Consistency Through Change

Altiris joins with MicroTek to streamline global learning.

By Michelle Ison

THE COMPANY:
Altiris

altiris education services
symantec.

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THE SUPPLIER:
MicroTek

MicroTek
Global Learning Solutions

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Altiris, now part of Symantec, had been successfully helping its customers reduce the overall cost of securing and managing their information technology assets for more than 10 years. Nothing in business changes as fast as IT, so keeping pace with this industry is a task that needs constant and focused attention.

As the newly appointed director of global education, Doland White entered his new role with the challenge of delivering training in the global marketplace, and keeping up with the frenetic pace of IT.

MicroTek provides business learning solutions globally through a network of training facilities and on-demand business education services and logistics, including courseware and instructor management. MicroTek has been delivering Altiris classes for four years, between 700 to 800 times per year.

Delivering their training in both Altiris Authorized Training Centers (AATC) and MicroTek business education facilities was working well for Altiris, and it is usually the case that when something isn't broken, you don't fix it. But while other more pressing issues at Altiris were taking up time, MicroTek was developing training delivery services that were just what Altiris needed to streamline its global education initiatives.

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With a course catalog of more than 10 classes being delivered year-round both domestically and internationally, Altiris was educating thousands of students every year, and when things move fast, they change fast, too. And then, Altiris merged with Symantec in early 2007. It was then that Altiris began to think that delivering education along with the AATC partners alone wasn't the most effective model.

There were just too many other needs that were consuming too much of the Altiris education group's time—sourcing international training facilities in countries such as Germany, France, Switzerland, and others, as well as the ever-growing challenge of managing the courseware duplication, distribution, and worldwide delivery for all those training classes.

The growing complication of the course material was providing a challenge as well. The computer-based curriculum required very advanced hardware and memory specifications.

Altiris had been working very closely with the AATC locations to upgrade the computer hardware and software distribution capabilities. The MicroTek locations didn't have the same level of technology, but only because MicroTek didn't know it was needed. "I was prepared to deliver an unpopular message," said Doland White, "that our needs had outgrown the capabilities, and that our relationship might have to come to an end."

A relationship of this strength is not broken easily, and MicroTek was prepared to do whatever was needed. The first order of business was to reallocate the delivery and classroom setup configuration to match the AATC partners, so that the delivery in a MicroTek facility worked the same as the AATC facilities. "MicroTek worked within our parameters, rather than us working within theirs. Everything we asked, they did in spades," White says.

With the delivery setup challenge addressed, it was time to move on to the delivery of international training classes. Business truly operates in a global marketplace now, and working in other countries is as common as working in our own backyards. Companies need to exhibit that same agility when it comes to educating students and end users. In early 2007, MicroTek established an office in London, expanding the reach of training delivery into Europe.

Using the newly established MicroTek London office to source European facilities, Altiris expanded the European training initiative and delivered 80 days in Germany, France, and Switzerland in 2007.

There was still one task that consumed too much time and too many resources in the Global Education Group at Altiris—the courseware. IT-based education changes rapidly, requiring constant revisions and alterations to the content, including both software and training manuals. The task of revising content is daunting, but when the ordering, shipping, and logistics management of courseware for almost 10,000 students a year is included, the burden can be heavy.

"We needed a solution that allowed each training location to order the number of manuals needed directly from the printer and have them delivered just in time for class, without having to go through the Altiris education group," says White. "MicroTek put that in place for us, and now we can focus on updating the content and reviewing the order quantities on a single invoice".

Single point-of-contact resourcing for training delivery services through MicroTek has allowed the Altiris Education Group to expand both the number of courses available and the geographic locations of delivery. Altiris will be adding an additional seven classes to its current catalog this spring.

"When businesses tighten their belts, it's good for the training industry. These same companies are more likely to train their employees on new technology rather than hire consultants to do the short-term projects," states Bill Taylor, President of MicroTek. "Consistency of education quality during volatile economics provides stability for both business and for students."

Michelle Ison *is director of marketing at MicroTek; michellei@mclabs.com.*

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