



## Ireland's National Construction Training Centre invests in CM Labs simulation training to attract new talent pool

### Situation

The construction industry in Ireland needs thousands of additional equipment operators, but attracting a new talent pool is proving to be a challenge.

### Solution

Training simulators provide a safer and less intimidating way for novices to learn how to operate heavy equipment.

### Why CM Labs

Colleagues from a fellow training institution recommended CM Labs training simulators. Instructors highlighted the quality of the equipment hardware and realistic nature of the software training. Initial results have surpassed expectations.

### Benefits

CM Labs training simulators have helped capture the attention of a new and younger workforce, while also enhancing the quality and efficiency of equipment operator training.



## The National Construction Training Centre

John Kelly  
Training Centre Manager

### A new pathway to construction

The National Construction Training Centre in Mount Lucas, located near Daingean, Co Offaly, Ireland, plays an essential role in recruiting and training the vast number of equipment operators the construction and utility industries desperately need. It's no small task. The workforce has changed dramatically over the years, and traditional recruiting and training methods aren't nearly as effective as they once were.

"Awareness is our biggest challenge," said John Kelly, Manager of The National Construction Training Centre in Mount Lucas. "You need something new and exciting that grabs people's attention. Once you do that, you can have a conversation about what you do and what the career opportunities are."

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Another recruiting challenge is that there aren't as many young people who have had any experience that may attract them to operating heavy equipment like cranes or excavators. Without the experience or even driving a farm tractor, the thought of climbing into a large piece of construction machinery is rather intimidating.

Kelly discovered what he believes is the answer to both of these challenges while visiting the National Construction College in Bircham Newton, England. The College had equipment training simulators from CM Labs. "The potential was obvious immediately, and we began planning for the integration of simulators into our training provision at our center back in Ireland," Kelly said. "I undertook some desk research and asked questions of those using simulators and all pointed to the benefits of CM Labs, especially in crane training."

Initially Mount Lucas – Ireland's National Construction Training Campus leased a simulator from a supplier and began taking it to trade shows. "The young people just loved it," Kelly said. The positive reaction of young people cemented the certainty that simulators would greatly accelerate learning and attract the attention of those whose attention Mount Lucas sought.

"Using training simulators instead of actual equipment is a logical way to reduce emissions and help hit our climate targets," Kelly said. "But the biggest motivation is that we don't have enough equipment operators in Ireland. We can't look to the same labor pool as we have in the past. There is a new pool out there that doesn't come from a construction or agriculture background. If you ask a 17- or 18-year-old to jump on a real machine and drive it, they'll be terrified. But with a simulator, they know they can't do any damage or make a show of themselves. Simulators are creating a new pathway to construction."

### The correct approach to corrective training

The National Construction Training Centre in Mount Lucas incorporated simulation training in both its

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Skilled Utilities Operator programme and its Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) programme. Mount Lucas has invested in CM Labs' real-time simulation training for cranes, excavators, telescopic handlers and dumpers. Along with stimulating interest among a new talent pool, Kelly said the simulation training is improving the quality of the training Mount Lucas provides. "We want to use simulation training as much as possible for initial training, as well as upskilling and teaching about machine control," Kelly said.

Mount Lucas has been delivering its simulation training on three CM Labs systems equipped with Crane and Earthmoving Training Packs, including a desktop simulator that can be used for training as well as taken to trade shows.

"It's all about enhancing the training experience for each individual, and being as efficient with our training as possible," Kelly said.

To that end, simulation training continues to be a work in progress. Kelly and his team of instructors continually learn more about what the training can do, along with how students are responding. One thing has become abundantly clear since day one. "Simulation training does a brilliant job of allowing for corrective training on the spot," Kelly said. "You don't have to come down off of a crane and go into a classroom. The instructor can provide corrective training right then and there while literally standing next to the student."

Corrective training is an important step in the preparation of new equipment operators. Unfortunately, Kelly said some programmes don't spend enough time on this aspect of training, largely because doing so can slow down the overall training process. Simulation training changes that by providing an effective and efficient way to provide corrective training.

Enrolment at, and interest in, The National Construction Training Campus in Mount Lucas continues to grow.

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"The Irish Government has decided on locating the country's Modern Methods of Construction Demonstration Park at Mount Lucas," Kelly said. The Park is designed to serve as a resource for developers, construction professionals and other stakeholders who are interested in exploring innovative ways to build affordable and sustainable homes.

Mount Lucas is excited to display a full suite of training simulators among its many construction industry innovations. "SOLAS, who fund us on behalf of government, want us to focus on upskilling and working with the construction sector to uncover skill gaps and respond with programmes that are relevant, accessible and timely" says Kelly, "and simulation training is playing an influential role in achieving those objectives"