

JATCO + MLC

Case Study

JATCO OVERVIEW

Jatco Ltd, headquarters in Fuji City, Shizuoka, Japan, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of automatic transmissions, and the No. 1 CVT (continuously variable transmission) manufacturer in the world. Each year, the company sends 25-30 Japanese expats to work in its R&D, marketing, and manufacturing operations in various locations in the USA.

About MLC

Founded in 1978, Michigan Language Center (MLC) is an accredited educational institution that partners with global companies to empower their international staff.

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MLC Michigan
Language Center

NEED

The Japanese expat employees are on assignment in the USA for 1-3 years. They work with teams that are made up of primarily native speakers of English. Expat employees struggle not only with English, but also with understanding American culture. Historically, Jatco provided expat employees with private English tutoring and some general English conversation classes, but the results were mixed.

Jatco's HR team approached Michigan Language Center (MLC) in search of solutions to:

- Optimize financial resources
- Improve learning outcomes
- Equip employees with language skills that would ease their adjustment to life in the US

SOLUTION

To address Jatco's needs, MLC took the following steps:

- 1 Assessed every Jatco expat employee on his/her reading, writing, grammar, speaking and listening skills.
- 2 Conducted individual telephone interviews. Each employee was asked to evaluate his/her difficulties, and to identify which aspect of language learning was most important for him/her to improve.
- 3 Synthesized and analyzed all assessment and interview results.
- 4 Proposed a training program structure that divided employees into two curricular groups based on English levels.

The result was an ongoing program that is taught entirely online. There are periodic language evaluations and updates of the goals and needs of the two groups. MLC's classes also incorporate TOEIC-like questions and practice sessions to prepare the employees to take this test.

“The employees appreciate having more concrete goals, and enjoy the flexibility of being able to attend the class anywhere, and to view any classes they might have missed.”

Keiko Masuda, Assistant HR Manager

TECHNOLOGY

MLC's technology allows employees to watch class recordings on demand if a class is missed due to work responsibilities, or if an employee needs to review a class session. These reviews may be seen on a mobile phone, a tablet, or a laptop from any location in the world.

IMPACT

MLC has been very responsive to Jatco's needs and continues to adjust its curriculum to meet learning outcomes. MLC collaborates very closely with Jatco's HR team and makes attendance and grades of its employees available for Jatco managers to review.

Jatco has been pleased with the work MLC has done with the company. The employees appreciate having more concrete goals, and enjoy the flexibility of being able to attend the class anywhere, and to view any classes they might have missed. The HR team has gotten encouraging comments from them about feeling that they are making better progress than they had in the past.