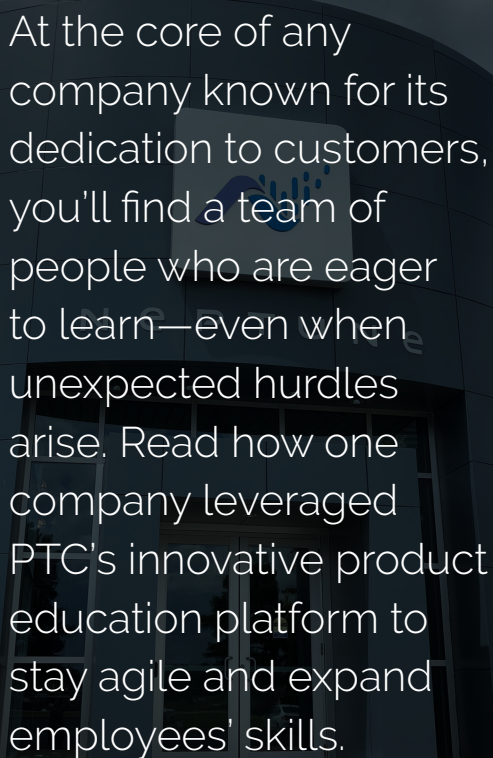


Neptune Technology Group harnesses the power of PTC LEARN to improve CAD capabilities and drive innovation

PTC's virtual learning platform empowers engineers to stay agile and expand skills with convenient, instructor-led courses



At the core of any company known for its dedication to customers, you'll find a team of people who are eager to learn—even when unexpected hurdles arise. Read how one company leveraged PTC's innovative product education platform to stay agile and expand employees' skills.

Neptune Technology Group is rooted in loyalty to customers

Neptune Technology Group Inc. is an Alabama-based technology company serving more than 4,000 water utilities across North America, with operations in municipalities of all shapes and sizes. As leaders in the water technology space, their primary focus is on water meter and meter reading systems, as well as software and networking as a service.

Neptune's goal is to be its customers' most valued partner. Theirs is a journey of continuous improvement, always trying to make better products and offerings to create more effective solutions for their customers.

A demanding industry requires continuous improvement to solve customer problems

As leaders in the water industry—where every drop of the natural resource matters—Neptune



approaches their work with both quality and precision. As part of their dedication to service, it's critical for Neptune to respond to customers' specific needs. To do this, they need to stay up to date on the latest digital technologies and trends, maintaining regular workforce training on the latest design and product software for its engineering group.

A key part of the team's workflow is using PTC's Creo and Windchill for CAD and PLM capabilities, respectively. Neptune's designers depend on Creo every day, with dozens of users relying on its advanced 3D design capabilities. Similarly, Neptune employees use Windchill to manage product data across its lifespan. Knowing the importance of continuous improvement, Neptune began looking for a way to help keep their engineers and designers up to date with the latest PTC software features and functions that they weren't taking advantage of or didn't know about.

With Creo in particular, there have been tremendous advances in technology over the past several years. Engineers who have not had continuous or up-to-date training are at a risk of failing to capitalize on these new functionalities and workflows, limiting their own productivity and ability to develop innovative new designs to best meet their customers' needs. "Innovation is a big focus for us," says David Thornton, Engineering Designer Supervisor at Neptune. "When we're better, we create more value for our customers. Our commitment to our utility customers drives us to be better and more innovative."

What's more, new designers and those unfamiliar with Creo need an effective way to learn the software and get up to speed quickly. Complicating matters, when COVID impacted the ability to gather in person, Neptune needed to find a learning solution that could be delivered remotely. "We had tried some e-learning stuff

before, but when COVID hit, it actually gave us a push in a new direction, and we knew we had to adapt to new ways of learning," says Thornton.

They needed a learning solution that would not only meet the unique circumstances of the COVID pandemic, but also account for scheduling within a demanding industry. First, they needed a flexible solution that wouldn't require blocks of days or weeks in time commitment, as engineers and other employees are incredibly busy. Timeliness was another critical factor, as getting people up to speed quickly and giving them confidence in their new skills was a must. But they also had to account for varying skill level and past experience—some trainees were familiar with other CAD software such as SolidWorks, but not Creo. Finally, they needed a learning solution that would meet their high marks for quality and innovation—all told, a high bar to meet.

PTC LEARN becomes a key element for Neptune's continuous improvement and learning plan

PTC's Customer Success team works closely with customers to simplify complex technology and provide post-sale leadership to help realize immediate value and plan for the future. With the events of the past year posing a significant challenge to in-person learning, the engineering design team at Neptune partnered with the PTC Customer Success team to create a pilot learning solution that would work for them.

