



## Executive Input Increased

**Well-rounded leadership is just one of the outcomes when learning is synchronized across the organization.**

Learning at Computer Sciences Corporation follows a hybrid structure: It is centralized at the corporate level for desired behavior and cultural changes that are implemented globally, allowing for economies of scale in reaching the company's 79,000 employees in 80 countries. But the unique skill-set needs necessitated by CSC's wide-ranging client base—federal, commercial, financial, and health care companies—as well as their many different geographies requires a decentralized approach. Chief Learning Officer Holly Huntley sponsors a Learning Officer Council comprising nine key learning officers from the business units, who feed needs back to her department of Global Learning and Development Management and help its members to understand the collective needs of the organization.

The mission of GLDM is to actively support strategic and operational business objectives by providing global management direction and support for quality learning and development activities. The department monitors and synchronizes all learning and development programs across the organization to ensure that business needs are met and to provide opportunities within a self-directed learning culture for employees to improve their competencies and skills.

A recent focus of GLDM was improved leadership development. "We have had strong leadership development for a long time," says Huntley, "but we wanted more involvement from executives. CSC is a complex, highly matrixed organization. People report into multiple chains with multiple accountabilities. We wanted to make

key leaders visible—to facilitate 'management by walking around' in a virtual sense. We also wanted to expose internal thought leadership."

To that end, GLDM rolled out an innovative blended learning initiative called the Senior Leader Development Program, designed to address the learning needs of about 1,800 senior executives, high potentials, and succession plan candidates. "The program directly ties to our succession planning policy and process and has executive sponsorship by the CEO, COO, and board of directors," Huntley explains.

The SLDP provides a coherent program tied to the company's strategic goals.

Coaching and assessment form the foundation of the program. Participants receive 360-degree feedback based on a defined competency model for executives. They receive coaching along with their assessments as input to individual development plans. The board of directors reviews and monitors IDPs for key leadership positions and their identified successors.

The foundational course for the SLDP, CSC Business Leader Workshop is a three-day simulation that prepares senior leaders to run a multifunctional business, focusing on key business drivers. Participants track their own business performance and ROI results from operating in a simulated competitive marketplace across multiple years.

In addition, participants learn the importance and level of interaction of key functional roles in managing the bottom line. "I came up through the HR ranks,"

Huntley says. "We addressed problems through our own frame of reference. This approach allows leaders to solve business problems through different functional perspectives outside of their current role and comfort zone. I think the experience of walking in another leader's shoes results in more well-rounded leaders."

Previous leadership development programs at CSC had largely been conducted in the classroom. For the new program, the company partnered

**Internal thought leadership is showcased through bimonthly teleconferences that feature internal executives talking about organizational leadership issues.**

with an Ivy League university-affiliated vendor to offer an executive-level certificate program. Led by experienced faculty, these courses combine self-paced study with asynchronous discussion. Instructors provide individual feedback to students and organizational feedback to the executive sponsors. As follow-up, students are invited to participate in a conversation with the COO to discuss lessons learned and potential application to the business.

### Leadership is the star

Internal thought leadership is showcased through CSC's Leaders Roundtable, bimonthly teleconferences that feature internal executives talking about organizational leadership issues. More than 300 senior leaders participate in each live teleconference, and the call is available for later playback. ☆

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## **Barclays Bank** London, United Kingdom

**B**arclays categorizes its learning by purpose into five categories. The blended approach is applied to all and is highlighted in the “Take the Lead” program within the Leadership and Management Development category. Take the Lead is blended leadership development aimed at all leaders across the bank’s group of companies. It consists of e-learning modules based on nine facets of leadership: take the lead in performance, communication, style, teamworking, life, time, change, decision making, and business. Each is supported with a range of generic face-to-face programs relating to aspects of each component module. For example, Performance is supported by a face-to-face program in personal development planning, performance management, and coaching skills. An issue with the program that is being addressed is that it is generic. The bank’s business units are increasingly seeking to tailor the content to specific application within their businesses. The first significant review took place last year in Barclays’ call centers. ★

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## **Capital One Financial Inc.** McLean, Virginia

**C**apital One’s Leaders as Teachers program is an example of how executives champion learning as a critical driver of business success. The program includes an executive speaker series and leadership workshops. Executives bring their experiences and insights as leaders to engage participants in conversations about current business goals, successes, and challenges. This initiative sends an enterprise-wide message that learning and development is at the core of the company’s corpo-

rate values, with senior leaders investing time and interest in all associates.

