Acumen

eLearning
for the
Financial Markets

The new
generation
of elearning

Acumen The new generation of eLearning

Acumen belongs to a new generation of eLearning. Crafted by experts skilled in the art of knowledge transfer, Acumen is unequalled in scope, interaction and innovation.

Acumen has been carefully designed by the global leaders in the creation of sophisticated financial simulations. This expertise has been blended with unrivalled experience in financial markets training, and content from leading professionals, to produce a truly compelling and powerful online learning experience focused on the world of finance.

Acumen combines a flexible, modular structure with leading-edge techniques to create the most effective and user-friendly online training system available to the financial sector. The system has been structured

The key concepts are **dynamic interaction** and **practice**. Acumen positively encourages interaction. Users become thoroughly immersed and involved in the learning process. They can experiment with the interactive graphics and simulations, investigate more detailed explanations of technical concepts, and take control over the structure and pace of their learning. With Acumen, acquiring knowledge becomes an interesting, challenging, and stimulating experience

to provide a smooth and progressive track from finance basics through to advanced concepts.

Following a path personally tailored for each user, knowledge and understanding is assessed at every stage. After completing each module, users have a thorough grasp of the subject and can apply their knowledge with confidence.

Embedded simulation segments allow Acumen to capture the compulsive and engaging qualities of application through simulation online.

Acumen has also been designed to link seamlessly with tutor-led training and a portfolio of sophisticated simulations to create a unique, multi-faceted **blended-**

learning experience, which delivers fast, quantifiable results.
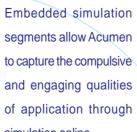
Acumen is not e-reading or electronic page turning with a few animated graphs and charts. It does not just reproduce the tell-and-test model. The Acumen system gets results by keeping users constantly engaged and motivated. Acumen can make learning addictive.

Acumen is an advanced eLearning product which utilizes the very latest online techniques, including simulation, to enrich and reinforce the process of knowledge transfer.

This is an innovative system which adds real value. With Acumen users can acquire skills as well as knowledge.
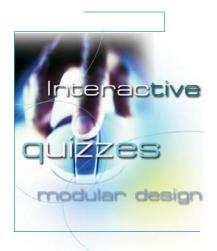
*Acumen –
an investment in
knowledge, an
investment in
your people*

eLearning system

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Acumen
Key features for users

Acumen features:

- A **highly modular design** – split into volumes, modules, and sections – making it easy to assimilate the learning in manageable units.

- A **flexible path** – Users can follow the modules in any order, or move along their personally tailored path as recommended by the system.

- An **adaptable architecture,** making it easy to assemble a tailored system by choosing the most appropriate modules for the business.

- A **clearly set-out structure** and learning objectives for each module.

- **Animated diagrams and text** to clarify difficult concepts and to stimulate visual interest.
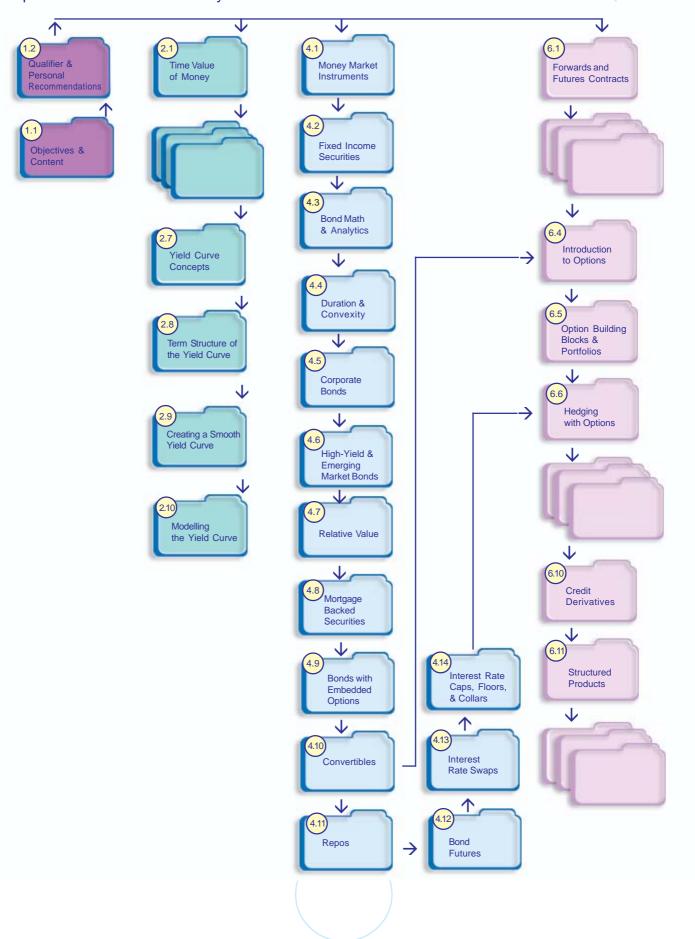
flexible path
interactive
Adaptable

