

U. S. Steel Kosice – Employees’ training and development

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Abstract—These papers introduce the employees training process in U. S. Steel Kosice and the 2010 training review and training costs breakdown. Highlighted are the e-learning programs we implemented in recent years and the different areas of computer-based training we use for employees’ training and development.

I. INTRODUCTION

U. S. Steel Kosice (hereinafter USSK), a profitable integrated steel company located in Eastern Slovakia, represents a successful partnership of Slovak technical skills and knowledge with strong American plant management and market-oriented business experience. A responsible approach to business is fundamental and permanent principle of USSK which is a leading contributor to the economic, environmental, and social development of Kosice and Eastern Slovakia. The Company supports community projects in healthcare, education, charity, sport and culture. paper, adjust the lengths of the columns so that they are equal. Use automatic hyphenation and check spelling. Digitize or paste down figures.

U. S. Steel Group's Vision:

- A profitable steel company that earns an adequate return for its shareholders and provides sufficient capital to assure its long-term success.
- An innovative steel company that clearly distinguishes itself as the industry leader in providing superior quality and service to its customers, while continuously reducing costs to achieve a status of low-cost producer.
- A company that has respect for all employees, creates an atmosphere which motivates employees to fully utilize their talents, encourages all employees to work together effectively and promptly recognizes and rewards each employee for contributions to the overall success of the company.
- A company that values diversity in its workforce, fosters a safe and healthy workplace, is environmentally responsible and at all times conducts itself in an ethical manner.

- A company in which each employee takes pride in being an important and contributing member.

To achieve this VISION, we must significantly elevate our performance standards and consistently achieve these new levels.

Qualified employees are the basis of every company's success. USSK provides various kinds of training activities for employees and possesses a highly-qualified and professionally skilled work-force. Investment in development of human resources is one of the priorities in the top management interests. [1]

II. TRAINING PROCESS

The USSK training process is a systematic approach that is provided by the Training and development department and consists of the following steps:

1. Needs Definition

First step is to identify all the needs for training activities for our employees. In order to ensure all necessary training, we have to follow legal requirements – both European (such as REACH, ISO, etc.) and Slovak Law (such as Labor Code, Safety Law, etc.). Since we are a part of an international corporation, we also pay attention to corporate strategy requirements / needs or new technology needs and provide employees with training that was set by the corporation for respective year. Another part of training activities comes from the annual employees’ performance appraisal and personal development goals (Leadership, Business, Professional, Language Skills training, etc.). Training department also cooperates with Recruiting department and provides the needed training based on the results from the Assessment / Development Center. In case of any finding from QMS / EMS audits, we reflect all needs in our training plan.

2. Planning

As soon as we have all the needs summarized, we prepare the USSK training plan. We use the information system Financial 2000 that allows us to make plans for each organizational unit broken down by quarters. In addition to this plan, we manage „ad hoc“ requests, mostly to conferences & seminars, or specialized professional training.

3. Realization

The training is mostly provided by internal resources (especially in vocational, safety, fire protection and quality management training). On the other hand, we use external vendors to provide language, managerial, IT and a wide range of professional training, including seminars & conferences. We use all the existing forms & methods, starting from classroom-based sessions, ending with hands-on or e-learning.

4. Evaluation

As for the training evaluation, we compare ourselves to the external market applying benchmark indicators, such as external training cost, training cost / total labor cost ratio, total training cost per 1 employee and training hours per 1 employee, etc.. Moreover, we have been using the Kirkpatrick model evaluating training programs that covers all important areas to make sure the training is administered and performed well.



