



Global Knowledge – Europe's leading provider of learning services for IT and management professionals

Telecoms equipment provider rings the changes with focus on training

The last few years have been tough in the telecom equipment sector. Yet some equipment providers are now leading the pack because of innovative business solutions that were never tried before. And some, like a Global Knowledge customer in this sector, have found that when they focus on their employees, they can benefit at a very strategic level.

With the support of Global Knowledge this company is now achieving:

- » Massively improved employee retention
- » Increased levels of workforce performance
- » Greatly improved customer satisfaction

Overcoming obstacles

A leading provider of installation and maintenance services for telecom customer premise equipment, this company had been through years of turmoil, layoffs, and cultural change. Multiple acquisitions and drastic corporate changes had affected morale, resulting in an uncertain working climate and a perception of job insecurity. As a result, employee loyalty was low and turnover rates high.

The business was investing significant resources in training programmes for its service technicians who, once trained, would leave to work for a competitor. "We were becoming part of a vicious cycle," explains a Senior Board Member. "As a company in a highly technical field we knew that training and workforce development would be critical to our success and the success of our customers. However, we didn't want to continue paying to train and certify service technicians only to lose them in a high-turnover environment. It was a revolving door. It was time to make a strategic investment in our people."

The future success of the business was largely tied to the performance and loyalty of its field technical force and, unsurprisingly, the company's leadership wanted to reassure its technicians that their careers were safe and that their contribution to the business was vital. While a comprehensive and strategic training programme was seen as the way to address all the goals of employee satisfaction

and retention, senior management was uncertain where to start.

Selecting a partner

A member of Nortel's Elite Advantage Partner programme, the company was expected to maintain a high level of certified technicians who ultimately could deliver a high degree of customer satisfaction. Nortel recommended global learning solutions provider Global Knowledge as an ideal partner to work closely with both companies to design a solution.

The company's executives expressed interest in developing an incentive programme to motivate employees but recognised that they didn't have the expertise, training infrastructure, or internal resources to deploy such a comprehensive programme. Global Knowledge worked with both Nortel and the telecoms equipment provider to define the strategy and logistics required to develop and implement a comprehensive and customised training programme.

It was essential for Global Knowledge to become immersed in the business and culture to be able to meet the learning needs of the highly technical, widely distributed workforce. In terms of the SOLVE methodology, we Surround the business in order to scope the solution and agree the overall working processes.





Clearly, the best place to start was with the target audience – the service technicians. An exhaustive analysis of the training histories of more than 300 service technicians was conducted before training track recommendations were made for Nortel certification. By doing this, Global Knowledge was able to determine which technicians were best prepared for any of Nortel's 60 certification exams and what additional training would be required at an individual level.

Incentivised training

The next objective was to Originate a tailored Technical Advancement Programme (TAP) that would motivate and train employees. This comprehensive programme provided employee incentives for attending training courses and earning new certifications. A skills assessment review enabled Global Knowledge to develop a training curriculum tailored to meet the professional needs of individual technicians.

On completion of a new certification, each service technician received 25 percent of a two-phase bonus payment. On the first anniversary of their certification completion, each technician would be paid the remaining 75 percent.

With field technicians operating across numerous regional offices, a flexible Launch strategy was needed that would enable technicians to take training courses at their convenience. Global Knowledge proposed an innovative, blended learning solution that offered classroom and e-Learning courses.

Multiple courses were made available as web-based training, and employees accessed the courses by going to a custom-developed web portal. Each student pre-registered and received an email alerting them to the courses they should take and a timeframe for participation. Once a student completed the training, they were offered an end-of-course assessment test. After students passed a Nortel certification exam, they could then progress to second-level training with a fresh batch of courses and a new timeline.

The web portal was complemented with additional services, such as eMentor, allowing technicians to send questions directly to an instructor; surveys to assess student satisfaction; and an online reporting tool for administrators to show which students were accessing courseware, dates of access, and pass/fail rates. Hands-on training courses were hosted at the Global Knowledge Training Centres, allowing all delegates to install and configure live equipment.

Success confirmed

Just six months after implementation, the success of the TAP programme was Validated by a Customer Satisfaction Survey that reported stellar results. In nearly every category of the Nortel-sponsored survey, the scores showed improvements. Specific categories showed great improvement year-on-year in: Availability of Trained Personnel; Overall Installation Experience; Technical Competence of Representatives; and Overall Technical Support and Repair.

The customer attributes this to TAP and to Global Knowledge. "The astounding results of this survey reaffirmed the benefits of working with Global Knowledge. If you want to run a world-class service organisation, you have to invest in training," concluded a Senior Board Member. "Global Knowledge brought the resources and expertise we needed to get the Technical Advancement Programme up and running and, as a result, our business continues to grow and prosper exponentially."

Among the key benefits of the Global Knowledge solution are:

- » field technician retention has improved and within eight months of the rollout employee turnover rate had reached less than half a percent.
- » before implementing TAP the certification pass/fail ratio was estimated at 10:90. It is now estimated at 80:20, with 80 percent of students passing and only 20 percent failing.





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Global Knowledge continues to Evaluate and assess the successes and challenges associated with the programme and is consequently able to shape it to deliver the most up-to-date course-ware and to modify offerings and delivery methods as required.

TAP is undoubtedly improving workforce performance, employee retention and loyalty, and customer satisfaction. By using the SOLVE methodology, the key points of the programme were built in from the start – buy-in from the technicians, active involvement from company executives, continuous monitoring of activity with messaging to technicians, a phased-in course implementation, and structured motivational rewards. It's a winning solution.

For further information please contact Global Knowledge
www.globalknowledge.co.uk ☎ **01189 123456**

Global Knowledge, Mulberry Business Park, Fishponds Rd, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 2GY
T +44 (0) 1189 123456 **F** +44 (0) 1189 195109 **E** info@globalknowledge.co.uk

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