



# ExecBlueprints™

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## Action Points

### I. How Can On-Demand Learning Programs Help Your Company?

In order to remain successful, a company must continue to ensure that its employees possess the essential skills and knowledge to meet ever-changing job requirements. On-demand learning programs can deliver trainings consistently across the company while allowing people the flexibility to learn according to their own pace and schedule.

### II. The Bottom Line

Establishing an on-demand learning program is an investment – and one that you'll want to monitor carefully to ensure that profitability goals are being met. Are your employees working more efficiently as a result of the trainings? Are they staying at the company longer? Have your net training costs decreased?

### III. Must-Have Strategies for Developing Your Company's Learning Programs

First, you need to assess what your employees need: have rules or skills recently changed in your industry? Which trainings, if any, can be offered online? Second, you should partner with firms that have expertise in building e-learning programs. Finally, mount the programs, and monitor progress and end results. Has job performance improved?

### IV. The Golden Rules for Motivating Employees

In every company, there are people who will take advantage of every opportunity to advance, and there are others who tend to do only what's required. You can increase the latter group's participation in on-demand learning programs by offering them something tangible (as appropriate): a raffle prize, a raise, or even a promotion.

### V. Essential Take-Aways

On-demand learning programs may seem like the magic bullet to address all of a company's training needs, but they can pose their own challenges. How do you reach your employees who have low literacy, or who speak different languages? Perhaps most importantly, which trainings should never be given online?

HR VPs from Scripps Health, Hellmann Worldwide Logistics, and Wells' Dairy on:

## How Your Organization Can Profit From On-Demand Learning

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Change is a constant in today's business world, and any company that does not address the ever-pressing need to train its employees in new processes, technologies, and regulatory requirements will lose its edge — and possibly more. The Web, however, has brought new ways to disseminate learning programs without having to hire instructors and host expensive classroom sessions. Today, many companies are using online learning platforms to teach everything from compliance procedures to the principles of project management. The authors of this ExecBlueprint work for such companies, and describe their experiences with developing, mounting, and benchmarking such trainings. While they can provide a cost-efficient and consistent content delivery system, on-demand programs cannot solve every training need, the authors emphasize, nor are they appropriate for every employee. But, if designed to fit the needs and education levels of their intended audience, they can enable more employees to access more information, resulting in more people who perform better, and who stay at the company longer. ■

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# About the Authors



## **Victor Buzachero**

*Corporate Senior Vice President, Scripps Health*

**V**ictor Buzachero has more than 27 years of human resources and health care experience. He joined Scripps in September 2001 from the Providence Health System, to lead the system's e-health strategy and HIPAA compliance efforts, and develop a strategic human resources plan for the Washington State region.

Prior to his tenure at Providence, Mr. Buzachero served as senior vice president

of human resources and organizational development for the Banner Health System and as senior vice president of human resources for the Samaritan Health System, which is now a part of Banner. During this time, he led new programs for leadership development, service excellence, reduction in employee turnover, and improved employee satisfaction. His efforts to improve organizational development and effectiveness were

recognized by Franklin/Covey with a 1999 "Organization of Excellence" award.

Mr. Buzachero has also held senior executive roles in Presbyterian Health System (Texas Health Resources) and the Baptist Health System.

[Read Vic's insights on Page 3](#)



## **Kenneth A. Finneran**

*VP, Human Resources, Hellmann Worldwide Logistics, Inc.*

**K**enneth A. Finneran has led the human resources department at Hellmann Worldwide Logistics, Inc. (USA) since January 2006. From 2001 to 2005, Mr. Finneran was founder, president, and CEO of ICM – Intellectual Capital Management, an international consulting firm headquartered in Wroclaw, Poland, specializing in HR and organizational consulting, executive search, interim management, and

complex training solutions for multinational companies in Central and Eastern Europe.

Prior to this, Mr. Finneran worked as a consultant to the president for a major central European pharmaceutical company and as a manager for two large multinational HR services companies.

Mr. Finneran's client list included companies such as GM/Opel, Bosch, Bridgestone/Firestone, Saint-Gobain, 3M,

IBM, and Coca Cola. He has held key roles and led teams in the U.S., Germany, and Poland. Mr. Finneran has also conducted dozens of trainings around the world on leadership, management, corporate social responsibility, change management, and cultural aspects in business dealings.