Figure 2. USSK Interactive Training Center

III. 2010 TRAINING REVIEW

In 2010, we provided 131 900 training activities for our employees, which is almost 12 training activities during the year if calculated per one employee out of the average number of 11 129. We spent 1, 56 mil EUR on external training activities. The breakdown by training areas is in the chart below:

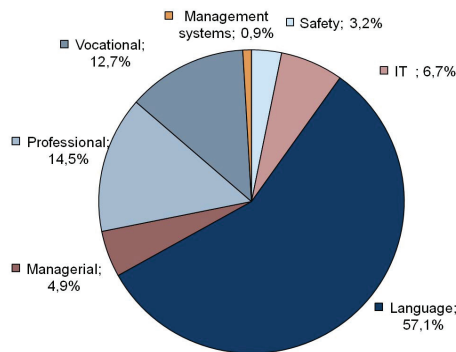


Figure 2. Breakdown of 2010 USSK external training costs by training

As you can see, more than 50% of our external training costs were spent on language training (especially English language training). Managerial, IT and major part of the Management systems training was provided internally, using e-learning programs. Vocational and Safety training is trained especially by internal trainers to ensure compliance with internal rules and procedures. We have our own Interactive Training Center which is used for hands-on training, such as Life Threatening Programs training (incl. Cardinal Rules, Hand Injury Prevention, Energy Control, Fall Protection, etc.). The center was open in 2007 and has special stands for practice. Every year we train more than 11 000 employees (USSK & Subsidiaries) in this center.



Figure 3. USSK Interactive Training Center

In USSK, we also have our own Welding School for welding training. We train around 2500 employees in average (USSK & Subsidiaries) and additional 20 from external companies. We provide around 60 types of welding courses (duration: from 1 up to 20 days).

IV. USE OF E-LEARNING

Due to rapid changes in technology, new techniques, such as business skills training online via the Internet, are available for employee development that generally offer better results. Time is money and we decided to use e-learning programs not only to save money on training costs but we also realized the setback our business suffers when employees have to put their work on hold and travel to attend training seminars and programs. Online business skills training programs solve this problem by enabling us to introduce employee training through the process of e-learning. Employees can increase their productivity by following these online training programs in the comfort of their office. E-learning programs are available at the place of convenience to the employee.

Employees can understand the instruction of these online training programs at their own pace. With regular seminars and training programs, if the employee is unable to understand a concept it is not always possible to go through it again. Employee can replay any aspect of the program until he / she understands it absolutely. Our e-learning programs allow employee to go through the entire curriculum without having the pressure of time on the mind. At the same time, it is easy to skip the parts that he / she already knows about the issue and save time doing repetitive study. [2]

In cooperation with our IT courses provider, we prepared Microsoft Office and Windows e-learning programs to help our employees with existing excel, word and powerpoint files and respective problems couple of years ago.

In 2008, we started to use our own e-learning programs, technically prepared in cooperation with external vendor, focused on Safety area (Occupational Safety, USSK Cardinal Rules for Administration, Fire Protection and Major Industrial Accident Prevention training), QMS and EMS annual refreshers and basics of managerial soft skill courses (Presentation Skills, Time Management, Teamwork, Effective Motivation, Problem Solving and Decision Making, Work-Life Balance). Employees who have their work PC can access all the above mentioned courses via employee portal placed on the USSK intranet. We work on new courses from both managerial and safety area that should be offered in 2012.

Our e-learning programs were well received and appreciated not only by the users, USSK employees, but also by the jury of the 7th year of Learning Projects Competition "eLearning in Praxis" organized within the ICETA 2010 conference.

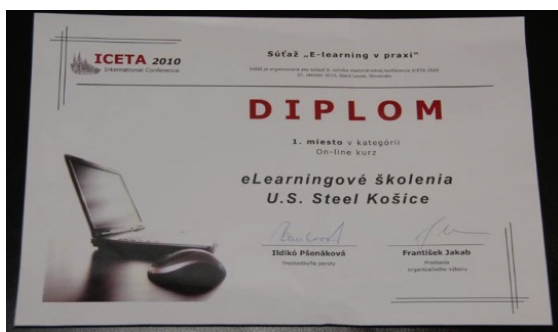


Figure 4. USSK – winner of the 7th year of Learning Projects Competition "eLearning in Praxis"

In 2011, we took another step forward and decided to introduce a new learning tool in language training, online English training program provided by GlobalEnglish. The complex system offers initial placement test, access to virtual classes to talk with life teacher, focus on both general and business English, available vocabulary and translator for general and special areas (industry, finance, legal, etc.), communication toolbar with email templates,

library and interesting text and audio. The system enables to study English and practice and improve all aspects of foreign language – grammar, listening, reading, pronunciation, speaking and understanding. The system offers user-friendly, interactive and multimedial content.

