

EDF trains its top management in financial analysis

IN BRIEF



Key objectives

To enable the Group's 1,500 senior executives to develop and refine their financial literacy, in anticipation of a possible privatisation.

EDF

As it prepared itself to be a listed company, the EDF Group was positioned as a European leader in the generation, distribution and supply of electricity. With over 161,300 employees, EDF provides energy and services to over 42 million customers throughout the world, including 36.2 million in Europe.



► Back in 2002, when EDF was a state owned company, it knew it would eventually have to open its capital to go public. As a result, it urgently needed to train 1,500 managers and future managers on financial issues.

A traditional training solution was not available immediately, and could not have been implemented in EDF's time-frame. It would also have been very expensive.

"72% of managerial staff or future managers are engineers. When it comes to the professional curriculum, we thought it would be useful to offer them specialised training in the fundamentals of financial analysis... We thought it was necessary for our high potential staff and managers to have a good grasp of financial matters, starting with the basics." Dominique Olszer, EDF Group University.

The Launch of the E-Learning Program

E-learning was the obvious solution. The newly formed EDF University took on this project together with the Financial Director, who was its official sponsor.

The Program gathered 60 top managers from Human Resources, Finance and other senior management positions over a 4-month

period, who then participated in a preliminary financial awareness program. The final program was to be introduced in a similar format to this pilot. Many of the first 60 users had only general experience with the Internet, so were able to test the user-friendliness of the technical features of the site, the modules, and the tutoring process in real-world conditions.

An Effective Communication

The pilot was such a success that the EDF Group University in France launched the full Financial Awareness program just a few months later at the end of 2003 with a sophisticated communication campaign. A Managerial Newsletter and emails directly from the Finance Director and from the University helped the company inform its managers in France about the program, encouraging their participation. Participants were chosen by Human Resources career management teams, and registrations came in waves of 300 to 400. Participants first received a user kit, which included a welcome letter from the sponsor with information

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Dominique Olszer,
EDF Group University Project leader

on the importance of the program as well as login information, a head-phone set and a CD-Rom.

Adapted Training

Managers were asked to complete a self-evaluation test that would target their individual needs. The results created an individualised course of compulsory and optional modules for each manager according to their strengths and weaknesses and their specific development needs. The e-learning modules covered topics such as ‘An introduction to finance’ and ‘The valuation of shares and options’.

Even though the course was not mandatory, EDF trainers developed

a practice of sending emails encouraging participants to complete the program. At the end of the course, participants could do the test again to assess how much they had learned. The University also sent regular emails to the participants to encourage them to “log on and learn”.

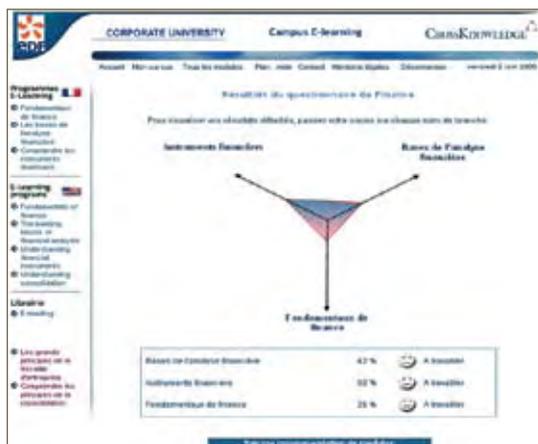
But that is not all. Future participants heard about the program both from word-of-mouth and newsletter testimonials. These positive reviews motivated future participants when it was their time to log on.

Nearly 40% of EDF’s engineers and managers are based outside of France. As a result of the very favourable feedback from French managers the program was launched internationally in 2004.

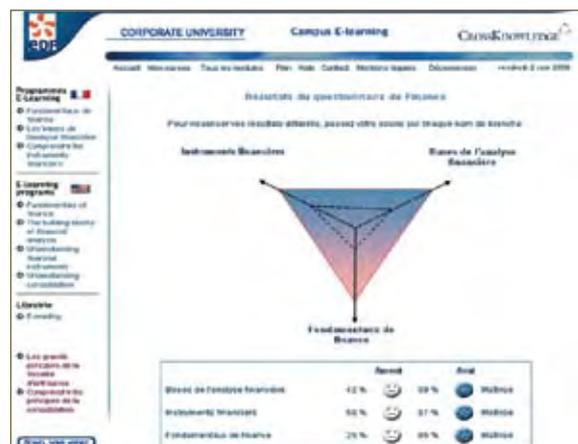
Invigorating Results

With a participation rate of 75%, each trainee accessed between seven and eight modules on average. To top it off, the self-evaluation post-test boasted an average improvement rate of 40%.

The proven achievements made by EDF employees have enticed the EDF University to expand e-learning to other areas. As it considers the exciting future for e-learning within the group, EDF is evaluating a blended learning solution that combines traditional classroom training with distance training, and is complemented by assessment quizzes at the beginning and at the end of the programs. ●●●



Self-diagnostic test initial results



Self-diagnostic test results after training