B&Q is the UK’s most successful home improvement retailer, with a 12 per cent share of the nation’s DIY market. It currently employs 33,000 people in more than 320 stores nationwide. Founded in 1969, B&Q was acquired by F. W. Woolworth in 1980 and is now part of Kingfisher plc.

A combination of rapid business growth and high staff turnover means that B&Q has an ongoing need to deliver quality training to its employees. However, the traditional approach to training was both costly and time-consuming.

"Feedback from employee satisfaction survey informed us that our employees felt they need additional training to meet the level of service requested by our customers but our managers were telling us that they couldn’t afford the time for their team members to attend off site training workshops," explained Adrian Jones, e-learning manager at B&Q.
sustainable solution

For B&Q, the challenge was to introduce a sustainable training solution that could be delivered within its stores, with metrics to show that the projected benefits were being achieved. The company identified an e-learning infrastructure, based on the Docent Learning Management Server (LMS), as the best way forward. To implement this infrastructure, B&Q chose HP Education Services.

“HP offered us experience, security and a long-term relationship. Whilst the Docent product offered excellent functionality and ease-of-use, we felt that HP’s skills were essential for a truly integrated e-learning solution,” commented project leader Steve Hemmant.

HP was given responsibility for implementation, integration and support. The biggest challenge was to integrate content in a wide range of different formats using a variety of integration tools. Initially, the new infrastructure was used to deliver training related to health and safety but its scope was later expanded to cover areas such as product knowledge, induction training, and use of SAP. Some 30,000 people a year now access training in this way. HP has been involved throughout in customising the environment to meet B&Q’s evolving needs.

dramatic cost reduction

The most obvious benefit is a dramatic reduction in training costs. For example, Jones estimates that B&Q saved about £1 million on training costs associated with its recent rollout of SAP systems. However, although traditional classroom training is reckoned to cost five times as much as e-learning, B&Q has not dispensed with it completely, preferring to use a complementary approach.

For B&Q, e-learning represents a consistent, sustainable, easily accessible form of high-quality training. The effectiveness of training can be evaluated in a way that was never possible before. Staff are also more satisfied because they can monitor their progress and see what training is needed to perform their role effectively. Because they are more knowledgeable, they can also help B&Q achieve its business goal of increasing average transaction value within the stores.

“B&Q now has a large catalogue of training modules delivered via e-learning. Thanks to HP, they are all integrated and accessible to everyone in our stores. HP Education Services has been a key element in our successful utilisation of Docent,” concluded Jones.

For more information on how working with Hewlett-Packard can benefit you, please contact your local HP sales representative or reseller, or visit: http://www.hp.com

challenge

• Deliver quality training to support rapid business growth
• Identify sustainable alternative to costly, time-consuming traditional training methods
• Implement metrics to monitor effectiveness of training

solution

• Implement new e-learning infrastructure
• Base infrastructure on Docent LMS and Questionmark assessment software
• Engage hp Education Services to provide implementation, integration and support services

results

• High-quality training is available in a consistent, sustainable, easily accessible form
• Training costs have been reduced dramatically
• Savings of £1 million were made on training associated with the rollout of SAP Customer Ordering
• Effectiveness of training can be evaluated objectively
• Staff can monitor their own progress and, through being more knowledgeable, can help to increase average transaction value in the stores

why hp?

• Experience of Docent product
• Ability to build integrated e-learning solution
• Willingness to enter into a long-term relationship
customer at a glance:

industry sector: Retail
name: B&Q
headquarters: Eastleigh, Hampshire, UK
founded: 1969
telephone: +44 23 8025 6256
number of employees: 33,000
annual revenue: £3.2 billion (EUR 5 billion approx.)
URL: www.diy.com

services highlights:

- Integration, customisation and support services from hp Education Services
- E-learning infrastructure
- Docent 5.01
- Questionmark Perception 3.3 testing and assessment software
- Windows 2000
- Microsoft SQL Server 7
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- B&Q intranet

partner:

company: Docent Inc.
headquarters: Mountain View, California
founded: 1998
telephone: +1 650 934 9500
annual revenues: $29 million
URL: www.docent.com
business: Provider of business performance management applications
products: Docent LCMS, LMS, Peak Performance, Live!, Exchange, Analytics

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