



# Use concept

English Version

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In this “Use concept” you learn something about the general possibilities of application of evoLearn in the practice. Furthermore you will know, how you can obtain a business added value with the help of the system and how evoLearn can help you in your daily work.

## **1 The idea and the aim of evoLearn**

evoLearn indicates an interactive appropriation of product knowledge in the daily working practice. With the help of the e-learning-system employees of the retail trade can always keep their state of product knowledge current. Besides the high flexibility of the system, evoLearn has the possibility to integrate product information and individual sales experiences of the users. The learning system can be used by the Internet, the Intranet or also within a local area network (LAN).

evoLearn is not a complete product database of a certain product range. The essence is that it is a system and a procedure model, which can be used as basis for the adoption within the practice of your company.

The use of evoLearn is possible either into single enterprises or also in a group of companies (consortium). The learning system is mainly suitable for job returnees and employees with changing assortment areas and can be used (at home or in the enterprise) in a different way.

evoLearn is very flexible. The user can study independently or supported by a tutor.

## **2 Which added value has evoLearn for users?**

evoLearn offers you the possibility to realize the appropriation of product knowledge very simple and effective.

Moreover, the learning system can help you regarding internal range expansions or staff restructurings. It supports you to update the product knowledge and improves the quality of the customer advisory service.

evoLearn is easily adaptable to the individual conditions of the enterprise and can be used in different lines of business of the retail trade.

The quality of knowledge and the experiences of the sales staff are decisive success factors for retail trade companies.

By the support of evoLearn the different knowledge of the employees can be provided to everyone.

Another advantage of the learning system is the opportunity to support the internal knowledge management actively, because evoLearn can be used also in other knowledge areas of the enterprise. By the free design and administration possibilities all prerequisites are given to handle the knowledge management processes within the system.

### 3 Practice examples

You have several opportunities to use evoLearn within the practice. Generally you have 4 main applications:

- **basic knowledge acquisition**

Through an individualized learning route (Learning objectives), starting from entry level assessment, the user is led through the Bridging Module(s), with basic knowledge, and the Product Modules of one product range. At the end of the learning route the system gives immediate feedback on the learning results.

- **quick access to product information**

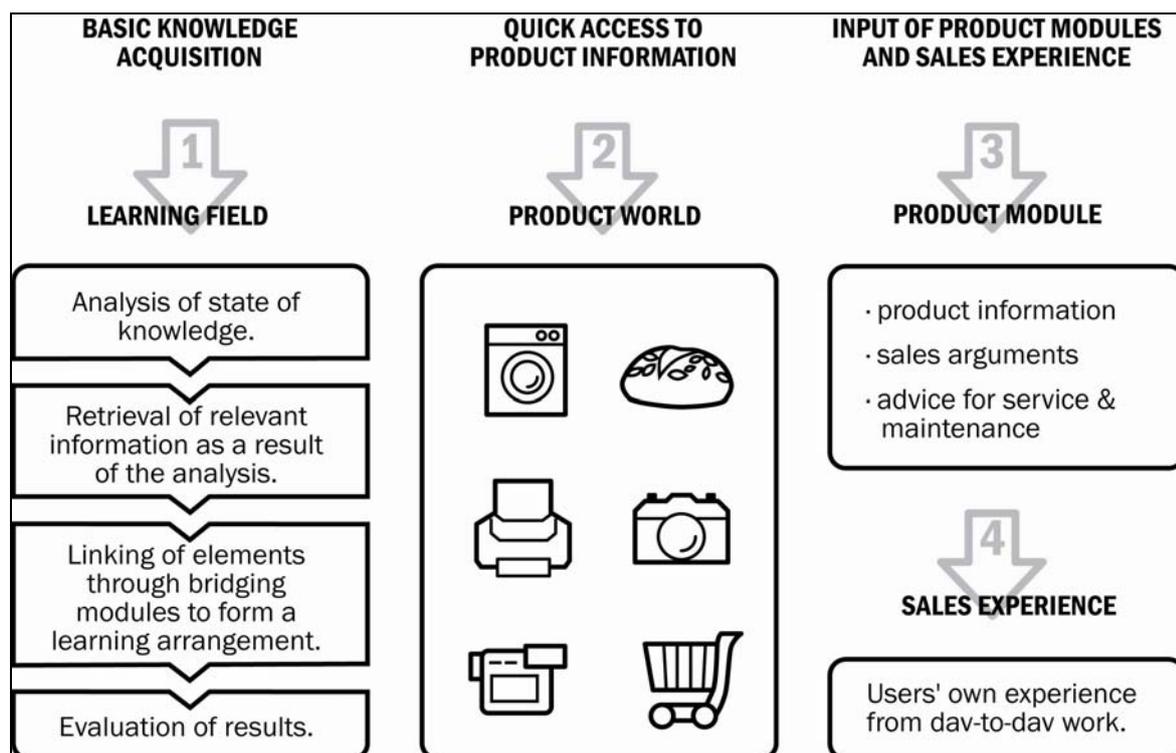
Product Modules may be accessed directly. Thus, the learning environment can also be used as a quick reference guide to look up specific information about products that is needed immediately.

