Headquartered in South Burlington, Vermont, PC Construction serves clients in healthcare, water treatment, hospitality, and a wide range of other industries across several states. It ranks among the 200 largest construction firms in the US. A family-run business for most of its more than 50-year history, the company is now 100 percent owned by its 850 employees.

"What our employees like about lynda.com is they can jump right in, get what they need, and then keep going with their day. They don't have to take a day away from work to get trained by a fire hose. It's nice to have a learning and development resource that I can push out to them really easily"

Rachel Fitch, Training and Development Manager

Construction company staff keeps skills up to date with lynda.com online training

PC Construction faced a challenge common to many organizations—how to keep employees trained on the latest technologies, including mobile devices, in a cost-effective way.

"We were handing out iPads and iPhones and updating computers left and right," said Rachel Fitch, training and development manager. "Our help desk was getting inundated with phone calls, often with very simple questions about Microsoft Word and Excel. But our IT department is really built on more of a network services-type of model; it manages hardware setup and purchases software, but department staff don't know every intricacy of the Microsoft Office suite, for example.

"As a result, if an employee needed Excel instruction, we'd send them offsite. They'd be gone one, two, maybe three days. It was expensive, and often they would come back from a daylong class more confused than before. The session may have touched on what they needed to learn, but also covered much more. It was overload."

PC Construction needed a cost-effective, on-demand training solution that functions like a virtual help desk, allowing employees to search and quickly find exactly what they need to learn. In addition, the company needed training on how to use mobile devices and a wide range of software applications.

Solution: lynda.com

An industry peer recommended lynda.com online training to Fitch, and she began researching her options in collaboration with the IT department. Impressed by the large lynda.com course catalog, PC Construction in June 2013 purchased lyndaPro, which let the company provide groups of employees with unlimited, 24/7 lynda.com access.

The IT director became an early convert after using lynda.com to answer a software question within minutes after logging in. He had previously searched Google™, YouTube™, and software company help videos with no resolution.

"Our people really liked it," Fitch said. "By the end of our first year, we had distributed 30 seats between our field and office employees. But we needed more."

The company soon upgraded to lyndaEnterprise, which gave large numbers of employees lynda.com access across the organization.

BENEFITS

• Trains office and field employees on technology including mobile devices

• Helps workers advance their careers at their own pace

• Provides a value-added benefit

"I had other training companies calling and asking if I'd be interested in talking with them about their products," Fitch said. "But lynda.com is great. I told them, 'We're good.'"

Result: support for field employees
lynda.com trains PC Construction field-based employees how to use their mobile devices.

"Smartphones and tablets are fantastic tools," Fitch said. "And we are trying to get people familiar with all their capabilities as a work platform— for example, using the camera on your iPad, getting drawings for a job on the device, manipulating those drawings right there in the field, making annotations to a plan.

"The goal is to get employees comfortable with the technology in their hands. They work on projects that are often hundreds of miles from our technology support teams. With lynda.com, they are off to the races, saving time, and wondering how they ever functioned without it."

PC Construction field engineers and virtual construction engineers rely heavily on lynda.com, which provides instruction on computer aided drafting (CAD), building information modeling (BIM), and other relevant technologies.

"I use lynda.com to self train in AutoCAD, SketchUp, Excel, iOS 8, and other interesting software applications," said Abe Torres, virtual construction engineer. "Before lynda.com, I used to go to YouTube to find training videos. The benefit of lynda.com is its training videos are really well done. I can learn a software application on my own time in just a few days, with the advantage that I can go back and play the video again if I forget how to do something. It is a great learning tool."

The team values a lynda.com feature that lets them create and share playlists of lynda.com courses.

"One of our field engineer managers set up and shared several playlists to teach beginner, intermediate, and advanced AutoCAD and other software applications," Fitch said. "It's been a great way to train."

Result: companywide professional development
lynda.com training has helped motivated PC Construction employees advance their careers. Several have accepted new responsibilities or assumed new positions requiring more advanced computer skills.

"What our employees like about lynda.com is they can jump right in, get what they need, and then keep going with their day," Fitch said. "They don't have to take a day away from work to get trained by a fire hose. It's nice to have a learning and development resource that I can push out to them really easily.

"It's up to them to pick up the ball and run with it when they're ready. Knowing that I'm ready on my end, that is the best. And I'm not sending them to a class. I'm not overwhelming them."

lynda.com supports the performance review process at PC Construction, Fitch said. "When I read an annual review, I can go back to the employee and say, 'I noticed that one of your goals is to become more proficient in Excel.' I can remind them about lynda.com. And away we go."

lynda.com courses on leadership topics helped form the foundation for a management training program, Fitch said. "It's been a great resource—helping me gather information, research the latest skills, and augment curricula."

Result: a value-added employee benefit
PC Construction views lynda.com as a value-added employee benefit, and has used its availability to staff as a recruitment tool.

"We encourage people to use lynda.com at home too. And I've told people about the great, non-work-related courses that are on there, like digital photography and Photoshop, or things like that. I tell them, 'Jump in there. Check it out.' It speaks to a broader service to our employees that can take place outside the workplace.

Looking ahead
Because PC Construction promotes lynda.com to employees during new hire orientation, some staff members start using the service shortly after they arrive.

In addition, Fitch has written about lynda.com in the internal company newsletter and periodic news bulletins. "I'm always a little surprised by the response. I hear from people who are experienced computer users and those who are still getting comfortable with technology. lynda.com generates interest from audiences across the spectrum."

Looking ahead, she plans to increasingly promote lynda.com with signs and other strategies. "I want to get the word out a lot more comprehensibly now that I know we have a lot more capacity with lyndaEnterprise. I was hesitant to do it full-scale before, because I didn't want to disappoint people if we didn't have a license for them."

As the word spreads, Fitch expects adoption to keep expanding.

"That's the utmost goal for me, to have more and more users. Employees accessing lynda.com do benefit greatly. And ultimately, it's a significant piece of our learning and development strategy. I see this as a very powerful partnership."