LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Transcript #17 *Interview with Claudia Innes*

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Mary Kay Lofurno: Welcome to the next edition of the SyberWorks LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Series, where we look at real world learning management system LMS implementations and e-Learning program roll outs. SyberWorks specializes in custom e-Learning solutions, learning management systems and e-Learning development for corporations, governments and non profit institutions.

My name is Mary Kay Lofurno and I'm the Marketing Director here at SyberWorks and your host today. In this edition, we are talking with Claudia Innes of Fairchild Semiconductor Incorporated about their use of the SyberWorks hosted LMS to provide marketing and performance support to their sales staff, sales engineers, partners and distributors in the power supply segment.

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Mary Kay: And now let's talk with Claudia Innes of Fairchild Semiconductor Incorporated. Good afternoon Claudia, thanks for coming to talk with us today.

Claudia Innes: Hi, Mary Kay, you're welcome and thanks for asking me.

Mary Kay: Sure. Sure. Claudia, can you tell us a little about yourself?

Claudia: Yes, I'm the director of marketing here at Fairchild Semiconductor. My organization is responsible for public relations, for advertising, for communication to our sales force and for other marketing programs which includes the introduction of all of our new products to the market and to all of our sales channels.

Mary Kay: Wow, that's a big job. Just for our audience, so they know, I'm familiar with the semiconductor market, but they may not be. Can you tell us a little bit about Fairchild Semiconductor Incorporated?

Claudia: Sure, Fairchild is a global company. We manufacture semiconductors, and semiconductors are used in all electronic equipment. We specifically focus on power products and the benefit of those is that they enable energy efficiency in all the electronic products, you know, that we all use - everything from cell phones, to computers, to televisions, even to our automobiles and to manufacturing equipment around the world.

As I said, Fairchild is global, we have more than 9,000 employees around the world and we're located on over four continents.

Mary Kay: Well that sounds great. Claudia, can you describe the business factors that drove your company to investigate web based learning management systems as a potential e-Learning solution for your organization. I mean what was the incident that really drove you that route.

Claudia: Well as I mentioned before we are a global company and we have sales people across four different continents. We introduce more than 200 new products into the market every year.

Mary Kay: Wow!

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Claudia: So we really had a challenge in trying to make sure that our sales people were aware of new products as we introduced them. As well as have easy access to information about our new products, as well as our existing products, and were able to educate themselves as they needed.

So we really needed a one stop shop where they could learn about new products, they could get information about new products, about our systems, our tools, all of those things. And a learning management solution was the perfect solution to that.

Mary Kay: OK, well that makes a lot of sense. Why did your company select the SyberWorks Hosted Learning Management System, LMS to create your marketing information portal, or at least that's what I'm calling it.

Claudia: Yes, sure. There were several reasons behind that. We did a lot of investigation of what was out there and who provided that sort of thing and we put together a requirements document of what we needed and SyberWorks met all of those needs.

Most importantly we wanted to have minimal involvement from our IT organization and we didn't need any involvement from IT in order to get SyberWorks Learning Management System up and running. We also wanted to be able to do it quickly. We wanted to have something there available for our sales force in less than 60 days and it really took less than 30 days.

Mary Kay: [interrupts] Wow.

Claudia: To get it in place, so that was fantastic. A couple other things, I've mentioned a couple times that we're global, so we really needed something that was accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Mary Kay: Sure.

Claudia: Since, you know, somewhere in the world it is a work day.

Mary Kay: Absolutely.

Claudia: So, again, SyberWorks system allowed us to do that. And we have channel partners that don't necessarily have access inside of Fairchild's firewall, so we wanted a secure system but one that was accessible outside of our firewall and again SyberWorks allowed us to do that because it is password protected, it definitely is secure. But through any browser somebody can access it.

So those were some of our basic requirements that every one was met. Then the other is for those that know the semiconductor industry. It has a lot of ups and downs. Much sharper than the normal economy and so there's always downturns and there's always upturns and during those times there's budget cuts. We did not want to be put into the situation that we had something in place and then do the budget cuts, it had to go away.

And that was another piece of flexibility that SyberWorks offered us. The flexibility that we could create training and courses on our own, which required resources not dollars. And so this way we didn't have the fear that we would put a lot of effort into something that would have to go away. So it was a cost effective solution, it was a flexible solution, so that's another reason.

And then the third, again back to the global portion of our business, not only are we located in all these places around the world, but we deal with a lot of different languages, not just English. Like Korean, Japanese, traditional and simplified Chinese as well as, you know, French, Spanish, etc.

Mary Kay: Sure.

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Claudia: And the SyberWorks system allowed us to make our information available in any language that we wanted. It allowed us to have text, to have voice, to have video, to have animation so it really offered us everything that we needed. And then finally the ability to measure who's using the system, how are they doing. We can test people; we could do certification if we wanted to. So that's the reason why, long answer. Sorry about that.

Mary Kay: No that's alright. No that's great. Great information, it makes a lot of sense. Could you get a little bit more specific? What types of information do you actually post on your marketing information portal? And how is the information used by your partners and distributors and sales engineers? Just if you could kind of give me just like a cursory example or something, that'd be fine.

Claudia: Yes, sure. We have several different things. We have online courses, so that's training on a, technical level and in depth, as well as just kind of a short update, the kind of thing that you wouldn't necessarily test someone on but it's a way to get information out there.

What we also have is access to various collateral, brochures and things like that. We have access to presentations that can be used for customers or can be used with our distribution channel, which you know those are in PowerPoint format. And we also have other competitive cross references, access tools.