Additionally, with the support of its CEO, senior leaders actively design and facilitate courses and discussions on a number of topics, sharing personal, real-life experiences pertinent to the company, and in many cases teaching other associates about highly specialized topics not available elsewhere. This program, hosted by Capital One University, began in July of 2004. The events clearly bring to life the corporate imperative to “win with our associates.” ★

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## **CheckFree Services Inc.** Norcross, Georgia

**T**he company’s culture is comprised of various forms of development and learning in the organization. To complement a culture of giving and receiving feedback and continuous learning, the Learning and Organizational Development organization implemented a peer mentoring and networking program. Participants include the director level and above, and they self select into the program. They complete a self-assessment on their strengths and development opportunities for each of the organization’s 14 leadership characteristics.

They are then put into peer networking and mentoring groups based on complement strengths and development opportunities across various geographic locations. Each group attends a kickoff session with a tool kit to help them work together as a team, with the sole purpose to benchmark and learn from each other. The groups meet as often as needed and pick topics of learning for their meetings. The duration of each peer mentoring group is one year. Feedback from the mentoring groups is very positive and the program has provided another opportunity for continuous learning and development. ★

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## **Deloitte & Touche USA LLP** New York, New York

**E**ven before the shift toward intensified corporate governance, a predominant and enduring emphasis on ethics, integrity, and quality has been the backbone of Deloitte & Touche USA LLP’s success. When events first transpired that shook the public trust and integrity in capital markets, the organization recommitted to these values essential to the health of both of its own and its clients’ businesses through an Ethics and Compliance Program, unprecedented in scope and strength of coverage.

Core processes and tools integral to the previous program were retained, including the organization’s own code of ethics and professional conduct and an online course that focuses on rules and regulations for maintaining independence from clients. In addition, the Ethics in Action Learning Program, essential for assimilating knowledge and building critical thinking skills for meeting behavioral expectations, was established.

The Ethics in Action Program blended curriculum combines an online story-based, two-hour course, with a four-hour live, instructor-led class delivered locally. Instructional designers and key stakeholders, including top leadership, collaborated to ensure the design aligns with business goals and addresses real-world problems. ★

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## **Equity Residential** Chicago, Illinois

**T**he company’s major corporate objective for 2004 was to become a better, more focused sales organization. The apartment business is competitive—and until now, the industry has sold apartment homes in a “commodity-based” market. As a result, the customer has controlled the sales interaction by demanding the same thing at every community they visit. Equity Residential con-

ducted an extensive review of non-industry-related sales training programs to better understand the training approach that “best of class organizations” utilize to define and communicate their corporate sales training philosophy.

To address the challenge, the Action Selling two-day workshop replaced the traditional selling approach with a “solution-based” selling alternative. The program teaches salespeople to ask the best questions, identify specific customer needs, and then sell solutions to meet those needs. Closing the deal becomes easier once solutions to a customer’s need have been identified. The Action Selling program promotes a consistent sales message throughout the entire organization. ★

## Gecis International Holdings Gurgaon, India

In 2004, the organization spent \$500,000 internally on designing and developing customized courseware for specific training needs. Some of these courses were online programs created for the Finance and Accounting Services business unit. This unit was growing rapidly and, therefore, faced with the challenge of continually training new hires on both old and new product lines every month.

To meet this challenge, the learning function of the Finance and Accounting Services unit built a pool of subject matter experts who would focus on training new hires on various products in collaboration with the customer. It supplemented the pool of SMEs with online courses developed by the in-house custom content development team.

The in-house development team created 16 online courses covering a majority of the 200 learning paths. While the courses were being created, customers observed that the content and learning objectives were also relevant to their employee’s learning



**Intel Corporation**  
Santa Clara, California

## Outside Influence

**A learning solution was created that not only increased market share, but also extended beyond the enterprise.**

“One of the things training and development people struggle with most is how to tie their efforts to business goals in a tangible way,” says Ron Dickson, knowledge and learning research strategist for Intel Corporation. Dickson provides benchmarking and research support to Intel’s virtual university, which is made up of approximately 60 autonomous training and development groups. One of those groups recently had the opportunity to create a learning solution that not only had demonstrable results in increased market share and penetration, but also extended learning outside the enterprise.