PTC University, a dedicated team that provides best-in-class learning support for customers, had recently developed PTC LEARN, a subscription-based online, instructor-led training program that provides users with a prolific catalog of courses on how to become power-users of PTC technology. LEARN offers certification programs

that cover both fundamental and more advanced professional knowledge and skills for various products. Through the pilot, Neptune would leverage PTC University's new LEARN solution to take courses and then provide continuous feedback.

Focusing on Creo courses, the Neptune team began to develop their plan by setting a baseline for measuring success. They had a group of designated workers take the certification courses—a series of three-hour classes—to determine baseline knowledge and skills for Creo. Most people scored in the mid-range for knowledge, and the team knew they could leverage those results to help identify key areas where they could improve.

Engineers then chose specific courses that would help them meet their personal goals and objectives and improve their skills. Upon beginning these courses, benefits to the LEARN program were immediately clear. LEARN offered timeliness and convenience, since courses could

"As a new Creo user, I have learned a great deal from the courses I have taken. The tools helped me to model quicker and with more efficiency, leading to fewer errors."


Kelsey Pelham,
Design Engineer, Neptune

be delivered in three-hour sessions versus days or even weeks of traditional onsite training.

Additionally, courses were offered in both self-paced and live instructor formats, so people could better meet their individual learning preferences. Workers could choose the courses that best met their job or personal learning needs, and managers could assign required courses to ensure consistency across their team.

With the Creo courses completed, Thornton and his team were able to demonstrate the results to the rest of the company, particularly through the certification program. They also expanded the learning program to more employees by purchasing additional Creo licenses.

With this accomplished, Neptune saw a clear return on their investment. "You can take two classes over the course of the year, and it's paid for itself," explains Thornton. "The ROI compared to several days of onsite training is incredible," he continues. "That's a no brainer."



"You can take two classes over the course of the year, and it's paid for itself. The ROI compared to several days of onsite training is incredible."

David Thornton,
*Engineering Designer Supervisor,
Neptune*

PTC LEARN delivers learning solutions that improve Creo users' skills

With program success evident, employees are now tasked with taking at least two sessions per quarter, and some choose to take more depending on time and interest in developing more skills. Kelsey Pelham, a design engineer with a background using SolidWorks CAD software, opted for the Creo certification coursework. After completing the courses, Pelham reported a 20% improvement in efficiency, as well as new-found confidence in using Creo without seeking help from other engineers. She also reported a clear improvement in ease of use over other CAD tools, and that through the Creo coursework she's learned best practices and elevated her career development. "As a new Creo user, I have learned a great deal from the courses I have taken," says Pelham. "The tools helped me to model quicker and with more efficiency, leading to fewer errors."

The confidence boost provided by LEARN has greatly impacted more than just a few people. "Creo is a big product," explains Thornton, adding that it takes time and experience for people to grow their skills. "Capabilities are being added all the time," he says. "There's a ton of power in Creo. It's a real accomplishment to earn your certification, and a lot of Neptune personnel are proud of that achievement."

With support from PTC LEARN, Neptune looks to expand learning opportunities

With the Creo certification program serving as exemplary proof of value, Neptune is eager to expand learning opportunities to more employees and for other technologies. The Windchill courses, in particular, have offered great promise, as



many of Neptune's designers work with the PLM solution to manage product data throughout the lifecycle.

For both Neptune and PTC, open communication and collaboration has been key to the successful experience. "Once David and I started discussing some of the limitations of his users, we linked it back to the lack of formal training, as well as web-based training that was not transferable to the user," says Brittany Woods, CAD Partner Sales Specialist at PTC. "Based on this, we were able to

offer LEARN as a solution. The successful adoption of LEARN at Neptune stemmed from David being open to our process and providing constant feedback to us—good, bad, or otherwise," she continues. "We wanted David's team to be successful just as much as he did."

Neptune's journey is one that highlights the importance of continuous improvement and lifelong learning. With PTC in their corner, they look forward to better serving customers through the many new learning opportunities to come.

www.ptc.com/en/case-studies

© 2021, PTC Inc. (PTC). All rights reserved. Information described herein is furnished for informational use only, is subject to change without notice, and should not be taken as a guarantee, commitment, or offer by PTC. PTC, the PTC logo, and all PTC product names and logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of PTC and/or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. All other product or company names are property of their respective owners. The timing of any product release, including any features or functionality, is subject to change at PTC's discretion.