



Microsoft Software Assurance Customer Solution Case Study



Transportation Manager Trains Users on New Desktops without Disruption, Saves £60,000

Overview

Country: United Kingdom

Industry: Transportation

Customer Profile

Tube Lines, headquartered in London, England, manages major portions of the London Underground transportation system and is responsible for moving 600 million passengers yearly.

Business Situation

As part of an upgrade of 2,000 desktops to Microsoft Windows XP Professional and Microsoft Office Editions, Tube Lines had to train users without taking them away from work.

Solution

Microsoft partner Key Training provided a blended learning solution using e-learning resources available to Tube Lines as part of its Microsoft Software Assurance for Volume Licensing agreement.

Benefits

- Users trained without disruption
- Saved £60,000
- Successful adoption of new platform
- Extensible resource supports additional use

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Paul Wilson, IT Solutions Manager, Tube Lines

Tube Lines, which manages major sections of the London Underground, needed to move 2,000 desktops to the Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional and Microsoft Office System platform without taking users away from work during training. Tube Lines’ answer is a blended learning solution from Microsoft partner Key Training that includes Microsoft e-learning resources at no extra cost—a benefit of Tube Lines’ participation in the Software Assurance for Volume Licensing program. Thanks to Software Assurance, Tube Line employees began training for the new software, at their desks, three months before it was deployed. They’ve continued to use the e-learning resources, a few minutes per day, as needed to facilitate specific tasks. Tube Lines saved £60,000 and has an extensible solution that also will facilitate its deployment of future line-of-business solutions.

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Situation

London's Tube Lines is part of a public-private partnership to modernize and manage major parts of the London Underground transportation system, including the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines, which carry 1.75 million passengers per day and 600 million passengers per year. Tube Lines also manages 251 trains and 100 stations, including three of the world's busiest: Waterloo, Leicester Square, and Tottenham Court Road.

In 2003, Tube Lines moved to its current facilities—and moved to its current IT infrastructure, as well. The company had been operating on the Microsoft® Windows® NT Workstation 4.0 and Windows 95 operating systems on the desktop with Microsoft Office 97 as its productivity suite. But the time had come to update this infrastructure to Microsoft Windows XP Professional and Microsoft Office XP.

The company would be updating 2,000 desktops at some 50 locations. And it would need to train many, if not most, of the workers using those desktops. The challenge was formidable.

“Our users vary widely in their software experience,” says Paul Wilson, IT Solutions Manager, Tube Lines. “We have some sophisticated users and many with far less PC background. Because we were making such major changes in our IT environment, and making those changes as part of a larger upgrade that included new premises and facilities, it was essential that we minimize any potential disruption.”

Tube Lines wanted to prepare its workers for the upgrade with training on the new software—and it wanted that training to be cost-effective. It also wanted to ensure that the training wouldn't take workers out of the

office for extended periods or cause other disruptions.

Solution

To devise appropriate training, Tube Lines turned to Key Training, a London-based Microsoft Certified Partner for Learning Solutions company and one of the leading independent IT Training companies in the U.K. Tube Lines had used Key Training Services in the past, but never for a project as extensive as training for a complete desktop upgrade throughout the enterprise.

Key Training proposed a blended learning solution including both onsite trainers and e-learning. The onsite training was in the form of just-in-time “floorwalkers,” a trio of Key Training professionals available at Tube Lines for nine weeks to respond one-on-one to user questions as those questions arose on the job. The use of onsite floorwalkers, as opposed to offsite training sessions, ensured that the training did not disrupt Tube Lines operations and was highly targeted to the exact needs of Tube Lines employees.

But the onsite instructors were only part of the Key Training proposal; the other was e-learning—online resources available over the company intranet to all users whenever they wished, whether they wanted to review an entire tutorial or just get a quick answer to a specific question. An e-learning reference library could have cost Tube Lines £60,000. Key Training showed the company how it could have that resource at no cost.

Tube Lines was able to acquire the Microsoft e-learning Library (MELL) without additional charge as part of its Microsoft Software Assurance for Volume Licensing Program benefits.