- **Input of Product modules**

Content managers are able to add complete Product Modules themselves. A very easy-to-use content management system, based on clear formats and common word processing functions, allows for this. This way, the contents can be tailored neatly to the needs of the user group(s) and/or the company.

- **sharing of sales experiences**

By adding seller’s comments to Product Modules, users can share their experiences in selling these products with each other. In case of important new information, comments can be integrated in the body text of the Product Modules.



### Possible practice cases for the use of evoLearn:

- **Job re-entry for professionals**

A sales assistant for TV sets returns after a two-year maternity leave. Before her maternity leave, the majority of TV sets in the product range were equipped with picture tubes. Costly new developments with LCD or plasma screens were rare. Due to mass production, prices fell and the demand increased. Therefore, the sales assistant needs to learn about new product features such as resolution, delay etc. EvoLearn makes it easier for people who want to re-enter their jobs to update their specific knowledge.

- **Recruiting**

Due to an increase in customer demand, an electronics store is recruiting additional staff. Two out of the three recruited sales assistants worked in a kitchen store before. They need to expand their product knowledge in order to be able to work in the household electronics division.

- **Expansion of product range or restructuring**

A grocer wants to expand his product range. In order to attract new customer groups, organic products will be included. An employee who had formerly been in charge of fruit and vegetables is supposed to additionally take charge of the new division. This employee is now able to learn about the new product world using the system.

- **Staff reorganisation**

In order to meet the increasing demand for advice, employees formerly employed in warehousing and commodity maintenance are now supposed to work as customer advisors. Due to this transfer the employees have to familiarise with the sales arguments in their new field.

- **New product developments**

An electronics store integrates coffee machines of the latest generation into its product range for household electronics. The division's staff have to familiarise with the product features, sales arguments and the respective additional offers before the products are delivered.

- **Knowledge demand for POS**

A client wants to buy certain organic products for a meal. He wants to prepare a low-sodium meal and asks how much sodium is contained in buckwheat. The sales assistant looks it up in the product world and can therefore immediately answer the client's question.

- **Trends in customer behaviour**

A new organic supermarket wants to better adapt its product range to the customers' needs by integrating new products. Therefore, an employee is charged with looking for novelties in the product world and finding out about other vendors' experience.

- **New product knowledge**

DVB-T is to be introduced in a new region. A sales assistant from another region, in which DVB-T has been used for some time already, has developed a corresponding product module, so this information becomes accessible for all users.

- **Sales experiences**

There are permanent claims in relation to a certain digital camera, the reasons for which are largely unknown. An employee of the claims department has discovered the mistake by chance. The reason lies in the misuse of a certain function by the customers. She wants to inform the other sales people about her finding. So she adds a note to the respective product module.

