

PROVIDING WORLDWIDE PRODUCT AND SALES TRAINING

The Story of Lenbrook International and Intelladon



A Specialty Market

Lenbrook International distributes high-end home entertainment components exclusively through specialized audio/visual equipment stores. Its sales force is distributor-based, consisting of roughly 3,000 specialty store employees scattered across 80 countries, many with little specific knowledge of Lenbrook products. Lenbrook believes it represents some of the best brands on the market. But without a direct connection to its sales force, its product line historically has been undersold.

“Our brands are not as well-recognized as our competitors, many of whom are household names. We really needed our products’ superiority to be understood,” says John Banks, Director of Business Development for Lenbrook International. “The challenge was making sure salespeople preferred our products so they would sell the customer the best component for specific home entertainment needs.”

Lenbrook’s prior training efforts consisted of distributing product literature and conducting “road shows” to deliver product information, both of which were expensive and limited in terms of scheduling and learner interaction. Additionally, widely ranging levels of product knowledge persisted among distributors and sales personnel.

Most important, these training approaches were not building brand loyalty, a major Lenbrook goal. “We wanted the sales guys to have a feeling of ownership and loyalty and to really understand the superiority of our products,” says Banks.

Finding the Right Partner

Lenbrook wanted to deliver enterprisewide training that would both entertain and educate sales personnel about the company’s product line. The training had to reflect the engineering staff’s message regarding product features, improvements and differentiators, while delivering the information to sales and distribution in a timely, consistent, comprehensible and entertaining way.

“In looking at our needs and the return on our prior training programs, we began to wonder if we could use the power of the web to improve our training efforts,” says Banks.

Lenbrook began searching for an e-learning solution that would fulfill the company’s unique training requirements: deliver customized, standardized training to a highly dispersed work force who are not Lenbrook employees. After contacting several LMS integrators and platform providers, Lenbrook chose Intelladon to build an online training program to support and improve company sales.

Banks says Lenbrook chose Intelladon as its solution integrator because it was right-sized, with the flexibility to accommodate the company’s special training needs. Lenbrook liked the robust nature of the solutions offered, and Intelladon’s one-point-of-contact customer service was a great selling point. In the end, Intelladon delivered quick and seamless implementation from initial design through ongoing support, says Banks.

SOUND ACADEMY

Executive Summary

The Challenge

Educate 3,000 geographically dispersed salespeople in 80 countries around the world, including distributors and retailers, about Lenbrook products. Training would cover the numerous, but subtle, features and market differentiators that distinguish the company’s products from the 30 to 40 other “black boxes” sitting on store shelves, along with the Lenbrook product line.

The Solution

Intelladon Services

Consulting, Implementation, Integration, Administration and Managed Services

Learning Solutions

NetDimensions EKP, Articulate Rapid E-Learning Studio

The Result

Lenbrook reported a “jaw dropping” increase in sales after its single-market pilot of Sound Academy, the learning management system (LMS) that Intelladon implemented for Lenbrook.

Sound Academy Offers Sound Advice

Intelladon assessed Lenbrook's training needs and recommended a learning management system (LMS) that combined the NetDimensions EKP platform with Articulate, an easy-to-use software authoring tool that Lenbrook used to build customized training. The result: Sound Academy, which allows Lenbrook to deliver targeted training to sales representatives scattered in 80 countries around the globe.

Paul Huntington of Lenbrook's marketing staff had no knowledge of Articulate before attending Intelladon's Rapid e-Learning Bootcamp. While there, he acquired the knowledge and resources to immediately create professional learning content. After a few days of training at Intelladon, he developed and deployed 40 short learning modules within only a few months. Huntington says that one of Articulate's strengths is its ability to create professional-quality Flash presentations and e-Learning courses from standard PowerPoint® presentations.

According to Banks, "With Intelladon's help, we developed Sound Academy – our LMS. We felt there was a lack of understanding among sales staff about the technologies and, maybe more important, the philosophies behind our products."

Additionally, consumers of home theater systems expect their sales staff to have a certain level of expertise in electronics to help them properly spec and set up a theater or audio system for the home. Sound Academy enables sales reps to provide that level of service, which is not available at the big box stores.

Simplifying Product Rollout

Sound Academy allows Lenbrook to contact the sales force directly to announce a new product, while providing a link to a learning module, a review in a magazine article, or a selling sheet for a new receiver. Lenbrook believes this is a strong, value-add element of the LMS and that the strategy will positively impact product sales.

Banks says that Lenbrook is unique because it offers Sound Academy as a free service to external agents who are selling Lenbrook's products. "We are leveraging our current database as a repository of sales training, product reviews, catalogs and other things the sales force can use as sales tools. The LMS that Intelladon implemented for us makes everything available," he adds.

Salespeople report loving the LMS as a form of education because they don't have to waste an hour to get to the key points. In just a few minutes, Sound Academy presents essential information, making it understandable and straightforward – without putting anyone to sleep. Lenbrook found that getting information out quickly and to the point is appreciated.

The Sound Academy Vision

The company plans to expand Sound Academy as an ongoing way of directly reaching a worldwide sales force and creating a community for them, giving salespeople a voice so they can speak to each other through peer comments. Lenbrook will also encourage input from Sales about possible product improvements gleaned from their interactions with customers on the floor.

According to Banks, "Our management team believes this is a fantastic way to increase product brand recognition in the marketplace, increase sales and, perhaps most important, increase brand loyalty.

In addition to teaching about products and technologies in the Lenbrook line, Sound Academy also offers training in general salesmanship. "A good salesperson understands ways of communicating, ways of greeting a customer, and how to listen properly. We hope to make them better salespeople – so their sales success is our sales success," adds Banks.

About Lenbrook International

Lenbrook Industries manufactures high-end specialty electronic equipment for the home entertainment market, including items such as receivers, amplifiers, speakers and home theater systems. Distribution channels include sales to major distributors and stores that specialize in audio/visual components for the home. The company's products are sold in 80 countries on four continents, with 3,000 distributors and specialty-store salespeople responsible for selling the Lenbrook line.

With a proprietary and custom-tailored solution from Intelladon, we were able to deliver product information and customer-service training in a clear, consistent and cost-effective way.

John Banks

Director,
Business Development
Lenbrook International