

ASCENT FLIGHT TRAINING: A SMOOTH TAKE OFF



Ascent is a training design and delivery organization created as a joint venture between Lockheed Martin and Babcock, which, following an open competition, was appointed in May 2008 as the Ministry of Defence's Training Service Partner to deliver its training output. Ascent has a 25-year contract to provide a United Kingdom Military Flight Training System (UKMFTS) for the UK's Armed Forces. Website: www.ascentflighttraining.com

Prior to Ascent being established in 2008 in response to the United Kingdom Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS), every military flight training cell produced its own training materials. Each cell had its own unique way of developing and implementing its training materials.

THE CHALLENGE

As a newly formed training company, Ascent's mandate was crystal clear. The company was challenged to develop, manage, maintain and deliver modular and personalized world class training programs for all UK aircrew. This needed to be done more quickly than was previously possible and meet the detailed specifications for content, quality and budget of the new program.

Having come from former training divisions throughout the UK military, the new Ascent training team was well aware of the challenges that each military division had previously encountered with respect to developing and delivering training. The newly formed team gathered to discuss past training challenges and how they would meet those needs in order to fulfill the numerous requirements of the UKMFTS.

"Although we were all previously from different armed forces training teams, our challenges had been quite similar," said Andy Stryker, Courseware Development Lead of Ascent Flight Training. "We have all had issues integrating with various learning management systems (LMSs), making the delivery and tracking of training difficult; the existing training lacked a consistency in branding that would now be required by the new program; the existing process for updating content was labor intensive and required updating entire lessons and courses, even for minor changes, and we were unable to reuse or repurpose content required to support the training needs for all UK aircrew under the new program."

After discussing its needs with parent company Lockheed Martin and researching the market, it was clear that a learning content management system (LCMS) would meet Ascent's requirements.

THE SOLUTION

After a comprehensive process, Ascent selected Kenexa, an IBM Company, for its LCMS. Kenexa LCMS provides the company with the required flexibility to integrate with any LMS and template capability to ensure consistency in branding across all military divisions. The LCMS also allows for reuse and repurposing of content and has the bandwidth to support the 3,000-plus learners that Ascent, through the UKMFTS program, supports.

THE RESULTS

By implementing an LCMS as part of the launch of the UKMFTS program, Ascent met its first deadline of completing a specific set of 266 training lessons. This included budget and timescale requirements and the development of all assets associated with the courses. Thus, the UKMFTS program would be a more efficient and affordable way of providing training to aircrew in the UK.

Although Ascent is not permitted to share specific results gained from implementing Kenexa's LCMS to support the training development of the UKMFTS program, Stryker said that the program is on target for optimizing the time spent in training, closing the training cap and reducing the cost of flight training.

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