



**Ms. Sachie Sumi**  
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## Online English Training Case Study: **QVC Japan, Inc. improves employees' careers through English learning support from goFLUENT**

**QVC Japan Inc.** is part of the omnichannel retailer QVC. In addition to the United States and Japan, QVC has operations in the UK, Germany, and Italy. Members from each market gather on a daily basis for meetings, leadership training, and other occasions, as necessary. English proficiency is an important asset, as the primary language of many executives and other team members is English.

QVC Japan began using goFLUENT's online English training in 2017 to improve its team members' English skills. By adopting various measures, such as covering all course fees, the company has increased team member motivation. The number of participants has increased 2.7 times since the program was first introduced.

Ms. Sachie Sumi, the Learning Development Manager of QVC Japan, was asked how to utilize the online English training provided by goFLUENT, about the measures to increase the number of participants, and some prospects for the future.

# Aiming to develop a workforce who are active participants within a global network



## **Please tell us about your business and your role within QVC Japan.**

**Ms. Sachie Sumi:** *QVC Japan, Inc. is an omnichannel retailer that broadcasts TV shopping programs on BS and CS broadcasts and also supports ordering and online shopping using smartphone apps. It broadcasts a diverse lineup of products including apparel, health and beauty, home appliances, and jewelry, to women 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.*

*I'm the Learning Development Manager of QVC Japan. It's been over a year since I joined the company, but I've been involved in human resources development for over 10 years already.*

## **Your company introduces selected products all over the world and has many businesses overseas and collaborates with companies across Europe and the US.**

**Ms. Sumi:** *QVC, which was established in the US in 1986, has now expanded into the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy in addition to Japan, and is currently building a global network.*

*Some departments have "horizontal" and "vertical" reporting lines overseas, depending on the type of job and position in various departments. No matter what department or position you are in, English proficiency is important, both domestically and internationally.*

*DE&I (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) and COVID-19 are global themes at QVC. Our team members in each position, either as part of their day jobs or as project members, participate in regular online meetings with their respective countries or meet with them individually.*

*We talk about countermeasures against COVID-19, the infection situation, laws and regulations, and the needs of team members differ from country to country. While respecting global guidelines, it's necessary to explain and propose measures based on Japan's unique background, circumstances, laws, regulations, and restrictions, and to adjust and implement them as measures.*

*At QVC Japan, we aim to develop a workforce who can smoothly work in a global network while also becoming active team members of the Japan office. For this reason, I think being proficient in English is an indispensable skill.*

# English training that supports employees' career advancement



## Please tell us about the steps you take to improve your workforce's English proficiency.

**Ms. Sumi:** *The participants for English language training are classified into team members who proactively enrolled and team members whose job responsibilities require a higher level of English proficiency. Both of these groups use various online English training tools and content provided by goFLUENT.*

*Actually, there were some people who found it difficult to set aside learning time, so it became a challenge for us to promote the use of online English training; thus, we asked goFLUENT to host a user orientation to provide an opportunity for team members to know the tool, how it can improve the four language skills – speaking, listening, reading, and writing – and for them to know that it has a wide variety of content for learners of various language levels.*

*In addition, in order to match the content with our learners and maximize the effectiveness of the language training program, we put considerable effort into promoting the use of the program such as checking on learners who are inconsistent in taking their lessons.*

## In addition to promoting the use of the language training system, you've also worked to visualize the results of the program and linked them to operations and evaluations. How did this work?

**Ms. Sumi:** *To better measure the results, we let learners take the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) before and after the training to use their scores as a key performance indicator. In addition, a 5-minute presentation using the English language was assigned to learners under the observation of their supervisors. This was set as a requirement for the completion of the program. Although this may seem quite strict, we set a quota for each learner to complete the study. If a learner fails to do so, he or she won't be allowed to join the program the following year.*

*On the other hand, we're also focusing on recognizing our learners' efforts to show that the company values their effort in learning, no matter their progress. We encourage supervisors to monitor their teams' skill development, the same way we encourage each learner to also incorporate English learning into their annual goals so that their efforts and achievements are aligned with their work and performance evaluations.*

*We hope that supervisors watching their team members' final presentations will provide a good opportunity for them to think about their career development. For example, they must think "If you can speak this well, maybe I should give you a more challenging role in the future." At the same time, we hope that learners are aware that this is an opportunity for them to show that they can excel in being proficient in English.*

