

## Case Study: GPU Energy

Recent deregulation in the energy marketplace has stimulated intense competition among electricity service providers forced to quickly learn new ways to streamline operations, attract customers, and adapt to changing market conditions. GPU, a premier regional provider of electric utility services based in Morristown, New Jersey, took the need for learning to heart.



GPU serves 2 million customers in a three-state area through GPU Energy, a Reading, Pennsylvania-based organization formed by merging three separate power companies. In addition to orienting the newly consolidated staff, the training group faced the challenge of system-wide training on the company's new enterprise software system. Cost-effectively addressing the varied training needs of its 5,000 technical, business, and craft employees, GPU Energy installed an interactive e-Learning network called "The Learning Curve" in 1998 using the KnowledgeSite™ Classroom solution from ONE TOUCH Knowledge Systems.

### Meeting the Knowledge Sharing Challenge

"We had our work cut out for us," related Bob Walker, GPU Energy's Supervisor of Employee Development. "Three separate training groups were merged—and made smaller than any of the previous three." The new corporate philosophy and organizational strategy needed to be disseminated to the organization, along with the enterprise software system that would be used to carry it out. Plus, because much of its large, geographically dispersed workforce is required "on the line," centralized training classes away from the job would significantly impact productivity. For Walker's group, e-Learning quickly became a survival tool.

Adding onto a business television (BTV) network already in place, ONE TOUCH KnowledgeSite Classrooms equipped with Interactive Touchpads and KnowledgeSite Manager site controllers were installed in small district locations throughout the system. New e-Learning presenter facilities were installed in the company's Reading headquarters. These included a standard broadcast studio and a practice studio connected to a simulated classroom, enabling the training staff to rehearse and speed the delivery of vital courses, as well as comfortably adjust to conducting distributed learning sessions. Currently serving 74 KnowledgeSite locations with 1,000 touchpad-equipped seats from Lake Erie to the New Jersey seashore, the network operates with maximum efficiency, using only a modest broadcast team.

### Learning at The Speed of Change™

Walker's team has used the ONE TOUCH e-Learning solution to deliver more than facts and job skills; The Learning Curve helped achieve an important corporate culture shift. "Step One was to train the entire company about how the new organization functions and makes money," recalled Walker, whose first "Business Literacy" classes broadcast in July 1998. Next, to educate the entire company in the proper adoption of its new enterprise software backbone, it was mandated that 5,600 training sessions take place in only a three-week period.

*"Fully interactive distance learning has aided us in achieving our corporate training goals by delivering on three critical needs—speed, reach, and consistency."*

J. Robert (Bob) Walker  
Supervisor, Employee  
Development  
GPU Energy



“With distance learning,” Walker noted, “this major goal was achieved with ease and precision. We estimate the savings attained using ONE TOUCH e-Learning over our previous training model for the accelerated SAP training initiative alone totaled \$2.1 million.”

Subsequent safety-related and regulatory training courses have placed a major priority on certification. The ONE TOUCH Presentation Server, which collects interactive responses from all participants, has accelerated the process by compiling test results and generating class performance reports. The results are measurable and certifiable and can be logged into the enterprise’s database.

### **Measure of Success**

In its first eight months, GPU conducted 11,375 ONE TOUCH-powered student training sessions. “Distance learning was a big culture shock for GPU, including the training staff. But we’ve come around to the new teaching medium, and especially the economic benefits it delivers. To remain competitive, we must position ourselves to respond quickly to the ever-changing needs of our customers; e-Learning provides the resources to quickly educate our employees to meet these needs.”



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