

# ENHANCING FORMAL INSTRUCTION

## Black Laser Learning

Traditionally hydrographic/marine geophysical training has been conducted by equipment manufacturers or educational institutions. As a long time technical instructor for various equipment manufacturers Vince Capone, founder of Black Laser Learning saw a gap in the hydrographic training market. There was a need for economical training conforming to the client's schedule.

Once Black Laser Learning identified the training need, there was considerable debate over how best to present the information? There existed a small but high quality library of written reference materials. We did not want to duplicate those materials and also develop a product go beyond the written text with enhanced training capabilities. Black Laser Learning choose to exploit the new technology of digital video presentations. The format allowed for animations and other visual tools not available with a paper documents. The DVD format also provided a quicker more economical route to market.

"The ability to convey ideas via 3 dimensional animations has allowed us to provide comprehensive explanations of complex concepts which in the book format would require lengthy text explanations and numerous still images" said Vince Capone, president of Black Laser Learning. "Try to imagine how many pages of text it would require to describe buttoning a shirt. With less than 5 seconds of video we can show you how, and you'll have a better retention rate."

### Using 3D Animations

The company applies this same concept for complex hydrographic training scenarios. It is much easier to use animations to show how a second sweep sonar anomaly is formed rather than explain that process in writing. Students very quickly grasp the concept when presented in a visual format. And by utilizing 3 Dimensional animations Black Laser Learning can recreate any underwater scenario that could never be filmed.

Conventional training programs are usually provided by educational institutions or equipment manufacturers, both of which do an excellent job. However institutions traditionally train up and coming hydrographers without provisions for those currently working in the industry or for military and governmental agencies. Many agencies conduct internal training and some educational institutions offer short courses. This starts to address the need. These types of training are often expensive and involve travel which means a long lead time to secure funding and schedule the training.

### Fast and Convenient

Today's project tasks are often driven by world events. Whether you are responding to extensive hurricane damage and need a 100 percent increase in survey strength, or require a short lead time increase in crews because of the demand for oil field services, many times the field teams do not have the luxury of long lead planning. Teams must ramp up quickly often recruiting personnel without extensive experience. While team leaders are experts in the field, many times their teams are supplemented with junior associates and project managers are expected to train during field operations. Our DVD programs allow for quick baseline training at the customers convenience. The DVD can even be viewed during transit on a boat or a plane to get new members up to speed quickly. This type of training does not replace more formal instruction but enhances that instruction by providing basic concepts in a fast and convenient format.

### Low Budget

Some organizations such as marine police using sonars for search and rescue or archaeologists searching for shipwrecks face limited budgets which preclude expensive training. The DVD format provides an option for organizations without the budgets to send personnel to a course or bring in a technical instructor.

The second most common training usually originates from the equipment manufacturer. These organizations usually provide excellent training however that training is specific to the manufacturer's equipment. In the real world most survey teams use equipment and software from multiple manufacturers. Recently Vince Capone conducted an onsite training program for a university which had acquired new survey equipment. By utilizing a Black Laser Learning instructor the organization received instruction in the integration of three manufacturers systems and 4 sets of software with a single instructor.

Another common problem is the institutional memory loss in groups that experience high turnover rates such as the military. Due to the cost and logistics it is neither feasible nor cost effective to bring in a technical representative every time there are personnel changes. Thus the DVD format allows organizations to again provide baseline instruction in a convenient and cost effective format.

### Company Focus

Black Laser Learning was founded in 2004 by Vincent J Capone and has since produced four training programs including the recently released "Not in the Manual Guide to Subbottom Profiler Surveys". The focus of the company is to produce educational training programs maximizing the advantages of the DVD multimedia format. The revenue streams are sub divided into two core product lines, 1) technical training programs such as the "Not in The Manual Guide to Side Scan Sonar" and "Image

Interpretations" and 2) An Educational series aimed at younger students and advocationaly interested adults. The young student series of future products will not only educate our youth but also create interest for future generations of hydrographers.

#### What Next?

Black Laser Learning has enjoyed a steady growth in the sale of its programs. Because of Vince Capone's™ reputation in the industry and his extensive teaching/lecture experience the problem has been one of marketing rather than acceptance of the product line. Many long time experts have found the programs extremely useful in bringing new hires up to speed very quickly. Black Laser Learning expansion has only been limited by the ability to bring new products online. The company expects to grow as it is continuing to expand its lists of available products.

In the future expect Black Laser Learning to provide a wide variety of technical training programs. We do not envision these products as a replacement for traditional training but an enhancement of the existing programs.

---

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/article/black-laser-learning-3>

---