



On its own
Praxair - the largest supplier of industrial gases
and on its way

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Mr. Lawrence A. Gibbons
Director of Human Resources Praxair, Canada

Praxair, one of the world’s leading industrial gas companies, was once part of Union Carbide. But by the early ‘90s, Praxair was spun off from its parent company and, in the process, acquired several new business goals, activities and ideas of its own.

The move has paid off. Praxair is the largest supplier of industrial gases in North and South America, and is the third largest gas producer in the world. Its sales in 1995 were well over USD 3.1 billion (SEK 20.9 billion/GBP 2.0 billion). “In order to help our employees understand the new business ideas, how value is created in the company, and their role in that process—in short to create a common vision of our company and the world in which it operates—we began a major development program,” explains Mr. Lawrence A. Gibbons, Director of Human

Resources for Praxair Canada. Part of that development program included Apples & Oranges™. Or, as it was called in the Praxair version: Becoming the Best—Business Basics. “And that is our goal,” adds Mr. Gibbons, “becoming the world’s best industrial gas company.”

Praxair has had 1500 employees from the United States and Canada participate in the simulations so far, and the reactions have been highly favorable—quite an achievement for a company where there was, at first, a certain amount of skepticism and even fear. “But Apples & Oranges earned high marks from participants in every group—both in terms of the content and their enjoyment of the learning process.”

Mr. Gibbons and Praxair did not settle on the Celemi solution right away. The company carefully evaluated a number of different types of simulations, including some that were computer based. “We were searching for a business simulation that could communicate knowledge about the company and its businesses in a simple and engaging fashion,” Mr. Gibbons recalls.



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“We arrived at the conclusion that Apples & Oranges was the best suited for our needs.”

According to Mr. Gibbons, Praxair’s performance is improving greatly and the company is moving toward its goal of becoming “the best.” And while it’s impossible to pinpoint precise measurements of success since the company has implemented a variety of initiatives, Apples & Oranges has clearly played an important role. Mr. Gibbons believes the fact that Praxair’s own group managers and line managers could act as facilitators and coaches during the simulations was a contributing factor to the overall success of Apples & Oranges. “The simulation really came to life because our own managers were able to continuously relate the things we were learning to our everyday jobs,” he explains.

Because of Praxair’s positive experience with Apples & Oranges, the company has decided to make its version of the simulation a basic component of its training program. In addition, Praxair is now studying the benefits of other business solutions offered by Celemi.

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