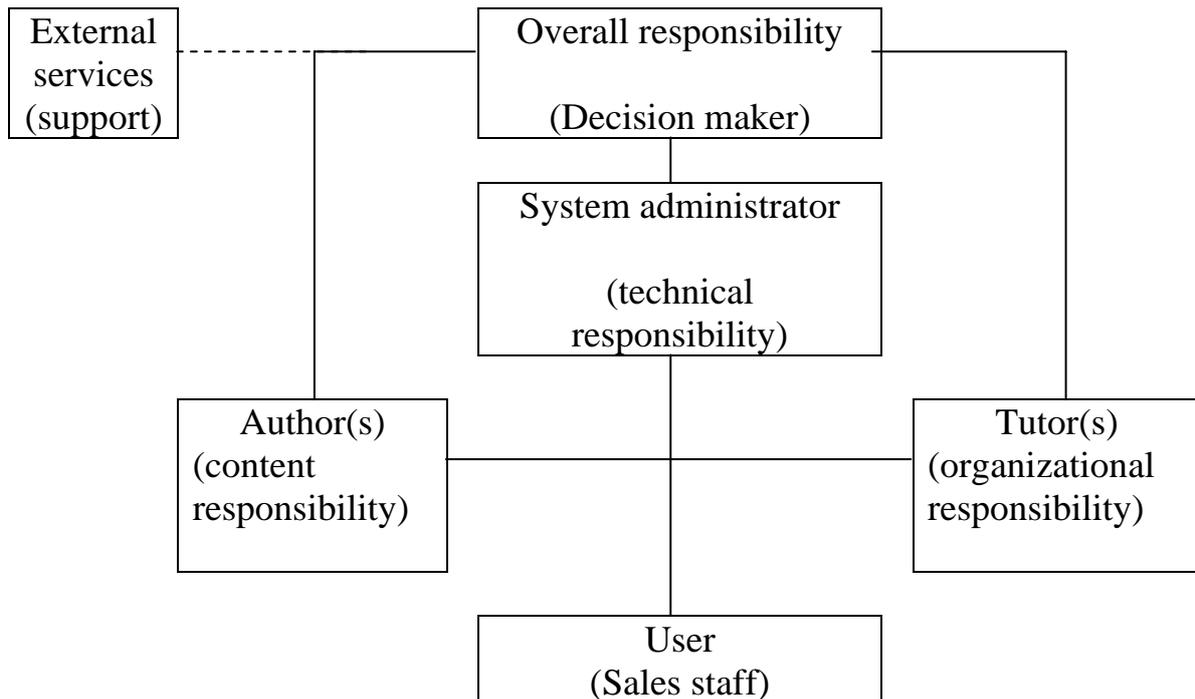
## **4 evoLearn use scenarios**

### **4.1 Use of evoLearn in a separate retail trade company with branch offices**

As mentioned already, evoLearn can be used on different ways in the practice? In principle, the use scenarios are different by the number of involved enterprises. At the first opportunity, the evoLearn system is used by a separate enterprise. All product information (sales arguments, customer notes and comments) are only related to the assortment of this enterprise. The organization of all application processes is carried out only within one company.

It is important for a successful putting into action, that the responsibilities for the system are defined and assigned clearly (administration, author function, tutor function etc.).

The structures should be summarized in an organization chart. The following example shall clarify how the responsibilities could be assigned.



The employees must take decisions within their responsibility area. The areas of responsibility are therefore assigned clearly.

For the organisation chart the tasks shall be shown exemplarily:

### **Overall responsibility**

Making of decisions which refer to the complete system:

- Staff decisions
- Costs
- Further development/expansion of the system
- Purchase of external services etc.

### **System administrator**

Making of decisions which refer to the technical aspects of the system:

- Administration of the system

- Maintenance of the system (e.g. updates)

### **Author(s)**

Making of decisions which refer to the contents of the system:

- Development of new product and bridging modules
- Integration of the product-related sales arguments, Cross-Selling possibilities and customer comments

### **Tutor(s)**

Making of decisions which refer to the organizational aspects of the system:

- Support of the users of evoLearn
- Answering of questions regarding the use of the system
- Answering or forwarding of questions regarding the contents (product related)
- Communication with the users

### **Users**

Active use of the system:

- Information search
- System supported appropriation of new product knowledge (Use of the Learning fields)
- Adding of product-related specialized knowledge (sales arguments etc.)