[Read Kenneth's insights on Page 7](#)



## **Thomas D. Posey**

*Senior Vice President, Organizational Capability, Wells' Dairy, Inc.*

**T**homas Posey joined the Wells' Dairy team in September of 2004, bringing an extensive background in human resources with nearly 20 years in the HR field. Mr. Posey came to Wells from Trane in St. Paul, MN, where he was the VP of human resources.

Prior to working for Trane, Mr. Posey was with Bellsouth Corporation in Atlanta, GA, serving as executive director of labor relations and as VP of the business process management group.

Mr. Posey also spent a good portion of his career working for Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc., where he started as a supervisor in the manufacturing area, worked his way to management, and then moved to the HR side of the business, where he spent more than six years in management roles, finishing his career as director of corporate labor relations.

A native of Ohio, Mr. Posey received his B.A. in philosophy from Youngstown State University. He is currently a board

member of the University of Michigan's Executive Education Advisory Committee, a member of the Douglas A. Fraser Center for Workplace Issues' advisory board, and a Six Sigma green belt.

[Read Tom's insights on Page 10](#)

# Victor Buzachero

Corporate Senior Vice President, Scripps Health

## Profitability Goals

Our company is a not-for-profit organization; however, we do strive to generate excess revenues over expenses in order to reinvest in ourselves and our community. As an organization, we have both non-operating income objectives and financial objectives that are tied to our public bond rating. We use the public markets to issue bonds to raise capital. Based upon the financial ratios needed for the highest bond ratings (AAA), we want to make sure that our operating margins hit these benchmarks. We tie our operating income objectives to the public debt markets to obtain the lowest-cost debt based upon these AAA ratings.

Our system also focuses on the EBIDA margin, which represents earnings before interest, depreciation, and amortization. In the for-profit world, they use EBITDA because they have taxable earnings. We don't pay taxes, so we use EBIDA. This target is our measure of cash flow, i.e., what it takes for us to maintain our operations.

The CFO and I conduct monthly operating reviews on an ongoing basis. We meet with each of the operating units to review their financial statements and operating activity in terms of volume, planned capital expenditures, and development of services. We want to make sure they are meeting our profitability targets.

*When training must be consistent throughout the entire organization, online training allows people the flexibility to work at their own pace while receiving exposure to the same information.*

Victor Buzachero

Corporate Senior Vice President  
Scripps Health

## Our Learning Programs

We have a series of programs, most of which are just-in-time training programs that focus on five areas:

- Compliance
- Quality
- Productivity/Patient Satisfaction
- Business Practices
- Clinical Practices

As a health care organization, we have recently become increasingly regulated; therefore, all employees move through a tremendous amount of compliance training concerning patient confidentiality, HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), Medicare, and security compliance. Programs that require training on an annual basis are all conducted online. For most, people must demonstrate a level of competency and knowledge, which is then documented in employee files and as part of annual performance reviews and compliance documentation.

## Compliance and Quality

Each operational area has unique considerations. People working in laboratories have certain privacy regulations, while people working as coders and abstracters in patient medical records have a different



**Victor Buzachero**

Corporate Senior Vice President  
Scripps Health

*"As the country is pushing for greater transparency and increased demonstration of quality outcomes in health care, our organization is moving to another level of skill development in quality techniques as a strategic initiation."*

- Over 27 years' experience in HR and health care
- Leads e-health strategy and HIPAA compliance efforts
- Previously with Providence Health System
- Recipient, 1999 "Organization of Excellence" award

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level of confidentiality regulations. Each manager and leader has an obligation to maintain compliance documentation for their staff. Our courses are, therefore, custom-designed for the population's requirements.

As we roll out different system-wide initiatives, we have training available online for the entire organization. For example, people access and use a tutorial to demonstrate competency in service standards.

## Productivity and Patient Satisfaction

Last year, we initiated a gain-sharing program based on the organization's EBIDA performance and patient satisfaction. We provided online training and education, including an online calculator that sits on our Web site each month as information comes in. On this site, employees can enter information into a worksheet that will calculate what their incentive bonus will likely be at the end of the year based upon performance results.