As Intel has attempted to introduce new Pentium 4 Hyper-Threading PCs into new and emerging markets in Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, geography and language have been principal barriers. As Dickson notes, “Personal computer use is not widespread in these areas, and there was much less awareness of the Intel brand.”

To fill those knowledge gaps in its prospective customer base, the company developed Intel PC Basics, a free educational product for both sales staff and end users. PC Basics introduces learners to the basics of PC usage, emphasizing how personal computer ownership can make a difference in their lives. The program includes such practical exercises as emailing a digital photo. The audience receives the PC Basics course free on

CD or directly pre-loaded on PC when they purchase a P4 machine with Hyper-Threading. Salespeople in each country can also download Flash marketing movies and printable material (in the country’s home language) from servers via the Internet or an intranet.

### Language leverage

The product is available in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Turkish, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Arabic, and Mandarin Chinese.

**PC Basics introduces learners to the basics of PC usage, emphasizing how personal computer ownership can make a difference in their lives.**

One of the biggest technological hurdles was rendering Arabic and other languages that use non-Latin character sets into Flash. A developer in Intel’s IT Innovation Centre in Ireland created a new standard that will be used in all of the company’s Arab-language products. Courseware design emphasized localization, expansion, and updating, and uses an XML schema to facilitate easy updates.

“By focusing on the application of the product and demonstrating how it will benefit the consumer, PC Basics reveals how much Intel cares about its customers,” says Dickson. “The delivery of marketing materials directly to sales representatives around the world eliminates bureaucracy and puts content developers in much closer contact with our audience.” ★

needs. Consequently, those courses were made available to customer employees via the organization's learning management system. To date, more than 100 customer employees have accessed the courses and this initiative has helped improve the relationship with the customer in addition to setting a framework for proactive knowledge sharing. ★

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## **Hewlett-Packard** Palo Alto, California

To meet customer demand, HP needed a sales team that specialized in a very competitive product for the company, high-performance servers, and storage supporting critical company operations, such as accounting, databases, and payroll. Management realized the fastest way to build this specialized salesforce was to utilize engineers who develop the product line, and therefore combine specialized product expertise with sales skills. It set out to develop a program that would transform engineers into sales representatives.

The result: Basic Essential Selling Skills Training (BESST) program, which focused on re-skilling engineers into sales professionals. Management identified engineers with product knowledge and expertise, and requested volunteers to transition from engineering to sales. Of the 60 volunteers that were extensively evaluated, 16 were selected to participate in the program, which had been code-named Extreme Makeover, because it would result in a major career shift for the engineers and would entail acquiring an entirely new set of skills after only six weeks of extensive training. By building a cohesive, blended program that included classroom instruction, structured field activities, and pre- and post-assessments, HP's workforce development group achieved its goal of rapidly creating a

specialized and competitive sales team. In addition, the team recorded millions of dollars of incremental revenue within six months. ★

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## **IBM** Armonk, New York

IBM's most innovative learning initiative within the past 12 months is not a training intervention or a learning solution. Instead, it is an enterprise-wide strategic initiative aimed at fundamentally redefining learning's role as a key enabler of its on demand transformation. Today, knowledge is growing at a rate much faster than the ability to learn it. Yet, ironically, while skill development becomes increasingly strategic, the demands of the current work environment leave employees with less time for formalized learning. The rapid churn of the skills and knowledge required to maintain job performance suggests learning can no longer be solely provided as a separate series of events.

In 2004, IBM launched the on demand learning strategy, instructional design model, and set of learning approaches. The on demand experience is based on the recognition that technology offers the opportunity to integrate learning with work in order to enhance performance in a dynamic, interactive, and measurable way. Content and resources are delivered within the context of a person's role, goals, and current activity, creating dynamic, personalized, role-based "workplaces" that include access to both formal and work-based learning. ★

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## **ICICI Bank Limited** Mumbai, India

The bank recently created its own Business Etiquette and Sales Training (BEST) program. The program provides inputs on grooming and a step-by-step sales methodology to the agency staff via customized, video-driven classroom methods. It also provides a qualitative

framework for line managers to monitor calls and provide developmental feedback to agency staff. The respective line managers deliver the program. Each business creates a set of master trainers who in turn train line managers via a train-the-trainer format. BEST has created 233 trainers for two main business groups who in turn have trained over 2,100 agency staff within two months.