### **Advantages of evoLearn use for separate enterprises:**

- The complete product knowledge remains internal; it can't be "abused" by competitors.
- The process control can be realized within the company (no external responsibilities)
- Full cost control

### **Disadvantages:**

- The product knowledge gets no additional "input" (from other companies)
- All of the operating costs must be carried alone.

## **4.2 Sharing of evoLearn by several companies (Consortium)**

At the sharing of evoLearn several retail trade enterprises are attached to the system. Different ranges can exist within the system. It would be conceivable, for example, that 3 enterprises evoLearn use at the same time although these are working in different lines of business (e.g. sports equipment, food, white goods). But also enterprises of the same line of business can start evoLearn together. But in this case these enterprises should not stand to each other in direct competition.

As represented in the chapter 4.1, it is also important at the Sharing use of evoLearn to define and to distribute the responsibilities exactly. The same organization chart can be used as a basis.

The difference consists that the process control is a little more difficult, since the responsibilities are distributed over several enterprises. In this case a common way must be found to make necessary decisions without delays. Perhaps this aspect should be considered within the contracts.

### **Advantages of the Sharing of evoLearn:**

- The product knowledge gets "an additional input of the outside" (fast knowledge growth).
- The operating costs can be carried by the consortium.

### **Disadvantages:**

- The complete product know-how does not remain internal; it is shared with all members of the consortium.
- The process control cannot be realized within the company (external responsibilities).
- No full cost control

## **4.3 Use of evoLearn as an extended knowledge management system**

By the high degree of flexibility evoLearn can be used also as a knowledge management system.

The concept of the product and bridging modules is designed very open and therefore it is expandable on other knowledge applications.

For example the structure of the modules can be changed or added any time. Also a completely new structure with a completely different knowledge reference can be made. The changed modules are integrable into the existing learning fields. Therefore a qualitatively new system will occur, which is developed permanently and can adapt to the knowledge requirements of the users.

## **5 The implementation of evoLearn – step by step**

### **5.1 Creation the technical prerequisites**

evolearn is based on the Open source software "ILIAS". ILIAS was developed by the University of Cologne (as an e-learning and knowledge management system). You can download the software under [www.ilias.de](http://www.ilias.de) and you can use it free of charge.

You also find all manuals and descriptions for the installation of the system on this internet page. Also all information about hard and software prerequisites, which are necessary for the installation, you can find on this page.

Generally there are two possibilities to install evoLearn (ILIAS):

- either within the own intranet of the enterprise (own server), or
- with help of a service provider (no own server is necessary).

The second variant has the advantage that an own EDP manager is not necessary.

In the case of a consortium, the use of an own server could make sense, since the costs can be distributed on several enterprises.

If ILIAS is installed on the Internet or also in the own Intranet, the individual attitudes and the design must be adapted yet.

These attitudes (and also the installation) can carry out by yourself or have to be carried out by an ILIAS or an evoLearn service partner.

For this please contact a respective partner to work out a concept for the introduction of evoLearn.

All further materials are available for downloading on the internet page of evoLearn [www.evolearn.net](http://www.evolearn.net) under the category "about evoLearn" and "make new contents".

This include:

- Open Office Templates for the creation of new product and bridging modules outside of the evoLearn system (the Open Office files can be imported in evoLearn)
- ILIAS-Templates for the direct creation of product and bridging modules within the evoLearn system
- Pictures and graphics

The use of evoLearn by the employees of the enterprise can be realized on different ways. In most cases it is sufficient to have a PC with Internet or Intranet connection in the BackOffice area of the branch office. This PC should be so configured on that every employee must login with his own name.

Also the use of a PC direct at the POS is imaginable. The clear advantage of this variant is, that the employees have direct access on the desired product information. Additional product information (e.g. sales arguments) also can be entered immediately.

Another important aspect is the question how the product information can be integrated in evoLearn.

In principle, there are 2 solution variants:

- All product information are entered by the authors (by OpenOffice or online)
- Automatic integration of the product information directly by the manufacturers

The technical prerequisites must be created for the second variant together with the manufacturers (interface adaption). In general, EvoLearn (ILIAS) offers the possibility to transfer external data into the system automatically (SCORM

standard). However, the adaption must be always carried out in cooperation with the manufacturer, since the structures of the manufacturer databases are mostly different in the practice.