*Perhaps, because of the increased motivation of our participants, the study time per learner per month using goFLUENT increased by 53% compared to the previous year.*

# goFLUENT's appeal as a one-stop solution that comprehensively enhances all four language skills

**You have developed a methodology for English language training that is truly tailored to QVC Japan's actual situation, and it has led to positive results. What do you think are the advantages of using goFLUENT?**

**Ms. Sumi:** *Although goFLUENT is a global provider, it also has a presence here in Japan where learning consultants provide guidance and support in Japanese so that each team member can learn according to their own needs. That alone is reassuring for our learners. For example, if you want to learn English, but inquiring and asking in English is a hurdle for you, you will be stuck already from the beginning of your learning journey.*

*goFLUENT's interactive content includes personalized 1-on-1 lessons and global conversation classes wherein learners can practice English with other learners with the same level from other countries. As mentioned above, the service covers the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). Also, the fact that learning is available 24 hours a day is also very convenient.*

*Another major advantage is that the AI recommends content from a variety of learning materials based on learners' language level, business content, and other factors. The system accommodates a wide range of language levels, too.*



*While it's natural for any provider to help beginners and intermediate learners to grow, what makes goFLUENT unique is that it offers content that allows advanced learners, such as those in the 900s of TOEIC, to maintain their language level, practice more, and work on other tasks and objectives according to their own needs and goals.*

*Another advantage is that goFLUENT can monitor learners' usage and progress online. goFLUENT can provide us with information such as, for example, "this person is only taking certain courses" or "this person has completely stopped learning at a certain point."*

*In fact, my previous company also used goFLUENT. goFLUENT is really great in terms of increasing the number of participants in their language training program. The person in charge of the program that time even went to the factory in Nagano to hold an information session. We were and still are very grateful to goFLUENT for their flexibility in helping us organize user orientations and English presentations.*

# Aiming to be an organization that can autonomously improve English proficiency and communication skills

## Please tell us about the future prospects of English training at your company.

**Ms. Sumi:** *We believe that it isn't only about improving English skills such as grammar and vocabulary, but also improving how to communicate in English which is more important and challenging.*

*The current situation is that many Japanese team members turn off both their cameras and microphones during global meetings. I want them to feel free and confident to speak their minds if they have an opinion or idea, to assert it without hesitation, and to further enhance QVC Japan's presence.*

*QVC Japan has many team members who aren't that fluent in English, but who, with the help of the in-house interpretation and translation team, have been able to cross over into overseas markets and play an active role in the company. Since English is only a means to an end, it can be said that "as long as you have the ability to perform your core duties, there's no problem." However, it's much easier for both sides to have English communication skills in order to communicate better with foreign supervisors and personnels and to be able to build better relationships with them.*

*For example, goFLUENT's Global Conversation Class is like a session where you can join anytime without an appointment and have casual conversation with learners around the globe. If you gain experience and become accustomed to the situation through these learning content, you'll be able to communicate overseas without any fear.*

*If you improve your English communication skills, you'll also develop in terms of career and performance. It's a win-win situation for you. It also leads to a greater sense of ownership of your work. For those who are required to submit reports in English for overseas markets, it's advisable for them to take the initiative to improve their English and communication skills.*

*Because English proficiency requirements differ depending on the type of job and responsibilities, HR doesn't set a "score required for promotion." Annual goals are set through discussions between team members and their supervisors and managers. In other words, autonomy is important, and it is up to you to take action.*

## The ideal situation is that the improvement of employees' English skills leads to increased self-confidence and improved communication skills.

**Ms. Sumi:** *That's correct. I would also like people who don't use English in their current work or who feel like English is their weakness to start working on it as soon as possible. Since it's not achievable to develop English skills by being "forced" to do so by the company, it will be an issue in the future to make people aware of the need for English communication skills and to motivate them.*

*QVC Japan hopes to be a company that allows each team member to grow in accordance with their job type, career, and phase. We hope to further strengthen our partnership with goFLUENT in order to increase the number of learners and improve their English communication skills.*



## About

goFLUENT is an award-winning digital language learning solution present in 150 countries around the world. Accelerate your language learning by combining technology, content, and human interaction to provide hyper-personalized solutions available on any device, anywhere, and anytime. Today, HR leaders from more than 1,000 global companies in more than 100 countries rely on goFLUENT's solutions to gain confidence, drive career growth and establish a more inclusive global culture.

You can check our client case studies here: <https://www.gofluent.com/us-en/client-stories>

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