The Microsoft Software Assurance program gives customers automatic access to new technology and provides productivity benefits,

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support, tools, and training to help deploy and use Microsoft software efficiently. Included in the program are two key training benefits:

- Microsoft e-learning, which delivers a comprehensive student experience using hands-on exercises and animations, and courses designed by professional instructors. Employees can take interactive modules and tutorials on various applications at any time at their own computer, even offline.
- Training Vouchers, which each eligible organization receives for Official Microsoft Learning Product courses from Microsoft Certified Partners for Learning Solutions, the premier authorized training channel for delivering learning products and services on Microsoft technology. More than 1,600 Learning Solutions partners worldwide offer Microsoft Official instructor-led and self-paced learning products available in paper and digital formats, alongside consultative learning services to IT professionals and developers. Taking training from Microsoft Learning Solutions partners enables customers to get the latest information about Microsoft technologies and training solutions, giving them the competitive advantage they need.

“When we began to talk with Key Training about our desktop training needs, they brought up our Software Assurance benefits almost immediately,” says Paul Wilson. “It looked like an ideal solution for us because it was a powerful resource, direct from Microsoft, already available to us as a Volume Licensing customer.”

Tube Lines installed the Microsoft e-learning modules for Microsoft Office and Windows XP Professional on an internal server and wrote a simple front-end to give its users access to the content, including simulations, interactive exercises, automated support tools, and on-screen demonstrations. The IT department

sent users an e-mail message introducing them to the solution and providing a hotlink to access it.

Key Training also presented a series of seminars to all Tube Lines staff across all the London sites. The seminars demonstrated the new Windows XP environment and some of the new features of Microsoft Office XP, such as Smart Tags. Key Training experts also demonstrated MELL live during the seminars to educate users on the resource, on how they would be able to get practical help via MELL, and on how to access the Microsoft Step By Step Books online as a reference tool.

The company introduced its workers to the e-learning training solution several weeks before the planned upgrade, so they could feel comfortable with the new software when it was rolled out. As that rollout took place, many staff members used the e-learning system for 10 minutes or more per day. Tube Lines helpdesk personnel directed users to the resource as part of their support efforts.

Several months after the rollout, employees continue to use the e-learning solution, primarily as a reference tool to new functions, and as a refresher tool.

Benefits

Thanks to Software Assurance, Tube Lines can conduct training without disrupting continuing operations, reduce the total cost of its training, and migrate smoothly new versions of its Microsoft software.

Training Without Disrupting Operations

Without disrupting Tube Lines activities, the company successfully trained approximately 1,200 users via the e-learning solution. Users were able to access the solution from their desks whenever they needed it to facilitate their use of the new software.

“Our helpdesk wasn’t swamped with calls—and the e-learning solution gave them another resource with which to assist users who did call.”

Paul Wilson, IT Solutions Manager, Tube Lines

“The e-learning solution we deployed with our Software Assurance benefits certainly helped reduce staff time away from work during the migration,” says Paul Wilson. “I would recommend SA e-learning as a very good component of an overall training solution. It just blended in to our operations.”

Reduces Total Cost of Training £60,000

By using Software Assurance e-learning training benefits included in its Microsoft Volume Licensing agreement, Tube Lines saved £60,000.

“We feel that the e-learning resource is so valuable that we would have willingly invested in it if we had to,” says Paul Wilson. “Of course, the fact that this was included as part of our Software Assurance benefit was a great bonus. It allows us to save money that we can redirect to other parts of the IT budget.”

Facilitating a Smooth Upgrade

Tube Lines’ bottom-line goal was to ensure a smooth upgrade to the Windows XP Professional and Microsoft Office 2002 environment—even by users unfamiliar with recent Microsoft desktop software. By this measure, Paul Wilson says that the Microsoft e-learning solution implemented by Key Training was a success.

“The Microsoft e-learning solution eased the move to the new software and it was a real boon to us,” says Paul Wilson. “Our people were able to begin learning about Windows XP and Office 2002 even before we had the software deployed, so they could adopt it more easily once we rolled it out. Our helpdesk wasn’t swamped with calls—and the e-learning solution gave them another resource with which to assist users who did call.”

The experience proved so successful that Paul Wilson says the company will add to its Microsoft e-learning solution with a module on Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003, to facilitate the introduction of that Microsoft Office System family member later this year. And Paul Wilson says that the expertise that users have gained with Windows XP Professional and Microsoft Office Editions will prove increasingly valuable as the company deploys a new suite of business solutions—including financials, human resources, and asset management—also based on the Microsoft software.

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For more information about Key Training products and services, call (44) 207-417-0880 or visit the Web site at: www.keytraining.co.uk

For more information about Tube Lines, visit the Web site at: www.tubelines.com

Microsoft Software Assurance

Microsoft's Software Assurance gives you automatic access to new technology and provides productivity benefits, support, tools, and training to help deploy and use software efficiently.

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