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Canon

Learning Tree Management Institute Provides Pan-European Training Solution for Canon

Canon Europe is an integral part of the Canon Group, selling to more than 100 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and generating nearly one-third of Canon's global sales revenue.

The Challenge

Canon's Business Solutions division (CBS) develops IT products, solutions and services for the office and professional print environments. CBS is strongly client-oriented and account-driven and, for these reasons, the role of Solution Business Consultant was created to provide technical input and support to Account Managers during the sales process.

After the role began to be implemented, it became clear that the Consultants could enhance their effectiveness by conveying the technical aspects to the client more concisely. Jonathan Smith, Canon Europe's Learning & Development Manager, summed up the challenge, "The Consultants support the Account Manager who is the key relationship builder, but doesn't have the technical knowledge. The Consultants understand the technical side, but also need to sell it to the client as part of the 'solution building', so they have to know how to present to people who don't have that background". Smith felt the first priority was to strengthen the Consultants' writing abilities, and the resource he selected for the required training was the Learning Tree Management Institute.

The Learning Tree Solution

The first step Canon Europe took was to run the Learning Tree Management Institute Course, *Business and Report Writing*, as a pilot program. Based on the feedback from both the Solution Business Consultants and the management team, they felt their technical writing could use polishing as well. After working closely with Learning Tree, the course was redesigned and customised to include elements from another Learning Tree Management Institute Course, *Technical Writing Introduction*. The combination struck exactly the right balance.

In addition to becoming a prerequisite for the position, the course has also been incorporated into Canon Europe's accreditation process, which tests the candidates on their ability to put together a proper business solution and frame it in written form. Passing is mandatory to assume the role.

The Results

For Canon Europe, the Learning Tree Management Institute did more than provide a course to enhance the writing skills of their technical Consultants. Smith explains, "We are a pan-European head office, and one of the constant headaches that we get is the ability to deliver in local languages, so any partner that we work with from a training perspective has to be able to deliver a consistent programme in a whole range of languages". To date, the Learning Tree Management Institute has successfully presented the course in Spain, Germany, Sweden, France, the UK and Norway.

Another byproduct of the course is that it has provided a framework for report writing that has been adopted by all of Canon Europe, further aligning the sales efforts of the various countries. For Smith, Learning Tree provided the best of all possible worlds: "Other management trainers can go in, but when you put them in front of technical people, it's a tough crowd. The Learning Tree Management Institute satisfied our needs because they could do both — speak the technical language with credibility and deliver the soft skills training effectively".



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