



Global Knowledge™

Cisco Systems turned to learning solutions provider Global Knowledge for the rapid development and delivery of a training programme that would give channel partners vital product knowledge.

Cisco uses learning to stamp its authority on lucrative new market

Cisco teamed up with global learning solutions provider Global Knowledge to deliver an ambitious education programme to its channel partners in a successful bid to carve a niche in the storage area network (SAN) market.

When Cisco Systems, Inc. embarked on a new and potentially high value business venture that would require a fast and steep learning curve on the part of its channel partners, it approached Global Knowledge for help.

Already the worldwide leader in networking for the internet, Cisco had entered the rapidly growing and competitive storage area networking (SAN) market. The company recognised that it needed to quickly establish its technical credentials and it sought to ensure there was a broad understanding of its technical solution amongst Cisco reseller and integrator partners at the earliest possible stage.

With a proven capability in successfully delivering major multi-national training roll-outs, Global Knowledge was the preferred partner to develop a pan-EMEA solution that would deliver Cisco's ambitious education programme aims.

Technical knowledge

Cisco and Global Knowledge agreed to jointly develop and deliver a high-level two-day course aimed primarily at partner sales executives and pre-sales engineers but which also included essential technical and hands-on practical content.

The course would be provided to selected reseller delegates free of charge and therefore presented a major training investment for Cisco. It was vital that Global Knowledge ensured risks were minimised and that the project supported Cisco's business goals.

The training had to give Cisco partners adequate first-hand positioning and technical knowledge of the SAN products so that they would:

- Understand the Cisco SANS product portfolio
- Understand the SANS features and benefits and competitive positioning
- Map customer requirements to the Cisco SANS products
- Be capable of identifying early SANS sales opportunities.

Overcoming key challenges

Working collaboratively throughout the programme development, Global Knowledge and Cisco had to address a number of challenges. Cisco, for instance, needed it to be delivered rapidly to minimise 'time to market' for their new product range. This created significant logistical pressures on a programme that required 256 delivery days over an 11-month period in many countries.

There was also a requirement to move high value technical equipment between training events and through regional customs departments. And the training delivery had to address the varying standards of technical and administrative support in Cisco facilities. In addition there was potential for delegate fall-out and consequently for Cisco to waste its investment.





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Global Knowledge – Europe's leading provider of learning services

The administration and management of up to five courses every week in different countries EMEA-wide with students from multiple countries was complex. High personal and professional demands were placed on all of the instructors, with constant travel over an extended period and the need for independence of thought and action, creativity and diplomatic skills.

An innovative solution

Global Knowledge rose to the occasion staging Cisco SAN courses in 28 countries across EMEA. This was more ambitious and demanding from a logistics perspective than anything previously attempted, particularly given the highly compressed timescale. It was deemed by Cisco to have achieved a spectacular result that helped the company increase its storage sales and market position.

Global Knowledge achieved this with a programme that provided maximum product visibility with minimum risk; ensuring that as few courses as possible would be cancelled or postponed for any reason, and maximising attendance.

The following elements were built into the project:

- Custom designed two-day training course authored by Global Knowledge and validated through pilots with Cisco
- Bespoke post course examination written by Global Knowledge and hosted over the web to allow easy access to all attendees
- Bespoke flight cases to secure and protect equipment
- Global Knowledge invested \$300K in two sets of equipment to avoid any cancelled training events due to equipment in transit or waiting customs clearance

- Global Knowledge Programme Office team created and dedicated to the delivery of this project
- Electronic joining instructions and location maps sent automatically via email from the Global Knowledge booking system
- SMS message last minute reminders to all delegates' mobile phones.

Global Knowledge committed heavily in terms of its own financial resources both in design of bespoke testing systems and in purchase of equipment and cases. The company also used the latest developments in communications technology to support the administration process – contacting students by SMS message proved to be both faster and more reliable than email. This highly effective and imaginative approach proved popular with students throughout EMEA.

Benefit and result

Assessment forms were completed on-line by every delegate at the end of each course. The average score in terms of overall satisfaction was an impressive 4.7 from a possible 5.0

In meeting Cisco's business goals Global Knowledge was able to develop new revenue streams from the successful launch of SANS in EMEA in a compressed timeframe, leaving Cisco delighted with the outcome of the programme.

This project required creativity, flexibility, commitment, professionalism, skill and experience and Global Knowledge was able to deliver well beyond the initial expectations. All the delivery objectives were achieved with very high levels of delegate satisfaction and with the risk of the return-on-investment not being achieved for Cisco effectively minimised.

For further information please contact Global Knowledge

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