



The schedule from the TCmanager® Trainer Portal of the YASKAWA Academy

Interview: Yaskawa Academy on LMS Selction

Torben Schäfer, Head of YASKAWA Academy (EMEA), shares his experience regarding the selection and development of a Learning Management System. The YASKAWA Academy EMEA offers a comprehensive, modular training program for employees and partner companies in the European region, covering robotics, drive, and control technology. YASKAWA utilizes TCmanager® LMS with a learning platform and custom learning portals for employees, trading partners, and trainers. In its continuous development, the YASKAWA Academy aligns with the needs of individuals and upholds high-quality standards.

eLearning Journal: How can the individual needs be assessed and articulated in the current situation when selecting an LMS?

The goal is to have an LMS that organizes and addresses one's own requirements and tasks. Achieving this goal involves understanding and naming one's processes and activities. We have implemented this by creating a process flow chart, thereby identifying the necessities and needs. This allowed us to easily recognize where interfaces to other

systems are needed, where documentation requirements exist, what should be provided as a handout, what should be automated, and what is better left under manual control.

From this process flow, we derived a needs specification by documenting and describing each process section individually. We classified the requirements into "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves." Starting from the registration form through training planning to the issuance of the

Torben Schäfer, Head of YASKAWA Academy EMEA, began his career as a robotics trainer at Yaskawa after completing vocational training and studies in 1998. With over 10 years of practical experience, he assumed leadership and strategic direction for the German market, expanding to cover EMEA in 2019. The introduction of the LMS TCmanager® in the DACH region started in 2014, with an extension to the first EMEA countries in 2021. His passion for education and training remains unchanged. Living in the heart of Hesse, he is actively involved in voluntary work for the DLRG. He finds professional balance in gardening and enjoys long walks with his dogs.

certificate, we described individual requirements. Based on these requirements, we selected potential LMS providers for our Academy.

eLearning Journal: How do you ensure that even future developments, which are not yet specifically known, can be covered?

The ability to "customize" the LMS was a selection criterion in the decision-making process. Even though an LMS is already very comprehensive and versatile in its standard form, experience has shown that the capability to make individual adjustments according to our needs must be present.

eLearning Journal: In your view, what are the three most relevant decision parameters when selecting an LMS?

1. Interface Compatibility:

ERP and CRM systems play a leading role in our company. The customizable interfaces of the LMS ensure that the relevant data of the Academy is always up-to-date and readily available.

2. Graphical Representation of the Training Plan:

Facilitating the efficient execution of complex planning processes from various perspectives for all resources.

3. All-in-One System:

We aimed to avoid the scenario where the back office and trainers have to work in different systems. All relevant processes and information regarding bookings and equipment availability should be traceable in real-time within the LMS. Similarly, training participants

should always be able to check the current status on their portal.

eLearning Journal: What were the characteristics for you that the introduction/implementation of your LMS was successful?

We pursued specific goals and set milestones for ourselves. This allowed us to track step by step whether what we wanted to achieve became tangible. Thus, we proceeded with the implementation in stages, concurrently evaluating and, if necessary, abandoning our processes. After all, our aim was to become more efficient, not more complex.

eLearning Journal: How important is the individuality of the learning platform and electronic learning content for you?

Our goal is always to convey content to the training participant in the best possible way. Therefore, diligence and a pursuit of quality serve as guiding principles in the development of learning environments and content. What proves to be good and important for our employees and customers is what matters. These experiences contribute to the continuous improvement of our learning environment.

Our primary focus is on meeting the needs of individuals, whether they are our external customers or internal employees. When it comes to platforms and learning portals, we concentrate on functionality. In designing content, the emphasis is on didactics and methodology. Standardized learning content usually differs only in details unless it involves specific, manufacturer-protected content.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your academy?

As with many other educational institutions, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated the development of digital content. The strong foundation of our LMS made it considerably easier for us to expand into new digital training formats, whether webinars, traditional eLearning, or digital training materials.

We quickly encountered challenges in these processes and can now speak of having developed a new standard, which we naturally utilize and our customers appreciate..

eLearning Journal: What criteria guide the selection of an LMS supplier, and what support do you expect from your service provider?

In addition to professional software development, we expect a constructive exchange on an equal footing, a willingness to discuss, cost awareness, and dedicated contact persons. In this regard, we highly appreciate our service provider, SoftDeCC. The annual network meetings provide a good platform for sharing application cases, experiences, and best practices. We wish for and look forward to impulses and suggestions, and we collaboratively develop the LMS further with other users. These interactions offer valuable insights into how other companies implement and use their LMS. A consistent team and personal advisors who accompany us over the years make it easy for us—and for SoftDeCC—to drive forward the development.

About Yaskawa Europe GmbH

Yaskawa Europe GmbH, headquartered in Eschborn, Herzogenaurach, and Allershausen, provides automation solutions, drive, control, and robotic technology for the markets in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union. Yaskawa is a leading global manufacturer of servo drives, frequency converters, controllers, and robots. Founded in 1915 in Japan, Yaskawa has been dedicated to the philosophy of delivering products of the highest quality for over 100 years. As a global and successful technology provider, YASKAWA has been recognized as a „Derwent Top 100 Global Innovator“ for the 6th consecutive year.

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Facts about the YASKAWA Academy

- Number of Learners: approx. 2000/year
- Number of Trainings per year: 475 courses
- Course Duration: 1-5 days
- eLearning/WBT Bookings (started in 2020): approx. 700/year
- Number of Trainers: 13 in Germany, 28 in EMEA
- International Learning Portals: currently in German, English, with others in planning
- International Academy Locations: 4 in Germany, 19 in the EMEA region
- LMS: TCmanager®
- Installation: On-premise