- **Interactive simulations** allow users to experiment with difficult concepts and apply knowledge at their own pace.

- Frequent **quizzes** to check that each new concept has been understood.

- Carefully structured **end-of-lesson tests** to ensure that delegates have really understood and internalised all the learning points.

- A comprehensive **hot-linked glossary** defining all key concepts – Click on *any* significant word to get a detailed explanation. Or browse the glossary from A to Z.

- A **formula repository**, where all formulae cited throughout Acumen are gathered in one place – an invaluable and enduring resource in its own right.

- **Search facility** for quickly finding a relevant subject.

- **Collaborative tools** for sharing knowledge. These include threaded discussions, conversation areas and an open forum.

- Online **financial calculators** and **pricing tools**.

- Fully functioning and **embedded spreadsheets**.

- **Personal profile** charts and learning plan.

- **Mentoring Service**

- **Fully up-to-date** – Acumen is continually updated to reflect the most recent developments in the fast-moving world of banking and finance.

Interactive quizzes
modular design

Example of an individual tailored learning
path for a Fixed Income analyst.

1.2 Qualifier & Personal Recommendations

1.1 Objectives & Content

2.1 Time Value of Money

2.7 Yield Curve Concepts

2.8 Term Structure of the Yield Curve

2.9 Creating a Smooth Yield Curve

2.10 Modelling the Yield Curve

4.1 Money Market Instruments

4.2 Fixed Income Securities

4.3 Bond Math & Analytics

4.4 Duration & Convexity

4.5 Corporate Bonds

4.6 High-Yield & Emerging Market Bonds

4.7 Relative Value

4.8 Mortgage Backed Securities

4.9 Bonds with Embedded Options

4.10 Convertibles

4.11 Repos

4.12 Bond Futures

4.13 Interest Rate Swaps

4.14 Interest Rate Caps, Floors, & Collars

6.1 Forwards and Futures Contracts

6.4 Introduction to Options

6.5 Option Building Blocks & Portfolios

6.6 Hedging with Options

6.10 Credit Derivatives

6.11 Structured Products

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Key Features for managers

There are also important features for those organising training.

Administrative access and control – Learning managers can register users and give them access to the entire Acumen system, or just a subset. Learning paths can be selected from a set of templates, or can easily be customised. Entry-screens can be personalized for each institution, and even for individual divisions within a firm.

Central monitoring of progress – The system tracks progress and test results in real time. Students can be assessed prior to starting their eLearning schedule, monitored throughout, and re-evaluated at the completion of the programme. Reports are automatically generated for nominated learning managers.
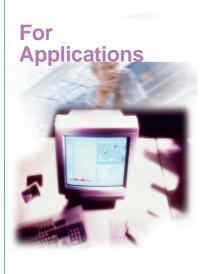
◆ **Reduces training costs** – Acumen can work out *one hundred times* less expensive than tutor-led sessions. Get your people up the learning curve at a fraction of the alternative cost.

◆ **Flexible timing** – Users can arrange their studying to fit their own schedule, pace, and availability. Each self-contained section can be completed in 20 minutes or less. The system keeps track of what's been done – so it's easy to pick up where you left off.

