THINQ Learning Solutions

Selects LT for its partnership ethic and range of services to localize THINQ's learning management system software for European and Latin American markets

The Business Challenge

When a company has up to a few hundred employees, keeping track of their training requirements and accomplishments can usually be handled through the use of a generic database or spreadsheet. But when the numbers get into the thousands and a complex learning regimen is offered to employees, customers, partners and others, businesses want something more streamlined and effective -- and that's when smart businesses turn to THINQ Learning Solutions, Inc.

THINQ is a leading supplier of learning management systems (LMS) software that connects employees to learning activities and allows administrators to schedule courses, manage enrollment and track individual achievement. This client's growing list of more than 200 customers includes such well-known industry leaders as Citigroup, Lockheed Martin, Hewlett-Packard, CVS/pharmacy and Boeing, as well as large governmental organizations including the Unites States Postal Service. The U.S. Navy is currently the THINQ customer with the largest number of learners: 1.2 million active-duty personnel, reservists and others.

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As THINQ has grown, the Baltimore-based company has seen an increasing demand for its software in languages other than English. In 2001, THINQ launched a search and intensive evaluation process to select a company that could help it localize its offerings.

The LT Solution

Jim Adelson, director of Solutions Management for THINQ, says the single strongest factor in the selection of L10N Technology (LT) was its partnership ethic -- a quality that was praised repeatedly when THINQ contacted LT customers. "LT's references talked about the kind of productive, cooperative relationship that we were looking for," Adelson says. "It's the way we like to do business, so hearing those compliments about LT from others really carried a lot of weight with us."

Another key factor, Adelson says, was the range of services LT provides. LT contributions to the localization process for THINQ include:

- **Translation.** In-country experts ensure that language choices are accurate and reflect the nuances required to communicate effectively with native-language speakers, while maintaining specialized business expressions and industry-specific vocabulary when appropriate.

- **Cultural Assessment.** LT provides insight into how people in different countries and cultures will react to everything from the obvious, for example a company's name or

commonly used screen layouts, to the more subtle, such as the possible impacts of logos, colors and font sizes.

- **Testing and Quality Assurance.** By playing a role in the testing process, LT helps THINQ uncover underlying software issues that need to be addressed due to the language conversion. For example, responses that the software generates automatically from a combination of phrases in the English version had to be adjusted to account for gender differentiation in other languages.

- **Software Expertise.** With its own software engineering expertise, LT can identify issues uncovered during translation that are not necessarily related to the change of language. Fast notification from LT allowed THINQ's software developers to tackle needed changes very quickly.

The evolving partnership between THINQ and LT has thus far resulted in the release of five localized versions of the THINQ TrainingServer Learning Management System (LMS) -- European French, European Spanish, German, Italian and Brazilian Portuguese. A Japanese version is awaiting final software fine-tuning, and Korean and simplified Chinese are expected to follow.

The Customer Benefits

As THINQ and LT move on to future projects together -- both new languages and software updates for existing languages -- Adelson is confident that the partnership will continue to strengthen THINQ's ability to provide customers with the localized learning management systems they need.

"We have a strong working relationship, and LT has been extremely responsive," he says. "Sometimes we've had tight deadlines and other times we've needed to slow down while software changes were going on -- and in both cases, LT was flexible to meet our needs." Adelson says he also appreciates the time LT has invested in brainstorming with THINQ on several levels. Examples range from advice about how other companies are handling the difference between European French and Canadian French to reviewing the development process for the first five language versions in order to identify possible improvements.

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Showcasing the partnership with LT at THINQ's annual customer conference is one more way for THINQ to help its customers. "Sometimes our customers configure their localized versions to meet their specialized needs, and they may need localization services, or they may have learning content that they need to localize," Adelson says. "It makes sense for them to know about LT, particularly its partnership ethic and its broad range of services."

To learn more, contact us at mcgcompany@naver.com or find us on the Web at www.liontech.co.kr.