

The Use of Companion Applications to Support Instructor–Led Training

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study reflects on the use of a mobile training companion application to overcome limitations of supporting a level-three evaluation of the participants following a face-to-face training course. A level-three evaluation determines how well a person that attended training is able to transfer the information they learned to their job. The rapid adoption of smartphones enables the creation of solutions not previously considered viable in this industry, which has typically used either a traditional web-based training strategy or a traditional face-to-face training strategy to meet its training objectives. This solution is especially important because the training attendees work individually and each person covers a different territory than another, making it even more difficult to measure transfer.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The manufacturer for this case study is a global technology leader in the design, manufacture and customer support of premium light-, medium- and heavy-duty trucks under the several well-known nameplates. The company also designs and manufactures advanced diesel engines, provides financial services, information technology, and distributes truck parts related to its principal business.

One nameplate builds premium commercial vehicles for sale in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Australia and for export throughout the world. Another nameplate designs, manufactures and distributes premium commercial vehicles in the US and Canada. The final nameplate manufactures trucks in the Netherlands, Belgium, Brazil and the United Kingdom for sale throughout Western and Eastern Europe, and for export to Asia, Africa, North and South America.

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The manufacturer delivers its products and services to customers worldwide through an extensive dealer network of 2,200 locations. Globally, the company sells the company's products in more than 100 countries and is expanding its dealer network in Asia and throughout the world. Approximately half of the revenues and profits are generated outside the United States.

The aftermarket parts division operates a network of parts distribution centers offering aftermarket support to their nameplate dealers and customers around the world. Aftermarket support includes customer call centers operating 24 hours a day throughout the year and technologically advanced systems to enhance inventory control and expedite order processing.

Their financial services provide finance, lease, and insurance services to dealers and customers in 24 countries including a portfolio of more than 180,000 trucks and trailers and total assets in excess of US\$13 billion. The group includes a major full-service truck leasing company in North America, with a fleet of 38,000 vehicles. Total revenue for the manufacturer was US\$23 billion in 2018 (Class 8 Truck Manufacturer, 2019).

SETTING THE STAGE

This case study represents the work done to support aftermarket part and service training for a large transportation manufacturer with a franchised dealer network geographically spread throughout North America. There are many divisions within this manufacturing company located throughout the world. This project affected only locations in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The division in question specifically deals with what is referred to as "aftersales" or aftermarket product. To further explain, there are several divisions responsible for engineering, designing, and ultimately, manufacturing large transportation vehicles, also known as Class 8 trucks. Class 8 trucks weigh 33,000 pounds or more. Once these trucks are manufactured, they are transferred to the franchised dealer network to sell to the end customer. As the truck is initially sold, everything on it is considered original equipment. Anything that would then have to be purchased to support the truck throughout its lifecycle (for example, oil and an oil filter for an oil change) is considered aftersales or aftermarket parts and service. These products are available to the end customers through any dealer franchise in the network, currently more than 800 locations in North America. The division in this case study supplies the dealer franchises with the aftermarket parts necessary to keep the Class 8 trucks on the road transporting goods and services.

Quite simply, there are many opportunities for learning within the franchised dealer network. Each franchise could develop a training plan to teach their dealership employees about the features and benefits of each aftermarket part and then execute it. However, the franchises have come to rely on the original equipment manufacturer (otherwise known as the Class 8 truck manufacturer), specifically the "aftersales" division, to provide training to the dealers, as a way to reduce cost and avoid duplication of effort. The dealers can then use the resources they may have previously used on developing training elsewhere in their business. This is typically reflected in online training opportunities offered through the manufacturer's Learning Management System (LMS) and printed supplemental technical publications, but periodically, throughout the year, the aftersales division offers face-to-face training courses for franchised dealer participants. The Learning Management System enables dealership employees to log into the virtual learning courses any time they would like (24/7/365) to review courses on sales, dealership management, or product information. These courses are targeted toward the entire dealership network, so in many cases, they do not enable the dealership employee to learn details about a product in a niche

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