

Enhanced Collaboration and Training for EDF Energy

EDF Energy, London/UK



SMART Board® interactive whiteboards have become an integral part of EDF Energy's Collaboration Hub.

EDF Energy is one of the UK's largest energy companies and its largest producer of low-carbon electricity. A wholly-owned subsidiary of the EDF Group, EDF Energy generates around one fifth of the UK's electricity, employs 15,000 people and supplies electricity and gas to 5.5 million residential and business customers. As well as operating power stations and wind farms, including eight nuclear power stations, EDF Energy is planning a new generation of nuclear power plants. EDF Energy has installed SMART Board® interactive whiteboards in the 'Collaboration Hub' at its Crawley office, where it supports a number of business functions, including its internal control improvement programme. EDF Energy also has a SMART Board in its Exeter office.

Embedding processes and guidelines into hearts and minds

EDF Energy runs an internal control improvement programme, disseminating EDF Energy's corporate standards and helping departments to improve their understanding of the processes and guidelines that need to be followed. Simon Vickers, Internal Control Manager for EDF Energy, explains how EDF Energy initially chose to deliver the training component of this programme in the SMART Board-equipped collaboration space at Ernst & Young's offices: "I was responsible for designing a series of scoping, planning and training sessions that would raise awareness of the key principles of our internal control processes and guidelines, which cover both mandatory activities and additional guidance. We wanted to embed these into people's hearts and minds, rather than relying on traditional training methods, so we used a dedicated collaboration space at Ernst & Young's London offices. This collaboration space is very different to the typical meeting room and equipped with several SMART Board interactive whiteboards. We ran about a dozen sessions there and found them really effective."

A SMART Board interactive whiteboard is a touch-enabled interactive display that allows users to write and draw in digital ink and to move and manipulate objects and diagrams using touch-enabled gestures, either on unlimited whiteboard pages or in any software applications. Two people can work on the board at the same time, simultaneously writing, drawing or moving objects, and all outputs can also be instantly saved and distributed.

Challenge

To deliver a more collaborative learning and working environment to support EDF Energy's internal control improvement programme.

Solution

A purpose-designed Collaboration Hub in EDF Energy's Crawley office, equipped with SMART Board® interactive whiteboards and Meeting Pro® software.

Result

A highly effective and well-used collaboration space, popular with different teams and with the potential to be introduced to other EDF Energy offices.

Having experienced the benefits of the SMART Board® interactive whiteboards within Ernst & Young's collaboration environment, the challenge for EDF Energy was to deliver the same benefits within their own offices, as Simon describes: "The sessions at Ernst & Young were a great success and we were very impressed not only by the SMART Boards themselves, but also the whole collaborative environment within which they were used, which was a world away from the traditional office setting. Our task was to find a framework through which we map out the processes that flow down from the higher level processes at a company level, identifying how they can add value for a business unit, ensuring that the processes are properly linked together and that everyone understands the risks managed by those processes. However, we wanted to move away from the traditional environment used for process mapping, which in a typical meeting room relies on flip charts, sticky notes and rolls of paper."

The Collaboration Hub: Engaging, dynamic and creative collaboration sessions

The solution for EDF Energy was to create its own 'Collaboration Hub', with the Crawley office being the chosen location, complete with two SMART Board 885i interactive whiteboards, with Meeting Pro® software, mobile seating and a magnetic whiteboard wall. A third SMART Board was installed in another meeting room in Crawley, whilst a SMART Board has also been installed in the innovation room of EDF Energy's Exeter office. As Simon Vickers explains: "We wanted to create a true collaboration environment in the Crawley office. Having converted it from a regular meeting room, we deliberately ensured that the hub is used as intended; for genuinely collaborative working where everyone can work together and contribute in an open, creative way. The hub is not owned by any one department; it is a resource for the whole company. For anyone requiring a space for brainstorming and freethinking, the hub is here for them. It is very well used at present, for example, the team behind EDF Energy's smart metering programme are making very good use of the space." SMART's Meeting Pro software is also very well suited to EDF Energy's requirements, with the ability to easily convert handwriting into text, to annotate any document, a drag-and-drop feature for shapes that fit in with EDF Energy's process mapping terminology and the ability to instantly save and distribute the outputs from a collaboration session.

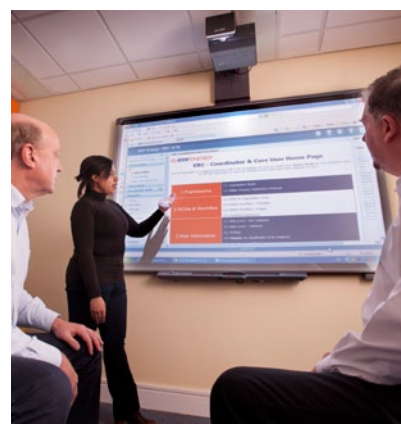
91% said they found it very useful

According to Simon Vickers, the benefits have been immediately evident in delivering engaging, dynamic and creative collaboration sessions: "Everyone took to using the SMART Boards very quickly and easily. There has also been a significant boost in staff engagement, both 'on-the-day', where everyone can walk up to the SMART Board and contribute, and afterwards where they can immediately see the tangible output of their work, instead of waiting a week or two for someone to write up notes." Simon is also confident that the SMART Boards have been a worthwhile investment and the response from staff has been equally positive: "The benefits of the SMART Boards, both in the Collaboration Hub in our Crawley office and in the innovation room of our Exeter office, have been immediately obvious. What is more, after a couple of months we surveyed users to find out how effective they thought the Collaboration Hub was in meeting objectives. 91% said they found it very useful; the remaining 9% found it fairly useful."

Other EDF Energy locations around the country and a new campus

Simon Vickers can see the benefits that SMART's visual collaboration solutions can deliver across EDF Energy's extensive network of UK offices, utilising the Bridgit® software from SMART that can link up two or more SMART Boards for real-time remote collaboration: "The Crawley office was the right starting point for us but I'd like to see facilities of this type in other EDF Energy locations around the country. We'll certainly be considering the benefits of SMART's Bridgit software, which would allow us to collaborate remotely. There is great potential in us being able to deliver training remotely across multiple locations or collaborating in real time from different offices.

EDF Energy is also establishing a new campus near Bridgewater, Somerset, which will serve as a major location for research, development and training, not just for our nuclear programme but in supporting all parts of our business. We see SMART Boards as an integral component of the collaboration environment that we aim to create there."



SMART Board® interactive whiteboards have helped EDF create a truly collaborative working environment.

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Simon Vickers,

Internal Control Manager for EDF Energy

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is a leading provider of collaboration solutions that change the way the world works and learns. As the global leader in interactive whiteboards, our focus is on developing a variety of easy-to-use, integrated solutions that free people from their desks and computer screens, making collaboration and learning with digital resources more natural. Our products have transformed teaching and learning in more than two million classrooms worldwide, reaching over 40 million students and their teachers. In business, our Freestorm™ visual collaboration solutions improve the way that people work and collaborate, enabling them to be more productive and reduce costs.

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