Overall the BEST intervention has covered 6,672 agency staff since inception. Significant improvements have been seen in qualitative aspects ascertained through customer responses and manager feedback. ★

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## **Israel Discount Bank Limited** Tel-Aviv, Israel

In recent years, an organizational and technological project unique in its scope has been under way in the organization, in which the computer systems (software and hardware) have been replaced in all the business units (about 150 units including head office units). This is one of the biggest and most complex projects under way in Israel today. The introduction of the new computer system posed huge training challenges for the organization, requiring simultaneous training of about 3,500 employees in new work processes from both conceptual and operational aspects.

In addition, the ability to retain vital employees was established during the past year within the framework of a temporary employees development plan. This population is the youngest and most educated, but there was no track that would ensure their promotion and development. As part of the organization's objective to develop the human resource and to prevent employees from leaving, a training track was developed for this group in the organization's call center. ★



# Crafted Solutions

### Rather than “sell” training, account managers build relationships.

The mission of the learning and development division for Johnson Controls is “to improve human performance for JCI’s business success. Our vision is to be considered by JCI and JCI’s customers as a critical partner in the achievement of business goals, while being viewed externally as a world-class performance improvement organization against which benchmarking is continually sought.” The operation has been included in *Training’s* Top 100 for the past several years and reached the Top 25 in 2004. This is the first year that JCI has entered ASTD’s BEST awards, and the organization has come away a winner.

“We have just begun pulling together data companywide over the past couple of years,” says Janice Simmons, director of learning and development for the controls group. “This award is a great external benchmark.”

More than 500 learning and development professionals support the company’s 123,000 employees. Annual expenditures within the controls group represent more than 4 percent of payroll, and employees average more than 22 hours of learning per year. The learning function reports to the vice president of human resources, and all of the company’s senior management—from vice presidents to CEO—make public statements in support of learning.

Learning and development staff in the controls group utilize a systemic strategy of account management, which ensures that all learning

and performance decisions start with discussions with business partners and have a strong direct tie to the business. The account managers strive to craft solutions to meet business needs rather than to “sell” training. Members of the account management team are responsible for building the relationship to specific business units, and educating themselves about strategic plans, critical business initiatives and goals, and the results that the business is trying to achieve.

### Centralize, synergize

When Simmons came on board in 2001, training organizations reported to different parts of the company. Her mandate was to centralize, achieve synergies and efficiencies, and bring the various parts together and align them with the businesses. The success of those efforts can be seen in the controls group’s most innovative learning initiative of 2004, a program to prepare 160 new branch managers to lead change within the company.

Following a redefinition of branch managers’ roles that restructured the way business was done and left the managers with new accountability, learning group staff recognized the need to help managers support and implement the changes rapidly. Their efforts began earlier, though, with participation in the business modeling efforts that defined how JCI would meet customers’ needs. They then developed a competency model and a related assessment tool that measured current skills, knowledge,

and attitudes against the model. Each manager received a personalized written report for coaching and follow-up. The assessments also allowed learning personnel to determine performance gaps at three levels: across the whole group, regionally, and individually. They then developed an 18-month program to close gaps at the first two levels, and to provide the affected managers with resources to address their individual needs.

The program includes four weeklong learning events, and the degree of senior executive support and involvement is extraordinary. Senior executives lead classroom sessions, provide personalized coaching to participants outside their chain of command, and assist in the creation of individual learning plans. They lead change initiatives that are embedded into the training, which is wrapped around real work. A mix of delivery methods allows the learning staff to reach this large audience simultaneously while customizing the learning.

“We took on everything at once: assessment, addressing of skills gaps, creation of individual development plans, a blended approach, and practical application,” notes Simmons. “There’s not a lot of theory or fluff.”

