

As one of the top packaging distributors across the nation, Elkay Plastics Company (Elkay) needed technology advances to remain competitive. Industrial, Food Service, and Health Care industries were growing at exponential rates. Elkay and their teams needed to supply their customers with the best services, products and downtime in the industry.

### Business Challenge

Technology plays a role for every member of the Elkay team. From RF guns used for tracking order status in the warehouses, all the way to the CEO planning strategy and reviewing financials. Anything technology related; small, large and confusing, involves the IT team. As the CIO for Elkay, Nish Gupta realized the importance of technology changes on the entire organization. “If we stay behind technology, we will never get ahead as a company,” stated Nish. From the



warehouse to website to network security and telecom infrastructure; Nish recognized the challenges of change ahead of his department and set out to change how the company worked.

### The Early Days

Before succeeding as CIO, Nish was involved in systems engineering, managing databases and remote support for Elkay. At the beginning of his career, Nish faced hurdles to become certified in Microsoft and Cisco. “We never got an opportunity; we were never officially trained. I begged and pleaded for my certifications, many times over. Then, I just did it myself. I was amazed at the value and realized even more so later the value of my training when I was able to fix other people’s problems. I was able to show the value ten times over to the rest of my department.”

Over the last three years, as Nish’s role has evolved, his innate ability to help with any IT challenge has been accredited to the professional training he received. When people ask stunned at his efficiency, “How did you know how to do that?” Nish’s instinctive response is, “Because I’ve been trained.”

### Today in the Modern IT Department

IT is no longer a product, but a service provider and the realms are endless. Every task, individual, order and operation in Elkay is a function of working technology. With new projects, planning, and technology developments in the works, Nish coaches his team: “We know where we need to go, without the necessary education and skills, we won’t get where we want to be.” Network, ERP

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and virtualization systems are the primary tasks at hand. To better understand these environments, his team needs to have the foundations and a good understanding of how these things work.

Nish's current project involves the long anticipated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System: "Currently, we are not satisfied with this system's performance. It can make or break our company's services. That's how complex it is." This ERP system focuses on a robust telecommunications and back-end database system. His team has spent the last year focusing their knowledge on IT Infrastructure, Oracle, Network, Storage and Virtualization certifications. With this new knowledge and skillset, Nish explains the value of his team: "It increased the moral of my team. It increases their confidence while working on projects, and their contribution to providing solutions. Getting their certifications makes them owners in every project, every movement and every task on our path."



### The Success

Elkay used to have outdated technology everywhere. Now, they are on the latest and greatest of every Software, Operating System, and Technology support platform. With a team who functions, takes ownership and has the skills needed to succeed, the results are endless.

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In 2013, their mobile website was launched. Since then, the growth in overall website traffic has grown by 70%. In 2014, Nish and his team completed the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) training to be able to integrate successfully IT solutions into the rest of the departments within the company. Shortly after, the IT team launched a remote help desk solutions, available 24/7 online and through mobile

applications. The success of the IT help desk was attributed to a few factors. Nish stated, "When we know what we're doing, and how to do it right, we are empowered to go above and beyond what's been done in the past." Training consisted of ITIL, business writing, customer service and time management. The goal was to create an IT culture, where the end user was their customer. "When we treat our end users like customers, we relate to them and communicate on their terms

and levels. The whole idea was IT used to be a product. We are now a service and an integral part of every team members' day. Our attitude is now, 'What can I do for you?'" stated Nish.

Currently, Nish and his team are working on a technology system to reduce the time it takes to process orders in the warehouse. Results so far have reduced a typical 40-minute process down to 12 minutes, 70% reduction in time to delivery. "Efficiency is key, focusing on inventory management, how we are doing things, and how we can do better is where IT plays a role. It's not all about training, but that's certainly where it starts."

### **Tomorrow's Success**

Elkay's IT department doesn't only support the website or CRM, but they have the privilege of assisting every department run smoothly, every end user to work more efficient, and every order to be completed error free and on time. Any technology advancement the IT department implements is a change. To manage that change, people need to be trained on it, from the back-end to front-end, and everything in between. As Elkay's training advocate, Nish states, "I'm not going to train them, and neither are my people. They need to be professionally trained. I want us to grow and evolve. To get out of the Mom and Pop mentality seeking a professionally and accredited trainer. I want people to take change seriously."

New Horizons Computer Learning Centers of Southern California & Southern Arizona and Elkay Plastics Company's IT department have partnered to be the change facilitator teams. With multiple training and learning modalities, you can learn what you want, how you want and when you want. All training sessions are recorded so that you can follow up. With lifetime retakes, Nish stated, "It brings me a lot of comfort as a customer to know my education has a warranty, you're protecting your knowledge. The instructors are great, they know what they're doing, and they care about my success."

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For Elkay, Nish's goal is to start planning, stop procrastinating and keep progress going. Through planning, technology, and companywide training, Elkay's success will continue to grow exponentially. If we keep our communications going, our progress will follow suit.