

Providing English Proficiency Solutions to a Global Solutions Company

Challenge:

Ensuring that English remains an integral part of the development of global-minded personnel

As an integrated IT Network and semiconductor solutions company, NEC does business on a global scale, which necessitates the ability to use English for communication, negotiations and presentations. That's why, in 1997, NEC University was established to begin putting educational and training programs into action. NEC University is made up of four divisions, one of which is called the Institute of Management Education and is responsible for the development of global-minded personnel.

The company has made global expansion a top priority. Therefore it needed to raise international awareness among NEC employees. To do this, the Institute decided to conduct training programs whose main focus was to improve English language skills, including written and conversational. And they aimed to broaden intercultural understanding, as well. But in order to develop the course content of this training system, they needed to effectively test the English language skills of their employees.

Solution:

The Institute for Management Education, before merging with NEC University, had implemented the TOEIC test from 1984 to determine the levels of training it offers NEC employees, based on their test scores. Beginning learners (under 470 points) receive support to build a solid set of basic skills, including listening, grammar and vocabulary skills. Those at the intermediate level (470 to 725 points), must focus on strengthening their basic skills while also working on improving communication skills related to areas like writing and conversation. Advanced scorers (730+ points) will work on acquiring skills that include making presentations, with the ultimate goal of increasing their English language ability to a level where they can conduct business smoothly in English.

Employees throughout the NEC Group can take the TOEIC test three times a year, in February, July and December. By setting the bar at a high level, NEC hopes to motivate its employees to exceed expectations and to learn the language further on their own.

Result:

Since it was first implemented, the TOEIC test has been taken by a steadily increasing number of people—approximately 285,000 from the entire NEC Group and about 105,000 from NEC Corporation specifically. In fact, in 2002 alone, a total of around 25,000 people from the NEC Group took the test, including roughly 9,000 from NEC Corporation.

The Institute intends to further emphasize English language skills for many years to come. The TOEIC test has allowed those at NEC to take advantage of the company's training courses and, ultimately, improve their English language skills so they can successfully do business in the international marketplace. Now, that's a global solution NEC can be proud of.