So we really have a wide variety of tools, presentation material, training material. And like I said it's used by our sales force. Which consists of direct sales people, it consists of sales representatives, which are people that don't work directly for Fairchild but represent our products.

It's also accessible by our distributors. These are people that carry our sales as well as our competitors. So a typical distributor channel. Also known by our product lines.

Mary Kay: Sure. Claudia, I understand that your information portal has some fine grain access controls with regards to different groups that are able to view various types of information and parts of the site.

Can you speak to the business case that precipitated this need and how the SyberWorks hosted LMS was able to accommodate your infrastructure requirements?

Claudia: Yeah. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, we make information available to our sales force as well as our sales representatives and our distributors. In the case of our sales representatives and distributors, they are not a part of Fairchild as a company but they represent us in one form or another.

So we needed the ability to make information available to them but not everything that we would want our sales force to see would we want our distributors to see. So we needed some way to control that. This SyberWorks hosted LMS system allowed us to have user classes and that way, based on the user class, we could control whether they saw certain types of information or not. It is very easy for us to have one place where we sent everybody but to control who sees what on that site.

Mary Kay: OK. What were some of the instructional design and planning processes you went through to develop these online training courses?

Claudia: Well we have two different types so the process is slightly different for each of them. The ones that are really in-depth and a little more timeless, in that it's training about a topic or it might be on a category of products, but its not something that is real dynamic and changes on a day to day or a week to week or even a month to month basis.

For those more in depth courses, the process we use is identifying the objective of the course itself, putting together an outline, gathering the content and in this case, we usually work with people at SyberWorks to help build the

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courses. These are the ones that we want to make sure that they're really interactive to the user and they hold their attention.

They have test questions throughout. SyberWorks has really helped us implement video, audio, animation and other things to make them really interesting. So that's the process we use for those.

We also create courses that are much more dynamic. They are intended just to let our sales force know what's new, and here's where to get more information. That's something we do every month. We call them a Pulse. Pulse because it's keeping a pulse on what's going on.

This one has a very general approach. It's basically using PowerPoint slides and recording voice to the PowerPoint slides. Then we put it into the learning management system as a course because then it allows us to measure who is actually taking this and how much time are they spending on it. That allows us to understand are they useful; what things can we do to improve; and that sort of thing. So there are two different approaches.

Mary Kay: OK. Well that sounds great. Do you have any future plans for rolling out some of the other functionality available in the SyberWorks Learning Management System? Like the class administration? Class logistics? Calendar? Or the competency management modules?

Claudia: Yes, actually we do. We haven't used some of these things at all and we haven't used some as thoroughly as we would have liked to. What we really want to do is help manage a little better the method of being able to inform the sales force of what information is available and how to manage enrollment for different classes.

We do a combination of online training as well as face to face training. The SyberWorks Learning Management System is wonderful in that it can help with both of those things. We've talked a lot about the online portion of it. But for the classroom portion of it, we really need a way to let the sales force know, "Hey, this training is available." And allow them to enroll in it.

It helps us understand is there enough demand that we should have more sessions; making sure we know are there enough people to even hold the session. It also allows us, or will allow us, to basically give each sales person their own customized schedule when we have multi-date training which we do and we allow people to sign up for the sessions that are of most interest to them.

So this system really takes a lot of the legwork away from us and automates it which is fantastic. A lot of the administration that we needed to do, this system would do for us.
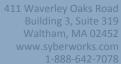
Mary Kay: OK.

Claudia: There's one other thing which has to do with the competency management. I mentioned the testing before and that's a way for us to see where is our sales force currently. But the other is to allow us to have a certification program in place. Again, that would be different for our distributors than it would be for our sales people. So the competency management module would really help us with that and it's something we look forward to using.

Mary Kay: OK. That sounds great. Can you tell us about your customer experience with SyberWorks?

Claudia: Sure. It's really been excellent. You know from the very start our requirements were a little bit different than what I think others have looked for in a learning management system. I need to mention that we started using this in 2001. At that time learning management systems certainly existed but they were not as sophisticated as they are today.

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What we wanted to do was more than what was out there. SyberWorks sat down with us and talked to us about what it was we needed and showed us how they were able to use what they had to address that. All along the way, no matter what it was that we wanted to do or questions that we had, there was somebody that was right there, available and eager to help us figure out how to do it.

Or to help solve the problems, or, as I mentioned before, to help us create some of our courses so that we could quickly get them out there and available for our customers. It's been a wonderful experience.

Mary Kay: Well, that sounds terrific. Is there anything more you'd like to share in terms of working with SyberWorks to deliver your marketing performance support to your customers, vendors, and partners?

Claudia: Well, I guess just to wrap it up, we really found that this is an easy to use system and it is easy to use by the content providers. It's easy to use for the users themselves. Again, our sales people and our distributors and our regional marketing people.

One tip I would share with people is it's OK to start small and grow. I mentioned we started in 2001 and we did start small. Our whole usage has increased significantly since that time. The best thing is that in these seven years since we started using this system, it still suits our needs because you've grown with us.

Actually, you've grown faster than we have in terms of capability. So it might seem daunting but it's not. It's really easy to use, easy to get started. As I said, we were up and running in less than 30 days. So I would encourage everybody to look at this sort of solution.

Mary Kay: Well, Claudia, that sounds terrific. This has been great information. I know you're really busy so I'm going to let you go. Thanks for joining us today.

Claudia: Thank you.

Mary Kay: This is Mary KaMary Kay Lofurno, Marketing Director at SyberWorks. Thanks for listening to our interview with Claudia Innes of Fairchild Semiconductor, Inc. on the SyberWorks LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Series. Talk with you next month.

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