◆ **A continuously evolving system** – Acumen is constantly expanding to include new content, keeping ahead of today's ever-changing market. Alternatively, we can develop **customised content** to suit your own organisation's specific needs.
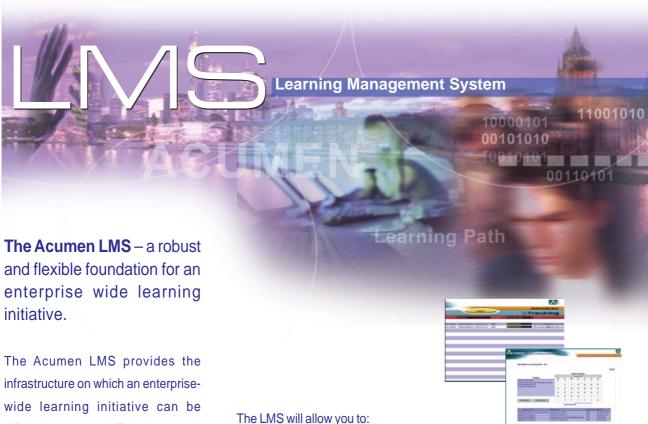
◆ **Online learning support** – direct from the content providers, delivers answers to specific questions or areas of difficulty that users may encounter.

◆ **Technical support –** from our systems experts to resolve any technical queries or issues that you may have.

◆ **No plug-ins -** Acumen can be used without any special software or add-ins.

◆ **Secure hosting -** Your eLearning will be securely hosted on our own powerful servers or, if you choose, on your own intranet.

◆ **A robust and flexible LMS** - To provide the infrastructure on which to construct a solid, enterprise-wide learning initiative.

For Applications

Applications

Acumen is ideal for:

◆ **Entry-level training** – a cost-effective way to learn fundamentals before attending seminars.

◆ **Pre-course studying** – to maximise the benefit of classroom learning.

◆ **Preparation** for **professional examinations** – like the ACI.

◆ **Upgrading knowledge** – to improve core competencies and performance.

◆ **Cross-market training** – to broaden knowledge across the financial spectrum.

◆ **Filling skills gaps** – make sure your people have the knowledge to give their best.

◆ **Continuing education** – to ensure professionals are fully up-to-date with the latest market developments.

LMS

Learning Management System

The Acumen LMS – a robust and flexible foundation for an enterprise wide learning initiative.

The Acumen LMS provides the infrastructure on which an enterprise-wide learning initiative can be efficiently managed. This immensely flexible database can be exactly configured to meet the needs of your organisation.

The Acumen LMS is an integrated knowledge management platform, not just a reporting system. With Acumen there is no need to buy a separate LMS. We can deliver exactly what you require as an essential part of your eLearning initiative or, if necessary, link with an existing system.

Created with an open architecture for easy customisation, the system is SCORM, AICC and IMS compliant and almost infinitely scalable. There is no limit to the number of users it can handle. The Acumen LMS is an integrated system which will administer and disseminate online learning and link the learning process to your firm-wide training programme.

The LMS will allow you to:

- ◆ **Create user IDs** and control access to the system.

- ◆ **Assess** user abilities and needs.

- ◆ **Designate individual learning paths** or allow users **open-access** use of the system.

- ◆ **Compile** delegate lists and **create** learning schedules.

- ◆ **Check successful completion** of specified learning assignments.

- ◆ **Monitor** and summarise **test** and **exam results**.

- ◆ **Track** system usage, page-by-page if necessary, and in **real-time**.

- ◆ **Link eLearning with tutor-led sessions** to achieve a completely blended solution.

- ◆ **Manage classroom training** and other learning resources.

- ◆ **Assist competency management** by defining skill profiles.

- ◆ **Assess individual skills** against the profiles to identify skill gaps & create personalized learning plans.

- ◆ **Use a knowledge depository** for storing and distributing your own learning content.

