

## OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Cases

American Red Cross

Autodesk

Charles Schwab

Cisco Systems

Department of Justice

Docent

Ford Motor Company

Internal Revenue Service

Nortel Networks

United States Postal Service

Sources and Suggestions for Further Reading

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ASSUMPTIONS

“Best Practices in eLearning” is a report targeted at practitioners who either are, or contemplate, implementing eLearning in their institutions. This study is not meant to be a rigid scientific study; rather, it is a collection of ten cases exploring various aspects of eLearning. The primary focus is internal use of distance education. The study includes various types of institutions. For simplicity, all the cases have been formatted in the same manner. It was not possible to obtain information relating to all categories for all the cases within the given time frame. We have, however, included these cases in the report, since there were enough interesting aspects to report. A contact person has been listed for each organization. We ask that you please direct your questions to Mona Engvig at [monaengvig@earthlink.net](mailto:monaengvig@earthlink.net).

The study has been developed with the help of Kristian Folkman and Andre Lambine.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Most students feel that eLearning courses are very helpful in getting them up to speed and keeping their knowledge and skills current, and often rate Web training slightly ahead of traditional courses.
- Per-student cost often drops drastically as a result of distance education, but total cost might increase due to need for manuals, support, etc. for a much larger number of students. Major savings are possible, particularly by reducing travel expenses. Cisco Systems reduced the training cost for 19,000 users from \$1.4 million to \$16,000 by utilizing eLearning, and estimates an average cost reduction of 40-60% compared to face-to-face courses.
- Curriculum, design and content must constantly evolve and improve in order to give updated info that eventually benefits the customer.
- Learning and training should be processes that are embedded in daily activities and work tasks, not as formal, instructor-led training courses that occur in a classroom.
- The focus should be on learning and performance, not on technology – but technological infrastructure must be ready to handle the increased strain. Continuously assess new technologies, but don't experiment with new technologies and new content at the same time.
- ELearning can be a powerful sales tool. Factor in new business development in eLearning initiatives.
- Individual distance learning components should be integrated with the organization, and also with each other. If they are not, this might lead to a division of responsibility and *ad hoc* media selection decisions
- Use templates for rapid, consistent content development.
- Be prepared for bumps in the learning curve: Acceptance of new media will take time.