

# Clariant Production Systems: In Pursuit of Excellence

## The company

As one of the world's leading specialty chemical companies, Clariant creates innovative and sustainable solutions for its customers spanning a diverse array of industries. The company's portfolio is designed to meet its clients' specific needs with as much precision as possible, while also addressing market trends, including energy efficiency, bio-based materials, emissions-free mobility, and conserving finite resources.



## The business challenge

In 2009, Hariolf Kottmann joined Clariant as CEO and instituted a new mission for the organization – a “process for excellence” – as a means to help the company to achieve a complete cultural change, an ongoing process that will position Clariant sustainably at top performance level.

The dedicated focus on excellence required all divisions in the organization, from the supply chain to production and every point in between, to alter their operations to ensure that a new level of excellence could be achieved for each of the company's six goals:

1. Meet financial targets.
2. Keep investors happy.
3. Satisfy customers by delivering on time and in full.
4. Put safety first and reduce accident rate.
5. Grow the business – particularly in emerging markets.
6. Appreciate employees by adhering to company values.

Change is never easy. Clariant's leadership knew the transformation would be most successful if they had a partner who could help educate employees on the new culture and engage them in the strategy execution.

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## The solution and implementation

In order to bring the “process for excellence” to life, Kottmann established an Excellence Team, comprised of top leaders throughout the company. After seeing an example of a Root Strategic *Learning Map*® module, the team quickly realized this visual and interactive methodology was the right solution to the challenge, as it could garner attention from Clariant employees in ways that traditional training could not. Root was selected as Clariant’s partner to assist the organization in its culture transformation and in adopting a new mission focused on excellence.

To help the Clariant Production Systems (CPS) team develop its *Learning Map*® module, the Root team and key CPS executives – Felix Grimm, head of operational excellence, and Marga DeBeer, Amanda Diaz, and Marc Steffen Muche, all project managers of operational excellence – met for a planning session at Clariant headquarters in Switzerland. As the teams discussed messaging and content, an illustrator from Root began drawing the first iteration of the *Learning Map*® visual in real-time on an oversized whiteboard. At the end of this session, an early version of the CPS *Learning Map*® visual, Clariant Production System: MAKE, was completed. Root then returned to the U.S. to finish creating the visual and supporting materials.

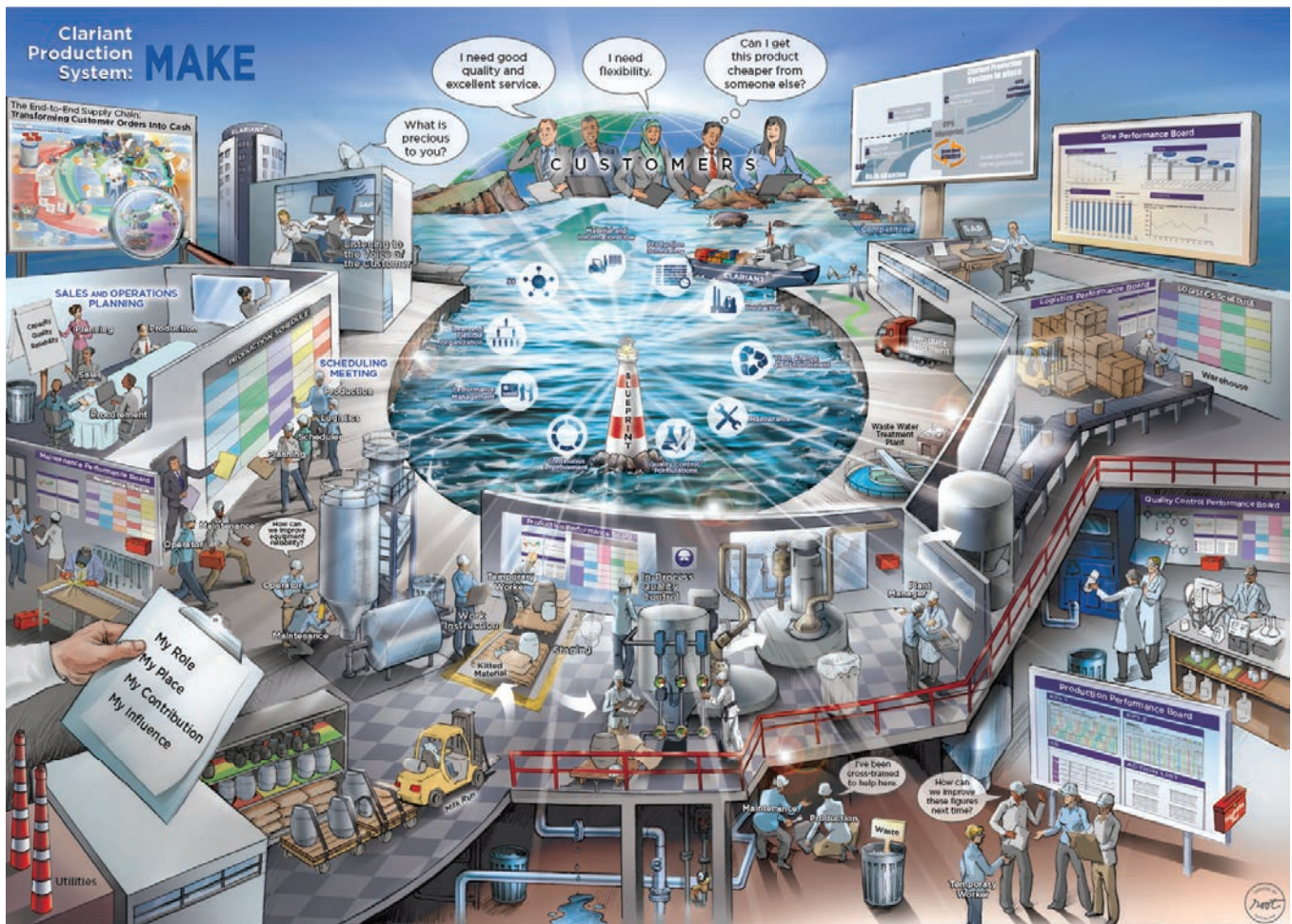
Clariant Production System: MAKE was designed to tell the overarching story of the organization, as well as best practices of CPS. The visual created a holistic story, showcasing how CPS impacts the rest of the organization. Additionally, it helped employees to embrace the power of collaboration by realizing that colleagues across the organization had knowledge and skills of excellence that could be leveraged to improve the business.

