Boeing, Plexus create online employee training system to reduce time, cost

The Boeing Company and Plexus Corporation of St. Paul, Minn., have signed a joint development and license agreement to create a Web-based system that will streamline employee training in quality standards and procedures.

Called "Quality eTraining", the system will be used to substantially reduce the time and cost of training Boeing employees in quality standards set by the International Organization for Standardization, or ISO; Advanced Quality System, or AQS; and the Boeing Quality Management System, or BQMS. The jointly developed quality training modules will be made available to suppliers and to non-aerospace businesses as well.

"There has been a growing need to deliver consistent, high quality standards training both quickly and affordably to a globally deployed workforce and its suppliers," said Tony Marino, Boeing Military Aircraft and Missile Systems Supplier Quality Management project leader. "Our eTraining system is designed to meet that need."

Under the agreement, Boeing is providing access to its existing training curricula and expertise in deploying ISO, AQS and BQMS quality standards. Plexus is providing its expertise in electronic training technologies to transfer Boeing's know-how into various modules of Web-based, CD-ROM and classroom training materials. It will also be responsible for worldwide sales through its current marketing infrastructure, which reaches into 16 countries. Plexus also has a license to use the Boeing trademark and logo, which will appear on all jointly developed eTraining products sold by Plexus.

The initial development effort will focus on 10 high-impact training modules, which will include such topics as ISO9001: 2000/AS9100: 2001, AS9003, AS9103, BQMS, and AQS. One module has already been completed and is being readied for sale. Other training modules may also be developed, depending on future demand from Boeing and worldwide markets.

"This licensing agreement is of mutual benefit to both Boeing and Plexus, and is a great example of how Boeing is leveraging its know-how," said Gene Partlow, vice president of Boeing's Intellectual Property Business.

Based in Irvine, Calif., Boeing's Intellectual Property Business was launched in 2000 with the goal of generating new revenue from licensing Boeing's large portfolio of technology, patents and know-how to outside companies. The financial terms of the Boeing-Plexus license agreement are not being disclosed.

The Boeing Company is the world's leading aerospace company. It is the largest manufacturer of satellites, commercial jetliners, and military aircraft. The company is also a global market leader in missile defense, human space flight, and launch services. In terms of sales, Boeing is the largest U.S. exporter. Total company revenues for 2001 were $58 billion.

Plexus focuses on building capacity within organizations to manage international standards and supplier quality requirements. Plexus Training Systems include Web-based, CD-ROM and classroom delivery as well as customized certification programs for auditors and trainers within the automotive, aerospace, healthcare, education and general manufacturing industries.

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