- ◆ **Search the catalogue** and create additional catalogues.

- ◆ **Send email reminders** to users.

- ◆ **Specify additional modules and functions** which can be created rapidly to tailor the system to your exact requirements.
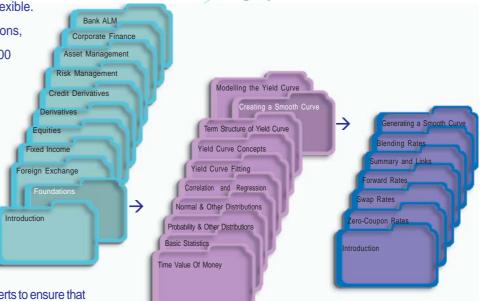
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Design

Acumen is completely modular and flexible. Split into volumes, modules, and sections, the present system provides around 400 hours of interactive training, and new content is continuously being developed.

A client can choose to have access to the entire system or build a tailored solution combining individual modules. Bespoke modules can also be created.

The modules have been designed by experts to ensure that users are guided smoothly through complex topics in a structured and easy-to-follow way.

Understanding is checked at every stage. Each section is followed by a quiz, and every module ends with a carefully constructed examination designed to test comprehension and consolidate learning. Embedded simulation segments encourage users to apply new knowledge in practice.

Summary of Volumes & Modules

Acumen begins with foundation modules in statistics and finance mathematics, and progresses to advanced concepts including derivatives pricing, risk management and ALM.

Users have complete flexibility to follow an individual learning path at their own pace, to study any subject in any order they wish, or to take specific sections of the program in isolation. As an example, a **fixed income** analyst might follow the learning path shown in the diagram on page 3.

INTRODUCTION
TO ACUMEN

1	**Introduction to *Acumen***	2.4	Normal and Other Parametric Distributions
1.1	Objectives and Content	2.5	Correlation and Regression
1.2	Qualifier and Personal Recommendations	2.6	Curve Fitting
		2.7	Yield Curve Concepts
2	**Statistical and Finance Foundations**	2.8	Term Structure of the Yield Curve
2.1	Time Value of Money	2.9	Creating a Smooth Yield Curve from Market Data
2.2	Basic Statistics	2.10	Modelling the Yield Curve
2.3	Probability and Probability Distributions		

ACUMEN

Bespoke eLearning Development

We can create eLearning modules specifically for you utilising the robust and flexible Acumen platform.

From individual, targeted modules to a comprehensive firm-wide core curriculum, your business can benefit from the unique power of Acumen eLearning. We can analyse your training needs, help you to define objectives and recommend learning strategies that meet your objectives. Existing training materials can be integrated into Acumen, or we can develop new content specifically for your organisation.

Our skilled eLearning development team comprises subject-matter experts, eLearning professionals, authors, academics, web programmers, technical specialists, and project-management executives.

Working with you, we can research content, design modules, and implement a bespoke eLearning package on a rapid timescale. The end-result would be a training package individually crafted to match your corporate philosophy, IT systems, delivery requirements, and the needs of your people.