Root soon turned around a completed program, which Felix had piloted to front-line CPS employees, ensuring the experience would resonate with the intended audience. After minor modifications to further encourage group discussion and reflection, the *Learning Map*® module was ready for full deployment.

Felix and his team then selected Clariant employees to participate in the Train-the-Trainer program. These people were taught how to lead their peers through the *Learning Map*® experience. Some trainers were recruited from other functions – not because there weren’t enough people from CPS, but because the demand to participate in the *Learning Map*® experience was so great. People from across Clariant truly believed in the power of the *Learning Map*® methodology and wanted to help share the content with peers from across the company.

## Results

To date, trainings for Clariant Production System: MAKE have been conducted hundreds of times on continents around the world and in five languages (using translated materials), ensuring all employees have the opportunity to become immersed in the pursuit of excellence mission. Participating countries include Switzerland, Germany, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, China, India, Argentina, Chile, Canada, and the U.S. – everywhere there is a production facility. There are more than 7,000 employees working in production and CPS leaders want everyone who touches production to experience their *Learning Map*® module.



While the background and cultures varied in each region, the message of the *Learning Map*® module transcends them all. Now, as Clariant employees visit production sites across the globe, they see the same training visual – uniting people regardless of language, country of origin, or culture in a shared context and commitment to excellence.

The *Learning Map*® module is now part of the core CPS training exercises. It is also used as an opportunity for employees to share their own ideas on sustaining excellence through continual improvement.

“The *Learning Map*® experience impacted our culture in ways we weren’t expecting. People now care about the business as a whole. They understand how their actions impact others, are cognizant of each other’s obstacles, and are willing to partner together to overcome challenges in order to achieve success together. It’s been a very positive culture shift for us,” said Felix.

“Prior to going through the *Learning Map*® experience, our people tended to get stuck in silos, but afterwards, they had an entirely new perspective on the big picture of the business. This has drastically improved our company culture and united employees across all functions and continents.”

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— *Felix Grimm,*  
*Head of Operational Excellence*

In addition to the *Learning Map*® module created for CPS, Clariant Production System: MAKE, Root has created three other *Learning Map*® modules for the organization. Depending on the management level, it’s common for an employee to participate in all four of the modules as a holistic way to gain a deeper knowledge of Clariant’s pursuit of excellence.

Next up? Root and Clariant will be working together to update one of the first *Learning Map*® modules created for the organization.

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**About Root**

Root is a strategy execution company that helps organizations engage people as a catalyst for change using a proven framework that consistently achieves clarity, ownership, and results.

