



Success Story: Johnson Controls

Johnson Controls is a global multi-industrial company with 130 years of history in supplying heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, building controls, refrigeration and security systems for buildings. Through its Building Efficiency business, the company delivers solutions that increase energy efficiency and lower operating costs for over a million customers who are served through nearly 500 offices in more than 150 countries.

Business Challenges

- In 2012, existing learning management system (LMS) offered limited capabilities to manage, market and sell training courses to external customers, partners and resellers
- Needed a robust enterprise LMS to support existing and future business goals, including multilingual and ecommerce support
- Wanted the ability to easily create user groups and market courses to specific audiences based on user profiles and course history

Solution

Meridian Global LMS® with ecommerce

Results

- Easily and effectively manage and offer training courses to Building Efficiency customers, dealers and distributors throughout the U.S. and Canada, resulting in significant revenue
- Dynamically schedule and manage the registration, participation and accreditations for 32 instructor-led classroom courses offered at dozens of locations across the U.S. and Canada
- Leverage separate domains to divide and manage training of mutually exclusive groups within the organization
- In 2016, implement additional alignment strategies to even more analytically match offerings and potential audiences

Discovering a Need for Automated, External Training

Over the past decade, Johnson Controls has put a huge emphasis on offering learning and development (L&D) programs focused on developing skills, expanding knowledge and accelerating the individual growth of its 130,000 global employees. As Johnson Controls rolled out and evaluated the success of its internal learning and development programs, the company realized there was a unique, external group within the business that was not benefitting from the learning management system (LMS) for training.

Johnson Controls Building Efficiency Group is a worldwide leader in designing, producing, installing and servicing commercial and residential mechanical equipment, including heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems, industrial refrigeration systems, building management systems, and fire and security systems. The Building Efficiency Group also supports external technicians, dealers and distributors who service and sell Johnson Controls equipment.

“The project team was incredibly responsive and worked hard at helping us achieve our goals.” -Deborah Grahn, Senior Learning Technologist for Johnson Controls

“The external training courses for the Building Efficiency Group are unlike traditional learning and development offerings at Johnson Controls,” said Deborah Grahn, senior learning technologist for Johnson Controls. “Our diverse, external audience needs to know the ins and outs of building, installing and servicing a large offering of commercial and residential machines. For example, if a five ton chiller breaks, technicians need to know how to take it apart and put it back together. This requires in-depth, instructor led training.”

Prior to implementing a customer facing learning management system (LMS), students had to pick up the phone to enroll in one of the 240 instructor-led classes Johnson Controls offers. The process was not streamlined, and the company quickly identified that it would significantly benefit from leveraging an LMS to automate and streamline the process.

In 2012, after an evaluation of its internal LMS against Meridian Global®, Johnson Controls selected Meridian as the platform of its extended learning offerings largely due to its strong multi-language support, unique domain separation functionality and robust ecommerce capabilities.

Partnering With Meridian for External Learning

Meridian's project team worked closely to understand Johnson Controls' specific external learning needs, which focused on configuring the domains and ecommerce functions to support the business structure.

"From the beginning, partnering with Meridian felt natural," said Grahn. "The project team was incredibly responsive and worked hard at helping us achieve our goals."

Given the wide variety of course offerings, Johnson Controls needed to take a different approach to managing and scheduling training for the group. Now, every aspect of the external learning offerings are automated and streamlined through Meridian. The learning team can add and schedule courses as they become available, segment offerings based on geographical locations and user profiles, track course completions and accreditations, and easily and securely manage and confirm payment.

"Leveraging Meridian's learning technology has transformed our ability to manage all aspects of our external training offerings," said Grahn. "Our external clients can easily and securely register and pay for classes, and our internal team members no longer have the headache of managing a complicated process."

Upgrading the Solution to Meet Critical Business Needs

In 2014, Meridian released a new version of Meridian Global, which enhanced and advanced the ecommerce, social and language features that are core to the product. Looking at the new, expanded features, and how they aligned to the company's business goals, Johnson Controls upgraded their learning technology solution.

"Our decision to upgrade was twofold. Firstly, we had formed a great partnership with Meridian and our project team. We discussed our future needs for our external training program and they showed us how the new features of the LMS would help us achieve those goals. Secondly, we wanted to roll out external training to another group within the company, which required complex single sign on integration with a home grown system," said Grahn.

The Meridian support team worked tirelessly to meet every aspect of the new system requirements and ensure the tight upgrade deadline was maintained. The new upgrade successfully went live in October of 2015.

Marketing Training at Johnson Controls

“Offering external training to the Building Efficiency Group customer, dealer and distributor network is a significant business for Johnson Controls, and we’re exploring the opportunity to leverage the functionality of user groups within the system to market courses to users with specific profiles,” said Grahn.

For example, Johnson Controls course 388 is a prerequisite for the 389 course. So, if only a handful of people register for the 389 course in Boston – which is not enough to justify the cost to send an instructor and equipment for the class – Johnson Controls can market a special offer for the 389 course to users in the New England region who had completed the 388 course.

“The ability to segment and market classes to individuals based on location and course history is huge,” said Grahn. “We’re looking forward to working with Meridian to configure these capabilities based on our specific business needs.”

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-Deborah Grahn,, Senior Learning Technologist for Johnson Controls

In October of 2015, Johnson Controls completed their global joint venture agreement with Hitachi Appliances, a Japanese-based provider of innovative refrigeration and air conditioning products. The Meridian upgrade allows Johnson Controls to offer training on Hitachi variable refrigerant flow (VRF) equipment to dealers and distributors within the United States and Canada. In the future, the company plans on rolling out similar style training to this globally dispersed group.

“The Hitachi Appliances group is a global audience, which requires our team to support multiple languages, learning domains and payment options.” said Grahn. “Meridian’s team worked closely with us to meet each of these very important needs. The domain functionality allows us to segment the end users’ view of training offerings, without administrators having to log into a different system.

The administrators have a central view of learning activities, while external groups have unique views based on their group, location and profile. We can also easily deploy content and updates in different languages based on their location. And, we can securely and effectively manage payment options based on requirements mandated by different domestic and international regulations to make it even easier and faster for learners to find, take and complete training.”

An Ongoing Partnership

“Being able to work so closely with the Meridian product and customer support team to meet our future needs has been fantastic,” said Grahn. “On top of being able to achieve our goals, we’ve had the opportunity to offer input and recommendations on the product roadmap. We really feel like our voices are heard and we’re a true partner.”