



ONEIR SOLUTIONS' NOVEL APPROACH TO TRAINING BREEDS SUCCESS

Customized Oneir Solutions training eliminates distance and inconvenience

by Andy Shaw

If famed football coach Vince Lombardi were living in today's computerized world, he might well amend his famous quote about winning to: "Training isn't everything, it's the only thing." Like winning was to Lombardi, training is everything today when it comes to implementing high tech systems successfully. Training courses abound. So, however, do their costs and inconvenience. But not to get Oneir Solutions up and running. At least so say the folks at Chetwynd Petroleums in northern British Columbia's Peace River country.

"We were looking for a new accounting system that was user friendly and easy to learn," says Candide Lavoie, Chetwynd Petroleums Office Manager. "The maker of our old system who was just down the road was going out of business so we needed a replacement. And we needed to get it operational quickly." Given that need for speed, it's curious that Lavoie and Chetwynd Petroleums chose as their new supplier Oneir, whose offices are some 3,000 kilometres away.

"One of the advantages of Oneir is that all of our training can be done over the Internet," says Jane Giggall, CEO and President of Oneir Solutions Inc. in Toronto. "We can

go directly online with them so that we are looking and working with the same screen while talking to each other on the telephone. That gives us an intimacy with the customer that virtually eliminates any geographical distance between us. And it also allows us to do as-needed or specialized training with that particular client."

The ability to start such training right away is built into the unique software and server package that first arrives from Oneir.

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"The package also includes a very good instruction book but what we found best is that when we get to something we don't understand and need training on, we can just call Oneir and have them set up a session for us," says Lavoie.

That training session can be set up for as soon as later the same day. "What we do is take the data from the customer's actual books and create a duplicate company with it that we use strictly for training purposes," explains Jon Mainwaring, Oneir Solutions' executive vice president. "Our trainers can show them what to do, and watch them practice it on real data that

has meaning to the client, but which does not muck up the company's actual books. And those sessions can be saved so that the client can go back to them anytime they need a refresher. It makes testing anxiety free."

In over 20 years of developing their software, one thing Giggall and Mainwaring have learned is that customizing training, as opposed to fiddling with the software itself, is what is paramount.

"With on-call training we can roll with the customer's needs as they emerge," says Mainwaring.

"That's just what we did with Chetwynd Petroleums. We took Candide through one part of our software at a time as she was introducing them to the company's operations. She didn't have to take time off work to attend a long course - and then try to remember it all. And for us, doing training in short sessions like that over the Internet is far less disruptive than staging a formalized session in a classroom somewhere."

Both Oneir and Chetwynd agree then that this innovative approach to training is a win-win. Coach Lombardi would be pleased.

Andy Shaw is a freelance writer, broadcaster and international journalist with articles in many business and technical publications.