“It was not the typical scenario of trying to sell the training you have to line managers,” concludes Darrell Middleton, vice president of human resources for the controls group. “They want what we have and then some. This was a business initiative rather than a learning initiative.” ☆

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## **Merck & Company Inc. Merck Manufacturing Division** Whitehouse Station, New Jersey

**F**or this company and its manufacturing division, continuous improvement is employed as one of its business imperatives. To successfully meet new business challenges head on and to increase competitiveness, the division recognized the need to create and drive transformation across its global operations.

A solution provided by the learning and development organization was Business Connects, a curriculum to build business excellence. In complete alignment with the division's manufacturing strategy and based on direct input from senior divisional leaders and internal and external subject matter experts, this curriculum was constructed to provide the initial audience of 1,300 top managers globally with the critical business skills and financial tools they would need to optimize their business units.

This comprehensive and innovative curriculum was created and orchestrated in a way that intertwines all the latest advances and best practices in the learning and development field. The Business Connect curriculum incorporates e-learning with advanced search engines, glossaries and calculators for future reference, classroom learning, virtual classroom learning, and business simulations. Learner challenges and applications, constructed from divisional case studies and scenarios, were incorporated to motivate participants and bring focus to the material through real-world situations. This three-tier curriculum contains 11 university-level programs that build upon the knowledge and skill gained from prior-level programs.

By clearly demonstrating the integration and connections between business and finance, learners completing this

curriculum are now better prepared to optimize their performance by making better decisions. ★

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## **Portland General Electric Company** Portland, Oregon

**D**elivering safe reliable energy is the mission and core business of the company. As a result, the technical and regulatory training delivered to the trades and crafts must support business efficiency and safety. Since the electric utility industry is highly regulated, integrated, and system interdependent, the company must ensure training and development is consistent across the industry.

To meet this challenge, the company and another regional electric utility invested in a technical training center located on a local community college campus. In 2002, with large financial investments to the community college, a 15,000-square-foot college building was expanded to a 50,000-square-foot regional utility technical training center.

The company's Employee Development Program was the 2004 premier training developed and delivered by its cross-functional Organizational Development and Corporate University team. The program was driven by employee survey requests for more development opportunities. A small cross-functional group of managers and employees acted as advisors for developing and implementing the program. ★

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## **The Schwan Food Company** Marshall, Minnesota

**O**ne important way The Schwan Food Company's learning organization remains linked to performance is by simply engaging in all aspects of the company's strategic planning and operations. Being part of the company's Strategic Development division is helpful, of course. But, by also being involved

with executive development, the learning organization has constant interaction with all of the company's top leaders. The learning team organizes and facilitates the company's annual Vice Presidents Meeting, a strategy session for every VP in the company. It also is involved in developing strategic planning curriculum for the entire corporation.

A new Training Administration Department was established in 2004 to create greater ownership of the learning management system and its performance. Previously, the system was owned jointly by an administrator and a curriculum director. In addition, the company has invested in and engaged its IT department to help identify challenges and make the transition to a new LMS platform. IT is now more of a partner than ever before. ★

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## **TATA Consultancy Services Limited** Mumbai, India

**T**CS, a subsidiary of TATA Consultancy Services, is proud of its Initial Learning Program (ILP), which prepares new hires to transition from campus to corporate. ILP covers gaps in education, the company's processes and culture, skills required to execute projects, and attitudinal change needed for a global career.

ILP is a critical link in the company's staffing process, and affects its business in significant ways. The ILP model has evolved in conjunction with the company's business offerings over the last three decades. The contents of ILP closely match the body of knowledge model as evolved by professional bodies such as IEEE and ACM. This model has been published and has received universal acclaim. As a result, a TCS representative has been invited to the International Steering Committee on Software Engineering Education and Training.

TCS proudly claims that it hires people with diverse educational backgrounds who come from various geographies. In order to broaden the impact of its ILP, the company has tailored it to ad-

dress this diversity commitment.

In addition, TCS offers a variety of continuous learning programs covering domain, technology, and leadership to its consultants spread across the globe, resulting in an average of 15 learning days per employee per year. ★

## TELUS Corporation Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

TELUS has built on the success of its 2003 High Performance Leadership Workshops. That leadership program, initially developed for its Consumer Solutions team, and subsequently launched across the company, utilized business leaders and in-house HR experts who facilitated interactive exercises to build competencies in recruitment, engagement, performance management, recognition, and coaching. The content was modified for virtual delivery presentation, and targeted to new supervisors.