Additional manuals (User-, Author- and Tutor manual) are available for the download on the evoLearn internet page (“About evoLearn”, “Manuals”).

## **5.2 Creation the organizational prerequisites**

Among the organizational prerequisites include:

- Defining the responsibilities for the implementation phase of evoLearn - personnel decisions (Overall responsibility, system administration, Tutor(s), Author(s))
- Defining of communication channels (Who should be informed? When must be informed? What should be informed?)
- Defining of the evoLearn structures (range structure, content structure of the Product and the Bridging modules)
- Integration of the product information of the own range (Product and Bridging modules and Learning fields)
- Development of an own concept for the implementation of evoLearn (time schedule, work packages, responsibilities)
- Preparation of the employee training (contents, number of trainings, personnel planning , schedules)

The mentioned prerequisites cannot be complete, because the implementation of evoLearn will be dependent on different factors in every enterprise or in every consortium. In all cases there will be individual main emphasis, which are the reason that further prerequisites must be created. Therefore only the most important prerequisites can be mentioned here.

The workload for the integration of the product information of the assortment mustn't be underestimated in no case. As described in a previous chapter

already, the integration can be carried out automatically, what the workload reduces in considerable measure.

At first you should make a choice of articles of the assortment which are very intensive regarding the sales advice. The integration of the complete range cannot always be recommended, since there are articles in every range which have no or only low need for sales advice.

### **5.3 Start of evoLearn practice**

If all necessary technical and organizational prerequisites are created, you can start. evoLearn can be used in the practice now. But before then, the system must be tested.

A choice of employees should participate at the test stage, who can be multipliers within the practice phase later.

It is the aim of this test stage to uncover and to remove "teething problems" of the system. Of course all authors and tutors must be involved in the test because they are the base for the use of evoLearn within the practice.

Only if everything runs "around", the signal for the start of the system should be given.

The first step of the practice implementation should always be an employee training. To create a high motivation degree of the employees with regard to the use of evoLearn it is important, to clarify the added value for the individual employee. Only if many employees participate in the system actively, the contents will grow continuously and evoLearn value increase steadily.

### **5.4 Using evoLearn in the daily work**

Depending on what technical possibilities in the various branches (enterprises or consortium) are available, the use of evoLearn in daily practice can be different.

The ideal case is that the employees have access to the needed information at any time and in exactly the places where the information is required. In this case, the degree of acceptance of the system is at the highest level. Surely it is not always usual that every sales department has a separate evoLearn PC, but it should be available at least one PC in the sales room.

It is also important that employees not only participate in the system, but also be animated to play an active role within the system. Whether this is achieved by integrated bonus systems or by other suitable measures does not matter. Each company has to decide that themselves.

The additional product information are inputted in evoLearn by the "public comments". At first, these are visible only for the tutors. The reason for this is, that it must be ruled out, that the system is "overloaded" with unimportant information. It mustn't be that the system has wrong information. The information must first be filtered.

The tutors can decide then what shall happen with the information. Either they are immediately deleted, or forwarded for review to a specialist (in most cases, an author). Only after the release, the additional information are visible and usable for all users.

## **5.5 Maintenance of the system**

evoLearn is basically maintenance free. Only with regard to the technology used (server), the well-known measures of data and hardware backup are made. If evoLearn hosted by a provider, then the provider takes over this task. When using a dedicated server, however, must take these measures, the user himself.

Through the continuous development of the open-source software ILIAS regularly updates are available. The installation of this update is not mandatory. But in some cases they can contain useful new features. However, when you install new updates, you should always bear in mind that parts of your individual adjustments (design or Customizing) could lose completely. Decide therefore to install a new update only then, if you think that you need the new features urgent.

## 6 Help and support

The partners who were involved in the development of evoLearn like to be ready to help you with the preparation and implementation of evoLearn. The size and the manner of the support performance are different from partner to partner. The offered performance reaches from additional advisory services to the support of the complete implementation process.

You find the contact information on the internet page of evoLearn [www.evolearn.net](http://www.evolearn.net) in the category "Project team", "About evoLearn".