

## A Career Development Portal

### A Project Summary |

#### **Introduction**

The Upstream division of a multi-national oil company sought to radically transform their approach to career development by adopting a much more holistic approach that integrated all the various aspects that contribute to the learning experience.

This was a major undertaking that needed to engage with all parts of the business on a global basis. It also needed to recognise the substantial existing investment in facilities, processes and relationships and seek to accommodate or adapt where possible.

Substantial investment in people, processes, facilities and systems would be required to deliver the new undertaking. With its long history of designing, implementing and supporting solutions for competency assessment, learning development and knowledge sharing Addept were well placed to assist the client in delivering against its vision.

#### **The Approach**

It was recognised the early years of career development could be more proscriptive, whilst later years could be described as more opportunistic. To acknowledge this distinction a point was chosen approximately ten years into an employee's career development where they would be '*ready for leadership*'.

To cover these first ten years of career development a series of Roadmaps were developed that provided guidance on the Experience that should be attained and the learning and support opportunities available. Each Roadmap corresponded to a recognisable 'career' with a career path represented as a series of steps.

A new review process was instigated to monitor each employee's progress at regular intervals in a globally consistent manner.

For the more experienced staff the focus was on the learning and support opportunities available. To provide for consistency in the use of information the same underlying professional structures were used, but with an indication of the appropriate level of competence in place of the career path.

#### **Systems Requirement**

A new Intranet Portal was conceived as a single point of reference for Upstream staff. This portal would replace an existing portal which was used to support formal learning activities (training) and in addition would need to embrace functionality that was provided through a variety of other existing web sites, both internal and external.

In some cases existing functionality would be subsumed directly into the portal, but it was recognised that a wealth of information existed in disparate systems both inside and outside of the organisation, including Learning Management Systems, Document Repositories, SharePoint sites etc. The new system needed to provide a consistent way of describing all these various objects so that it could act as a signpost to the relevant source.

Some of the biggest challenges to be faced were:

- There needed to be a devolved administration structure so that different parts of the business could maintain their own information;
- The administration interface needed to be simple, intuitive and robust so that it did not require specialist training.
- The new portal would need to represent a mixture of the old and new processes so that different areas of the business could move on different timescales.
- There needed to be a unified way of describing objects ranging from face to face training to discussion forums to specialist products and suppliers.

## The Implementation

The new portal was developed as a custom application to suit the client's standard Microsoft based hosting platforms. There was considerable leverage from both Connect and other bespoke developments that Addept had undertaken on behalf of the client. This enabled a proof of concept to be rapidly established which proved invaluable in helping to engage across the businesses.

For the formal learning functionality we were able to leverage heavily from a standard Addept toolbox which in addition to logically 'connecting' activities from disparate systems also provided back end logistics support for scheduling, resourcing and evaluation. Since these tools were already in operational use within some parts of the business, this proved invaluable for gaining wider acceptance.

One of the major learning management systems already in use was an external system that required manual log in. This was recognised as a major barrier to use and Addept worked closely with the external supplier to develop a secure single sign-on protocol to allow seamless access. A key feature of this functionality is that the correlation between the internal and external user accounts is primarily managed by the end user, which dramatically reduces the administrative burden.

For the initial population of Roadmap information an import process was developed based on capturing the data in spreadsheet form. This approach integrated well with the business processes used to define the data.

For the longer term maintenance bespoke functionality has been developed that has allowed a WYSIWYG approach enabling authorised individuals to manage the majority of their information directly in the production environment.

## In Summary

This was a major undertaking by a large organisation seeking to change fundamental behaviours.

The system components needed to retain a high level of flexibility not only in respect of the business goals, but also in respect of the number of systems and processes to be incorporated.

A bespoke solution provided the necessary flexibility; leveraging from existing functionality reduced costs and timescales, improved robustness and reduced reworking.

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