Now labeled the Leadership Expectations program, this training initiative will ensure that the communication of leadership expectations and skills development to meet those expectations is sustained despite churn in the organization. Two pilots were delivered in the last quarter of 2004 to 21 new managers across the organization. The organization will continue to modify the program for delivery through 2005 based on participant feedback and measured performance impact. The 2005 program will also test virtual delivery using e-tools such as NetMeeting and an on-site facilitator for the interactive exercises. ★



## Reliance Industries Mumbai, India

### Human Capital Growth Elimination of hierarchical barriers brings breakthroughs.

The Reliance Group is India's largest business house in the private sector, with annual revenues of more than \$22 billion and 2004 profits approaching \$3 billion. The Group's activities include the exploration, production, refining, and marketing of oil and gas as well as initiatives in the petrochemicals, textiles, financial services and insurance, power, telecom, and infocom sectors. The Group exports its products to more than 100 countries around the world. Its annual revenue is equivalent to about 3.5 percent of India's gross domestic product. The company is the first and only private sector company from India to appear in *Fortune* magazine's 2004 Global 500 list of the world's largest corporations.

Reliance Industries Limited, the Group's flagship company, employs 11,300 people. A CLO reports to the CEO at the corporate level, and every manufacturing location has general managers who serve as Discipline Deans. (There are 101 Deans across the company.) At each manufacturing location, one Dean serves as the Coordinating Discipline Dean, who consults with his or her colleagues to

- identify knowledge elements and design new modules within the discipline
- ensure that learning kits and modules are prepared when new subjects are introduced
- keep learning modules current and efficient
- initiate new learning initiatives such as Six Sigma.

An Apex Group for each location meets every other week to review learning initiatives and assess needs. The location's learning center is responsible for designing and implementing initiatives. Representatives from all learning centers meet every

six months to ensure consistency and share best practices.

"Human capital is an appreciating asset at Reliance. Employee skill is the competitive muscle that differentiates us from our competitors, whether it is through speedier implementation of a project, implementation at a cost that is lower than our competitors', or employees' ability to extract more out of aging capital equipment," says Hardev Singh Kohli, executive director of the Hazira manufacturing division.

#### Total quality initiative

An initiative called Total Quality Organization: Capturing the Voice of Customers was launched at its Hazira manufacturing unit, and was the organization's most innovative of 2004. Its goals were to foster trust and team-building, communicate the power of win-win strategies, and create a total quality organization. "We wanted to create an atmosphere of self-managed teams engaged in continual breakthrough improvements, and change shop floor attitudes from apathy and indifference to cooperation and a sense of ownership in the organization," says Kohli.

One of the significant accomplishments of the program was to break down hierarchical barriers: Frontline employees and their supervisors learned jointly. Although Kohli admits that there were some initial hesitations, he notes that the recognition of the potential benefits of complete participation led to "en masse buy-in."

The program has been offered to 701 employees so far. Follow-up activities included shop-floor problem solving, small group interactions, cross-functional teamwork, and Six Sigma work. ★

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## **Toshiba America Business Solutions** Irvine, California

**T**oshiba's most innovative new learning initiative is Training To Go (TTG), an efficient, mobile, and flexible program to train new dealers with no prior experience with the company's products. It is innovative because no other company in its industry implements a dealer-training program with the same level of mobility, flexibility, and corporate commitment. Also, as a full-service technology company, Toshiba is able to integrate state-of-the-art technology components in the program at a low cost. The company recognized the revenue potential possible with the quick training of new sales reps, and made their success the company's first priority in developing the TTG program.

The TTG program educates new dealers on Toshiba products quickly, allowing them to begin selling the company's products immediately. Training To Go is a blended approach with workbook-based and classroom learning sessions. Delivering the information by way of a variety of methods ensures high retention. And because much of the information is completed at the dealership, participants can return to the field immediately and practice what they've learned to further reinforce their learning. ★

Wipro initiated a 10-fold increase in e-learning and created a separate team to promote and increase the usage of its e-learning content. Along with its content provider partner, Wipro conducted e-learning road shows in six cities where employees could come and see for themselves the portfolio of 2,200 technical titles and 120 soft skill offerings. By the end of the last year, Wipro had 20,000 e-learning users across the organization compared to 1,800 in the previous year, by far surpassing expectations.

