

KESDEE takes innovative e-Learning program to the Caribbean



Swarna Jessica Srinivas

KESDEE, a San Diego, California based company has introduced a menu of innovative e-learning courses to several major banking and other financial institutions in the Caribbean and is seeking to have more companies in the region utilize its e-learning services.

The name KESDEE is an abbreviation for knowledge, economy, skills, development, e-learning and excellence. Company officials are quick to point out that its courses are designed for learning, not just reading and that such training is cost effective, particularly at this time when companies are looking to cut operating costs.

Employees of several banking and insurance companies in the Caribbean have benefited from these in-

ternationally accredited e-learning courses which have increased their knowledge base and raised their levels of efficiency on the job, thereby providing an improved level of service to their customers.

KESDEE boasts among its current Caribbean clients Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (RBTT), CLICO Investment Bank, First Caribbean International Bank, National Commercial Bank of Jamaica and Life of Jamaica (Sagikor).

KESDEE provides innovative and interactive e-learning solutions to global finance professionals through its off-the-shelf e-learning solutions which consist of 600 accredited courses spanning about 1800 hours of e-learning. These courses are in the process of being translated into Spanish.

KESDEE's courses cover key finance topics related to bank balance sheet management, structured finance, market risk management, credit risk management, bank branch management, operational risk management, derivatives, compliance, corporate treasury management and anti money laundering, among others.

KESDEE also provides on-line Tutorials for Risk Manager Certification and Financial Analysis Exams such as Financial Risk Manager (FRM), Professional Risk Manager (PRM), Associate Professional Risk Manager (APRM) and Chartered Financial Analyst(r) (CFA(r)) Exam.

The company was represented at the annual Miami Conference on the Caribbean Basin at which it introduced its unique e-learning solutions to conference participants. Caribbean Sun editor-in-chief Wesley Kirton conducted an exclusive interview with the company's president, Swarna Jessica Srinivas.

Srinivas is a graduate of Harvard University, where she had the opportunity to take classes from several well known professors. She speaks about her economics course taught by Lawrence Summers, former treasury secretary in the Clinton administration and recently named by President-elect Obama as Director of the National Economic Council. Srinivas was also very active in several student leadership roles at Harvard. Her academic experience and leadership activities while at Harvard seem to be the catalyst for the ambitious goals she has set for her company. Srinivas manages KESDEE's operations around the globe including corporate/client service operations in the US, the development center in India, and the regional center in Latin America. She works long hours daily coordinating the company's activities and leading its team of qualified experts. She serves as KESDEE's well known brand ambassador.

Srinivas is a multi tasker. She instantly pulls up from her IBM laptop demos of highly interactive solutions to illustrate her comments. While talking to me, she is simultaneously working with her laptop and iPhone. She visits URLs to show examples of how different clients are using KESDEE's courses. She pulls up her recent presentations at global conferences. She speaks enthusiastically about the theme of her presentation in the Insights 2008 conference in Arizona where she led a panel with experts from Plateau and Skillsoft. The theme of her presentation was that organizations use eLearning for gaining competitive advantage and value creation. In this knowledge economy, Srinivas says "skilled employees are the most valuable assets for an organization". She has incredible insights into technology, business and clients.

KESDEE Inc, was recently selected as one of the top ten Internet companies in the US and included in the prestigious SI 100 list for 2008.

Here is a transcript of the interview with Swarna Jessica Srinivas by Wesley Kirton:

Q. Can you explain the scope of KESDEE's business in the Caribbean?

A. KESDEE has several important clients in the Caribbean. Banking and other financial institutions that have been using KESDEE's eLearning for the past several years include Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (RBTT), CLICO Investment Bank (CIB), First Caribbean International Bank (FCIB), National Commercial Bank Jamaica Limited (NCB) and Life of Jamaica (Sagikor). For all of these companies KESDEE has provided many of its 600 eLearning courses. We have also provided customization of content and learning paths. We developed private label e-learning portals for each client.

Q. What are your future plans for the Caribbean?

A. KESDEE will continue to market to the financial services industry. However, our eLearning modules are relevant not only for the providers of financial services, but also for the users, regulators, advisors and educators of financial services, and thus KESDEE will target several verticals including large corporations, small and medium businesses, government and educational institutions. Our eLearning courses are useful also for Caribbean-based companies operating in the US.

Q. How do you ensure that eLearning courses that KESDEE provides are customized to Caribbean conditions?

A. Kesdee believes that "One size fits one". Therefore, I lead cross-functional teams of content, technology and client service to handle this task. I believe in customizing content to incorporate local products, regulations and case studies. KESDEE also ensures that company specific policies are included. The objective is to make the program very relevant. I strongly believe in the strategy of global perspectives and local execution.

"... our eLearning modules are relevant not only for the providers of financial services, but also for the users, regulators, advisors and educators of financial services ..."

Q. What is the impact of the current global economic crisis and what is your response?

A. In some way or other, every one is impacted by the crisis. Institutions may be preoccupied with potential cut backs in pay rolls, and restructuring of operations. Therefore, sales cycles tend to get longer. The good news is that there is greater recognition of the value of eLearning for skill development. KESDEE has taken a very proactive approach. We encourage clients to offer KESDEE eLearning as one of the benefits for displaced employees. Such a step will be very much appreciated by employees and will help them to be on the cutting edge, acquire new skills and certification which will help them to get employment and improve their career prospects. KESDEE continues to add new eLearning modules to our portfolio which is already the largest financial eLearning portal in the world. In addition KESDEE incorporates the latest technological and learning innovations to all our solutions. It is very exciting to be in a position to make a positive impact through technology, finance and skill development.

"Our eLearning courses are useful also for Caribbean-based companies operating in the US."

Q. You have traveled extensively in the Caribbean. What are your impressions?

A. (Laughing) Of course, I like the sun and the beaches. More seriously, the people are incredibly friendly. I am amazed by their motivation and their thirst for knowledge. I am convinced that the adoption of eLearning will grow tremendously in the Caribbean.

Web site: www.kesdee.com

KESDEE Clients in the Caribbean



RBTT FINANCIAL GROUP



CLICO INVESTMENT BANK LIMITED



FIRST CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL BANK



Sagikor
Wise Financial Thinking for Life

Strategic Partner

- Institute of Chartered Accountants of Caribbean (ICAC)