Delivery & Implementation

Acumen is designed to run either through a corporate Intranet, or over the Internet from our powerful and secure dedicated servers.
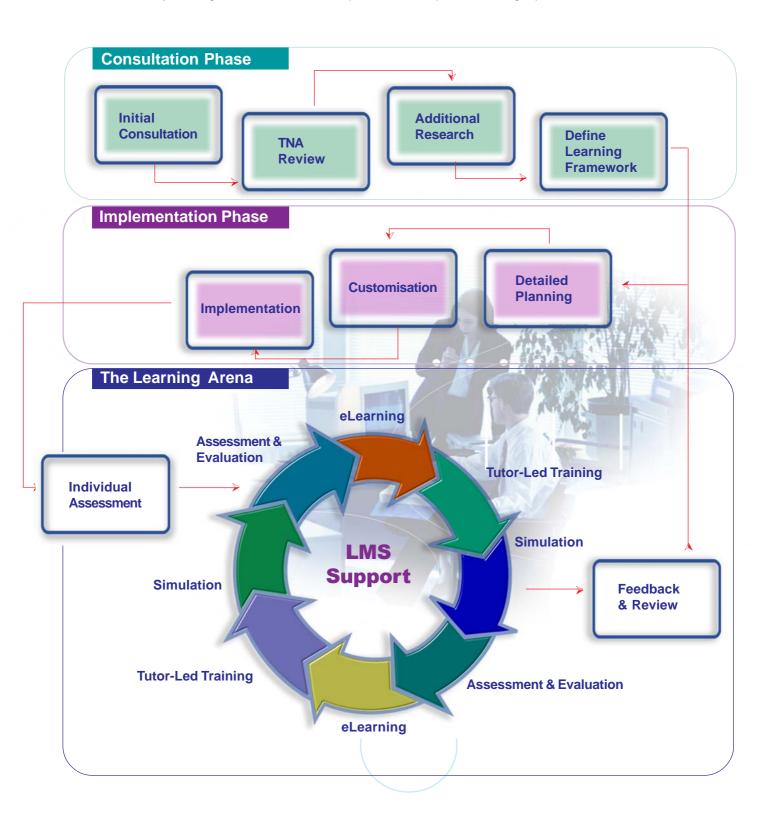
Blended Learning

Blended Learning – Create a new training vision

Blended learning is at the heart of our training philosophy. A dynamic blend of highly interactive eLearning, top quality tutor-led training and realistic and exciting simulations create the most effective and motivating training methodology available anywhere. Passive learning is kept to a minimum and the emphasis is on the application of theory to practice at every stage.
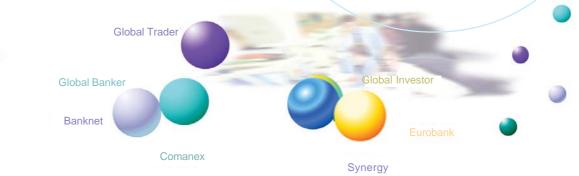
This integrated approach maintains focus and encourages learning through discovery – the most effective way to retain information. By blending all three elements we can provide the most powerful training experience available.

Consultation Phase

Initial Consultation → TNA Review → Additional Research → Define Learning Framework

Implementation Phase

Implementation ← Customisation ← Detailed Planning

The Learning Arena

Individual Assessment

LMS Support

- eLearning
- Tutor-Led Training
- Simulation
- Assessment & Evaluation
- eLearning
- Tutor-Led Training
- Simulation
- Assessment & Evaluation

Feedback & Review

…"Practice is the best of all instructors" (Publius Syrus)

Global Trader

Global Banker

Global Investor

Banknet

Comanex

Eurobank

Synergy

Simulation

Acumen eLearning and top quality tutor-led training are just two of the elements in our blended-learning approach. We are the global leaders in creating simulations covering all aspects of the financial markets. With our sophisticated simulations your people can go one challenging step further and put their knowledge into practice in a highly realistic environment.

Simulation is the most compelling and motivating way to learn. By encouraging active participation and application, knowledge retention is dramatically increased. Our portfolio of simulations enables your people to benefit from applying knowledge over a wide spectrum of the financial markets, from corporate finance and asset management to sales and trading or retail banking.

Contact us to find out how your people can benefit from truly blended learning.

Our Simulation Portfolio

Global Trader - the world's most powerful trading simulation

Global Trader is the most powerful and versatile markets simulator available. Using the latest technology, Global Trader recreates an incredibly realistic trading environment. Covering all the traded financial markets, including commodities and derivatives, Global Trader offers users the closest experience to the real thing.

With industrial-strength pricing tools, analytics, risk management measures, and an amazing degree of flexibility, Global Trader is much more than a trading simulation. From simple trading to the construction of structured products, Global Trader allows delegates to put theory into practice in a safe but exciting setting.

Intuitive and easy to use, and with the depth and breadth to cover complex as well as simple concepts and deals, Global Trader is the very best tool for

training anyone involved in the Global Financial Markets.