Each year Wipro has two cycles of performance measurement where an individual is measured against the goals and his learning needs are reviewed. Apart from a robust performance management system, the company also has an assessment center to help measure the competency levels and the effectiveness of the training. ★

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## **Wipro Technologies** Bangalore, India

**A**s an organization, Wipro has been venturing into e-learning in bits and pieces over the past four years. However, there was no significant impact to the organization. The company understood that relying on instructor-led training could never address its 40 percent growth in employees every year.





## Banking On Learning

**A deliberate emphasis is put on conducting a broad needs assessment rather than a training needs analysis.**

When Bob Spence joined St. George Bank three and a half years ago as manager of learning design and technology, the bank was evolving to place a much greater and more focused emphasis on learning and development for its 8,000 employees. Spence's mandate was to ensure that the bank's transition to a new learning management system and e-learning strategy went smoothly. Fully a quarter of the bank's learning content is devoted to information technology and systems as the institution upgrades the ways in which it serves customers electronically.

The learning function within the HR Division of St. George Bank is called the Corporate Performance Center. Spence reports to the general manager of the CPC, who in turn reports to the group executive for human resources. The CPC's 45 staff members make up 50 percent of the HR group; half work in the learning function and half in performance consulting. They work closely with the business areas and physically operate from within the business.

One of the CPC's main goals is to ensure that training really is the answer to a specific business problem: "Every effort is made to unpack the problem to determine the performance gap... Deliberate emphasis is put on conducting a broad needs assessment rather than a training needs analysis," says Spence. "This mindset and activity draws initial focus away from learning."

In the case of the bank's new web-based frontline teller system, however, the need for training was clear. In a

nine-month process that ended in May last year, the bank transitioned from its previous mainframe system to a streamlined new system that features a custom keyboard and nearly real-time interaction. That change affected all 350 branches and 4,000 employees. Learning activities for the rollout included change management and were delivered primarily via e-learning. "Superusers" from each branch received additional classroom-based workshops in order to act as advocates and gurus to their colleagues at the branches.

The timeframe was tight. "One of the significant challenges was that the system itself was being built on a customized basis for our organization; therefore, scoping of the learning requirements was difficult," says Spence. In some cases, final screen designs were transferred to training modules within two to three hours, as instructional designers built prototypes on old screens. However, Spence says the aggressive schedule is "typical of how this organization works."

### A system takes shape

As the system came together and learning requirements became clearer, instructional designers responded to the workflow analysis and developed specifications for the e-learning. The actual coding of the content was outsourced. Completed material was passed through the bank's usability laboratory for final acceptance testing by typical users, and their suggestions for improvement were incorporated.

Subsequently, users within the branch locations completed the e-learning program and were tested on their retention of the material. Based on their performance, each branch issued a traffic-signal code for readiness: Red meant not ready, amber meant almost there, and green meant go. On the single day when all 350 branches signaled green, the new system went live.

Afterward, the learning and development function conducted a post-implementation review, facilitating focus groups to elicit open, honest

**A quarter of the bank's learning content is devoted to information technology and systems as the institution upgrades the ways in which it serves customers electronically.**

feedback. "This was one of the most valuable pieces of the work," says Spence. "It heralded a method of ensuring organizational learning. It was agreed that the report would remain transparent and consequently proved to be valuable for future large-scale implementations."

As St. George Bank prepares for its next major enterprise-wide project, the implementation of a new customer relationship management system, the learning and development function, is a valued player on the Steering and Change Management committees. "In these forums it is evident that decisions about customer relationship management are in many cases made based on the learning and experience gained from the earlier project," Spence says. ☆

## BEST by the Numbers

Key Benchmarks	BEST Winners (2004 average)
Training expenditure per employee	\$1,554
Learning hours received per employee	36 hours
Expenditure as percentage of payroll	2.86%
Percentage of expenditure outsourced	27.49%

What sets the winners of the 2005 BEST Awards apart from other organizations in the business world? It's a deep commitment of time, money, and attention to the learning process. How does your organization stack up in these key areas?

Source: 2005 State of the Industry report, ASTD.