We also provide an online best practice tutorial. If people want to learn more about how to control costs, improve EBIDA, or enhance patient satisfaction on the unit where they work, there are specific tutorials for that. We may talk about how to grow revenue, how to decrease expense, how to improve patient satisfaction, or how to improve our responsiveness to requests. The process is driven by the organization's patient satisfaction and financial targets, which are part of our annual operating and strategic plans.

## Business Training

We also use online training for skills development in our collections and patient financial services areas. When designing these trainings, we do encounter some limitations related to education. People that go through the trainings on insurance, collection services, and billing all have different educational levels. Because we are finding that people are struggling with traditional training, we are looking at other ways of addressing the challenge.

In the business office, we have 500 to 600 people on the job. Because we have high turnover rates, we are constantly bringing in new people. Our training is replicated constantly for a large number of people; therefore, our on-demand online training offerings provide consistent and standardized skill development. Most business office clericals are not highly trained people to begin with; many of them have a high school degree and limited, or no, college or technical school education. For this reason, the online offering must be simple.

## Clinical Training

As patient units become more computerized, our clinical professionals are using handhelds to chart and take vital signs and enter them into the system. We are also becoming more sophisticated with our online electronic medical records, which has necessitated training all of our clinical people online. Our clinical population is about 8,000 out of our 12,000 people. On an annual basis, if the turnover is just 10 percent, that means we have 800 new people who need training.

Additionally, staff members must recertify their skill sets by completing online refresher courses. The online training is on demand and focused for business and clinical purposes. This material must be consistently presented to the 8,000 people who need to receive it. In addition, we require economy of scale, speed, and access.

## Online Advantages

When training must be consistent throughout the entire organization, online trainings allow people the flexibility to work at their own pace while receiving the same information. People working online independently

## Online Best Practices Tutorials: How Do They Work?

What is their subject matter?

Methods for . . .

- Controlling costs
- Improving EBIDA (earnings before interest, depreciation, and amortization)
- Enhancing patient satisfaction

What are specific topics?

- Growing revenue
- Decreasing expense
- Improving patient satisfaction
- Hastening responsiveness to requests

What drives the development of these tutorials?

- The organization's patient satisfaction and financial targets contained in annual operating and strategic plans

*Using automation today, we can do virtually anything. We can set up mannequins in laboratories and teach people how to start an IV line. We can have the model electronically hooked into the computer so that as someone is inserting an IV, it immediately feeds them data about whether they are doing it correctly. Users can even get direct communication from a faculty member who is observing the process. Frankly, however, the cost is almost prohibitive unless you are teaching many people at the same time. It is simpler to have an instructor meet with 25 people every three or four weeks.*

Victor Buzachero

Corporate Senior Vice President  
Scripps Health

can proceed through a consistent educational program and take a standardized exam to demonstrate their competency. Online training also enables documentation to be consistent.

When compared with classroom trainers, Web-based technology is very inexpensive. However, it can't be used for everything; in order to teach somebody how to intubate a patient, for example, someone should be right there teaching. But when training is intellectually based, it can be distributed through online information systems that not only do it faster and cheaper, but also document results with greater consistency.

## **Motivating Employees**

Motivating employees to take advantage of on-demand learning opportunities is driven by accountability. People who want to learn are motivated to learn. When training is required for everyone, some people are motivated because they truly want to do it, while a large number of people are motivated only because it is required and a

level of accountability exists. They know that if their name is not on the list, they have a problem. People who are interested in promotion or advancement may be disappointed to find out that online learning, in itself, will not get them promoted; their performance and relationships are going to earn them the promotion.

Consequently, there isn't much that our organization can do to motivate people to go online to learn. What we can do is hold people accountable and make online learning available anytime, anywhere so that it is easier for them to meet their accountabilities. This format gives people the flexibility and freedom to learn when they want to learn.

We do use incentives through our Web-based "company store," where people can buy logo golf shirts or company logo briefcases. We have offered credit for completion of online training in the form of dollars to use at this store. We have also raffled off certain prizes for the first people who go online.

## **Challenge Overview**

Scripps is located in one of the most diverse communities in the U.S. Because we are a health care organization, we have employees ranging from highly trained professionals to service workers and groundskeepers.

