Using Virtual Web-Enabled Technologies and Design at Accenture to Enhance Entry Level New Joiner Training.

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In a company where human capital and expertise, and retention and cultivation of this expertise, is strategically imperative to its long term success, Accenture is charged with training up its entry level new joiners in the skills needed to be successful in their work with clients on engagements. The Professional Development Program (PDP) - Client Engagement Readiness program is tasked with training up these new joiners. Delivering effective training is a challenge considering Accenture has offices in 47 countries worldwide with new Joiners coming on board throughout the year. The program itself consists of 2 weeks training in local offices and two weeks classroom training in the U.S. Implementation of the local portion of the program varies. Traditionally, the local office portion of the program was delivered using binders and CD ROM self-study programs. There may or may not be faculty facilitators for the course depending on the number of participants and faculty availability. In a local office, there may just be one to two people joining the program, or a large start group. And skills and educational backgrounds of New Joiners can range greatly.

Today, however, a new local office training approach is being piloted using the capability of the web, e-learning, collaborative technologies, virtual coaching and event driven personalization to customize and improve the learning and user experience during the local portion of the program. The new program: 1) Provides access to expert coaching support synchronously and asynchronously via a number of delivery methods – like instant messenger, phone, email etc 2) Encourages peer-to-peer connectivity, communication and support across offices – using contact list information garnered from learner, and coach intervention to encourage individuals to work together 3) Customizes learning experience through use of self-assessments diagnostics – to determine where to start in a self-study for example, or determine what path through a self-study to follow 4) Offers a broader range of learning experiences training product options opportunities depending on learner’s needs diagnostic results – for example offering additional training options for those needing more baseline skills, or those needing to stretch their learning 5) Improves content delivery – providing learner with recent content updates, status of issues errors, and additional content materials like answers to frequently asked questions, and presentation materials with faculty notes etc to overview of reinforce key concepts etc and 6) Enables program sponsors to craft and deliver customized communications to learners based on their program enrollment status.

This paper discusses these new program features and the findings from recent piloting testing of these features with learners. Future directions of the program are also discussed. These include: 1) Self serve download of key course software (self studies), 2) Introduction of self check questions and tracking to monitor performance and learners location in program 3) Use of that information to offer coaching feedback and remediation and finally, 4) the potential to extend the coaching role to provide local faculty with support to ensure consistent delivery of the course.