GlobalEnglish is available for access via internet, so our employees can use it not only at work but also at home using their private PC in order to manage their time. GlobalEnglish offers various online tests and quizzes that enable employees to judge the present knowledge base of the participant. Some people would say, that online training doesn't provide the competitive spirit, but with chat rooms and virtual discussion rooms coming alive e learning programs have given a new meaning to interaction. Similar ranked employees all over the globe are able to compete as well as gain insight from each other. Only e-learning can bring together such a large group of students.

GlobalEnglish performance and productivity tools will be soon accessible across more platforms and devices. We believe that the combination of on-line learning tool and classroom training provides our employees with sufficient training and enables them to progress in their English.

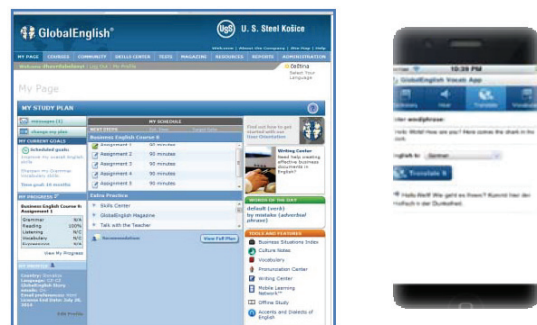


Figure 5. Global English site and mobile application

V. APPLICATIONS AND SYSTEM USED

Since 2000, when U. S. Steel Corporation acquired former Východoslovenské železiarne (VSŽ) Košice (East Slovakian Ironworks, Košice), an internal information system Financial 2000 is used in our company to manage different activities. In Training and development department we use the special HR module for training requirements recording for each employee (job position description), training plans preparation, training schedules and invitations as well as training attendance recordkeeping. It is not a learning management system, but we modify and enhance the system continuously to meet our needs. As mentioned above, the elearning courses are accessible via USSK employee portal which is linked with the IS Financial 2000. We can schedule courses for each employee, list all attended and planned training activities and offer all elearning courses (both mandatory and voluntary) via this portal. As soon as the course is completed by the employee, the date of

completion and the test result (in case of mandatory training) is recorded in IS Financial 2000, so we can keep track of every training activity we provide – classroom as well as computer-based.

E-learning programs are evaluated electronically. An email is sent to employee as soon as he / she complete the course with a questionnaire focused on training program satisfaction evaluation. Training administrators can see the evaluation statistics and the employees’ thoughts and satisfaction. We are happy they like it and appreciate this method of learning.

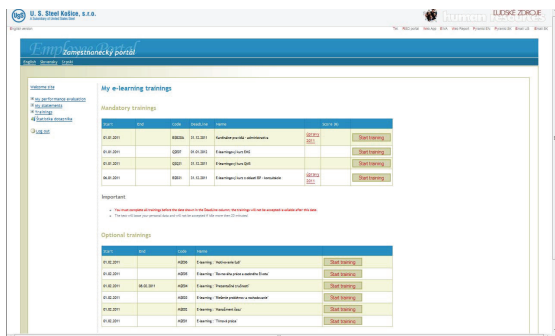


Figure 6. USSK Employee portal – My e-learning trainings site

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Using computer-based training has many advantages for both employee and our company. We can save employee’s time, allow him / her to take the course when suitable. The training costs per employee are significantly lower compared to classroom training. Unfortunately, we can only use this method of learning for employees who have PC and access to USSK intranet and / or internet. The majority of our employees are working in Operations – blue collar workers with no access to computer at workplace. We will continue to train them in classrooms and training centers also in future. Especially vocational and safety training needs to be trained by a live trainer who can demonstrate activities and answer questions right away and onsite. We will also continue to look for new topics for e-learning programs as well as for new methods and ways of employees training and development programs.

REFERENCES

- [1] U. S. Steel Košice, s.r.o. Corporate Info - <http://www.usske.sk/corpinfo/corpi-e.htm>
- [2] Benefits of using E-Learning for Employee Training and Development <http://www.elearningyellowpages.com/BusinessSkills/BusinessSkillsNews&Views-273.html>