



Culture & Values Training

a SSE case study

Engaging the Mind...Improving Performance

Business Challenge: One of the largest retailers in North America was faced with the challenges of improving the awareness and understanding of diversity issues in the workplace and changing behavior to create a more supportive and inclusive environment. The target audience was 18,000 globally dispersed professionals filling diverse corporate roles, within disparate organizational hierarchies, speaking a myriad of languages, and universally with limited eLearning experience.

Among the major considerations in developing the training were: First, the client had a very aggressive delivery timeframe coupled with a truly global audience. Secondly, the initiative introduced a somewhat new, abstract and philosophic concepts to learners in which the learning model would need to achieve both procedural and principled performance objectives. Learners would need instruction to recognize and understand a situation, and then combine knowledge, judgment and feedback to take the appropriate actions. Learners must first understand the very essence of diversity, consider its existence and application in the workplace, and simultaneously reflect upon their own beliefs and behavior.

It was also important that learners be able to re-access the learning on an ongoing and self-service basis, as some of the more philosophical topics would need to be revisited. The modules, lessons and events were designed to function as “scaffolding” to support ongoing understanding, development and achievement of the targeted behavior.

Business Solution: A quick analysis of the diversity issues determined that a balance perspective was essential rather than a clearly one-sided viewpoint of deep issues and belief systems. In some cases the learning or content could create an uncomfortable experience if the learners were to immediately realize that they had been acting inappropriately. A sensitive and flexible guided learning model was needed to bring unknowing perpetrators up the learning curve, catalyze new behavior and affect an outcome shift. In addition, the learning had to universally appeal to a diverse body of learners with varied experience. All learners needed to easily discern the issues and consider situational improvements. Consequently, significant effort and creativity were applied to the simulation and role-playing design, piloting and assessment.

To best address these requirements, scenario-based role-playing and simulated interventions were selected to create real life, thought-provoking and self-assessing events. It was determined that asynchronous interactive learning would be the most effective and cost efficient approach.

Results: Because of the audience size, the diversity initiative was deployed in stages. The final element of Blended Learning was the design of an instructor-led version, that completely mirrored all aspects of the interactive learning modules. This version was created to address a portion of the audience that had no access to technology, approximately 10% of the learner base. The instructor-led course was designed so that it could be facilitated by

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other professional instructors, which required the development of curriculum strategy and instructor and student manuals. Further, the scenario-based role-playing and simulation models from the interactive learning programs had to be converted to an instructor-led paradigm, which required a fresh approach to understanding the audience needs.

Defined metrics for success such as, adoption, motivation to complete, understanding of initiative and issues, and drive to improve workplace diversity through knowledge, attitudes and behavior, have received excellent reviews from all levels of management. It is becoming clear that the dynamic blended learning paradigm developed for this diversity training allowed an optimal use of educational resources while creating a very cost effective solution.

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