

Client – Telos / XACTA

Telos Corporation has provided innovative IT solutions and services to the federal government for more than 30 years, focusing since 1989 on secure enterprise solutions. Telos Secure Networks and Xacta® security solutions ensure that the government's most security-conscious organizations comply with demanding federal and DoD information security mandates.

The Challenge

DoD 8570 requires all staff performing security functions on DoD equipment to be certified in a rigorous body of knowledge, such as the CISSP, CISM, or GSE. As a leading security provider delivering on multiple multimillion dollar security contracts for the DoD, Telos had hundreds of staff delivering quality security services to DoD. Not all of the staff, however, had obtained the certifications that would soon become mandatory.

Telos needed to invest in their people to ensure DoD continuity of security operations once the mandate became official. Taking their staff off of contracts to get training, however, was a risk to continuity in itself and would also be an expensive loss of billable work.

The Solution

Litmus had conducted CISSP training for Telos in 2004. Telos gave Litmus a call to see what could be done to handle the new mandate.

After swapping a few emails, Telos and Litmus identified that a good option would be an after-hours CISSP training class. The after-hours class would need to span 3 months, rather than the typical 1-week boot camp. This presented the following unique challenges that are not typical for a boot camp training approach

- How can we keep the students focused for the long duration?
- How can we avoid “knowledge loss” between classes? -- Students had to apply their minds to their clients needs during the day and not think about their curriculum.

Spotting the unique challenge was the hard part. The solution was obvious – treat it like a college class --- colleges fight these same challenges. With this concept in mind, Litmus modified our courseware with the following additional features:

- Define homework assignments to be completed within 1 week of each 2-hour class. This gave the students the flexibility of “catching up” over the weekend if needed.
- Start each 2-hour class with a quiz. Each quiz covered the key points from the previous class. The quiz results were discussed in front of the class, creating a bit of “peer pressure” that encouraged the students to keep engaged over the long haul.
- Teach Litmus’ “Dig and Drill” process for rapidly learning any body of knowledge on your own. Litmus encouraged the students to apply this process between classes to “cement” their understanding.

The Result

Through Litmus’ training services, Telos was rewarded with a larger pool of certified CISSP labor. Their early-adoption of certified CISSP labor became a competitive advantage as Telos was easily able to bid on RFP’s which “suddenly” required certified labor. Many of Telos’ competitors were simply 6 months to 1 year behind.