


Case Study: Discover Petroleum



Problem: How do you let millions of schoolchildren tour an oil refinery to see for themselves how industry works?

Solution: Provide a virtual visit on an interactive educational website! Just click on www.schoolscience.co.uk/petroleum/

As part of its commitment to being a good corporate citizen and making a positive contribution wherever it does business, ExxonMobil invests over £2 million in community support initiatives annually in the UK. Much of this money is spent on supporting education.

As a business, ExxonMobil needs to keep the education pipeline filled with engineers, researchers and scientists to maintain the industry's skills base and create a sustainable future. In schools, where science is an important part of the national curriculum, teachers work hard to find new ways of enthusing students about the exciting developments and career opportunities in science and engineering.

So in theory, schools and industry are working towards the same goals – but, as many teachers are aware, the educational resources offered by industry do not always provide the curriculum support that's needed.

At ExxonMobil we strive to ensure that all our investments, whether in business or in the community, are made wisely. The challenge we face, in our support of the school science curriculum, is in finding ways of achieving a synthesis of both educational and business benefits.

Although school visits have in the past been a popular way of introducing students to the reality of industry, they are time consuming and expensive to organise for both schools and business. And obviously, there are many safety issues restricting the areas that can be accessed on a guided tour around an oil refinery.

It was time for a radical new approach so, in keeping with our reputation for utilising technology to provide innovative solutions,

ExxonMobil funded a project to develop a virtual visit website so that visitors could get up close to every aspect of refinery operations.

Discover Petroleum was developed using a range of internet technologies – word searches, Flash games and 360° panoramas with roll-over interactivity enabling students to take self-paced tours of the Esso refinery at Fawley. Students can also access an InfoBank and find out about careers in the oil industry. The website uses animations to demonstrate the chemistry and technology that happens inside the distillation towers and catalytic cracking plant.

Since its launch, the website has been enthusiastically received, attracting some 4,800 visitors on average a month. The website is fun for students, provides teachers with a cross-curricula project tool and also helps schools fulfil the statutory requirement for work-related learning at Key Stage 4.

An independent judging panel announced Discover Petroleum the winner of the prestigious Institute of Petroleum's Communication and People Award. The Institute of Petroleum Awards are highly regarded because they acknowledge ground-breaking initiatives, good practice, and recognise excellence and innovation in the oil and gas industry.

At ExxonMobil we are delighted that we can now offer a personal refinery tour to every schoolchild in the UK – and in a way that fuels the imagination, increases understanding of the oil industry and promotes careers in science.

Take your personal tour of the UK's largest refinery by visiting us today at

www.schoolscience.co.uk/petroleum

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