Global Investor – the asset management challenge

Global Investor is an extremely exciting, flexible and realistic simulation for learning the art of asset management.

Global Investor gives delegates a *unique* and s*trategic insight* into the key issues, and allows them to explore creative strategies for managing money while also managing risk.

The simulation provides delegates with a platform to practice the skills for making successful investment decisions and generating positive return in a global market.

Global Investor is versatile – capable of handing almost all asset classes including cash, money market, fixed income instruments (including high yield bonds), domestic and international

equities, commodities and derivatives, in any currency.

Global Investor is flexible and able to simulate any operating environment, from stable economies, to the highly volatile emerging markets. Delegates acquire a thorough appreciation of the investment process and the disciplines of portfolio construction.

Comanex – the most realistic and challenging company simulation available

Comanex is the most realistic, sophisticated and challenging company simulation available.

Comanex allows you to create your own virtual company. By choosing your level, you can explore the challenges of launching and developing a start-up, managing and expanding a medium-sized company, or experience the many challenges involved in controlling a national or multinational firm.

Comanex is invaluable for anyone involved in managing or advising companies and corporations. Its unique flexibility develops a wide range of skills, from managing cash flows and production schedules, to making complex financing and risk management decisions in a variety of economic environments.

Comanex is an exceptional way to put corporate finance theory into practice dynamically and immediately. For more information: www.comanex.com.

Global Banker – ALM and Strategic Bank Management

Global Banker is an extremely powerful and versatile simulation, which provides delegates with a unique insight into almost every aspect of commercial banking. The experience combines a broad overview with in-depth analysis.

Global Banker is the world's leading ALM simulation, allowing theory to be put into practice dynamically with immediate feedback.

Global Banker can simulate conditions and conventions specific to one particular country, or can demonstrate principles generally applicable throughout the world. The simulation is always tailored to mirror the business and culture of the participating institution.

TraderMetrics – discovering aptitude, developing potential

TraderMetrics is the most powerful assessment tool available for appraising and selecting people for the global financial markets.

Combining rigorous online tests with practical experience on a realistic trading simulator, TraderMetrics is capable of spotting the candidates most suited to the sales and trading environment. An online version enables your firm to filter candidates on a global basis.

TraderMetrics can also be used in formal assessment centres. Linked to the powerful Global Trader simulation, it will give you an opportunity to assess candidates in a highly realistic trading environment.

We conduct detailed consultations with your people to determine the parameters for assessment. These are strictly applied, controlled and monitored. The results are presented, both numerically and graphically, in a comprehensive set of reports.

Synergy – the simulation for Mergers and Acquisitions

Synergy is a unique and innovative simulation for effectively training anyone involved in the business of Mergers and Acquisitions.

Synergy is a brilliant vehicle for developing the skills of investment

bankers, analysts, and corporate staff. Delegates gain direct experience of M&A activity through a realistic, exciting and incredibly motivating simulation.

Synergy has the flexibility to be precisely tailored to meet individual client needs. The economic environment, the size and type of companies, the choice of industry sectors, the setting – either national or international, the strength of competition, and the number of background companies managed by the system – are all individually configurable.

With **Synergy** delegates are able to explore the entire M&A process including company analysis, valuation and modelling, targeting, due diligence, strategy, offensive and defensive tactics, financing, negotiation, implementation and integration.

BankNet – the retail banking simulation

BankNet is a dynamic and realistic simulation of a retail bank, which accurately reflects many of the challenges facing modern retail banking. Competition, consolidation, management skills, and the impact of new technology are all explored in the experience.

ACF

About ACF Consultants
– Transforming Financial Training

ACF Consultants is dedicated to providing the very best in training for your people. As a full-service training company we are committed to creating the most effective and cost efficient solution to your training needs. Quality and innovation, using the most advanced techniques technology can offer, have made us global leaders in delivering dynamic and motivating training for the financial markets. We have the expertise and experience to originate our written materials, eLearning and simulations in-house. This enables us consistently to deliver the highest quality to our clients.

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