional classroom training to just 18 days with blended Assima training."

Up-skilling within the organization

To cope with the demand for new smart meters, 100 apprentices have been taken on and run through a supportive in-depth 12 month training program. Some of these apprentices were existing members of staff, moved from their current role to avoid potential redundancies and to ensure their industry knowledge is being utilized in the best way possible.

80% reduction in staffing for new programs

More than 30 people worked full time to develop training content for the initial SAP training program at npower. Now, with Assima, a program with a similar content requirement can be delivered by just six people – representing a five-fold efficiency gain.

"Instead of taking on a team of 30 extra people like we did last time, we've been able to create the content for the training program in Assima with just six people, who are all members of our 'business as usual' team," says Andy. "Assima has helped us to reduce our staffing requirements for new projects by 80%, which equates to a major cost saving for the business," he adds.

“ **Because people can practice what they learn in the classroom, their retention is far better, and training is much faster and more effective too** ”

Support required for dyslexic users dramatically reduced

Previously, training was a challenge for npower's dyslexic users because new learning, heavy text and lots of manuals can be very daunting and confusing. By practising learning in a hands-on, physical environment it has helped overcome a lot of these challenges and reduce the support required to complete their training.

Improved training standards

The Assima clones reduce reliance on classroom teaching based on a blended eLearning approach. "We now split training about 70/30 between online learning and classroom training," says Andy. "Because people can practice what they learn in the classroom, their retention is far better, and training is much faster and more effective too."

5th most improved company in the UK for Customer Service

Being able to log complaints effectively, practise scenarios in a realistic, life-like environment and giving Call Center agents the confidence to deal with enquiries effectively has contributed to npower rising from the bottom of the big 6 energy suppliers to 2nd. They also became the 5th most improved company in the UK for customer service.