In San Diego, not everyone is proficient with the English language or online skills. Additionally, a percentage of our staff only has access to the Internet through their children or at work. Our challenge, then, is teaching people how to use something that will still be easy even if they possess no prior knowledge.

## **Language Issues**

Being so diverse, our employees speak many different languages. We have a large number of Latinos who are Spanish speaking. Close to 20 percent of our employees are Filipino. Most can speak English, but there are a few who do struggle. This limited proficiency does limit their abilities in the use of computers. However, there are only so many languages that we can add to an online system and have it still be cost-effective.

## *Time and Complexity Issues*

One of our other challenges is understanding what content fits and what doesn't fit into an online format. Not everything can be taught online; some topics require demonstration. We can use interactive video as part of the online process and show demonstrations digitally, but each time we do one, the cost and complexity begin to grow. The

online process becomes less simple and greater time is needed.

People who have recently entered the workforce are more comfortable spending an extended amount of time learning on computers than people who were taught only in the classroom. We still need to realize that not everybody has the same learning style. The more extensive the online process gets, the more likely we are to lose people who

prefer learning in face-to-face environments.

Twenty years from now, this will be a non-issue. Everybody will be comfortable with online learning. Today, however, the more simple and consistent standardized approaches to online learning are the easiest to adapt, the quickest to use, and the most effective. ■

# Kenneth A. Finneran

VP, Human Resources, Hellmann Worldwide Logistics, Inc.

## Our Use of On-Demand Learning

On-Demand learning is an area that we are moving toward. Before I arrived at Hellmann, there were no real on-demand learning options or opportunities. In the past, we had an online training provider that mounted specific trainings regarding logistic needs for safety and hazmat topics, but they did not get into soft skills. The training covered the legal regulations of working in a warehouse, such as driving a truck and operating a forklift, but it did not contain management courses. Regular classroom trainings were not structured.

As a team, we realized that on-demand learning could be a driver of value. It could lead to higher retention levels, reduction in overall employee turnover, and the ability to choose successors from within. Even our overseas offices are taking advantage of some of the leaders that we have been able to develop over the past two years.

While we have made initial steps to develop online training and blended learning opportunities for our employees, we realize that we cannot discount how important classroom trainings are. On-demand training can also be classroom training. We have

*We believe that if we can enhance the knowledge capabilities of our employees, we are going to profit in the long run.*

Kenneth A. Finneran  
VP, Human Resources  
Hellmann Worldwide Logistics, Inc.

yielded outstanding results. We've brought key managers together at least once or twice a year to interact and learn best practices from one another. That personal interaction is tough to put a value on. When our managers put a face to a name, we see more profits the following year. These types of relationships are something that you can't fully establish over the phone.

## Current Goals

Our immediate goal is to achieve profitable growth in all of our products, which include airfreight, ocean freight, contract logistics and consulting, domestic transport, and customs brokerage. Due to the ever-increasing complexity of the supply chain, it is vital that our employees are armed with the proper competencies to be able to service the growing demands of our customers.

As we strive to create value for our company and our customers beyond the traditional realm of freight forwarding, innovation and creativity play a major role in our development. We encourage employees to come up with innovative means to satisfy the three pillars of our value proposition to customers: speed, quality, and flexibility.

## HR's Role

We are constantly looking for effective and efficient ways to increase the knowledge base of the operations staff in the field from a cost and time standpoint. We believe that if we can enhance the knowledge capabilities of our employees, we are going to profit in the long run.



**Kenneth A. Finneran**

VP, Human Resources  
Hellmann Worldwide Logistics, Inc.

*"Over the past year and a half, we have been able to approach organizational learning and individual employee development as a vital part of our strategic growth initiatives."*

- With company since 2006
- Previously founder, president, and CEO, ICM – Intellectual Capital Management
- Served as manager for HR services companies
- Trainer in the areas of change management and cultural aspects of business

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If we can provide best practice solutions to our sales force and allow them to present those solutions to our valued customers, we will ultimately profit. Consequently, we encourage the sales and operations staff to search for greater billing opportunities that are aligned to higher levels of service, because even getting \$10 more per file means millions of dollars for our company at the end of the year.

Tactics as simple as asking sales reps to convince customers to buy insurance for freight through our company could be huge. While the

customer needs this insurance, often companies (including ours) miss out on this opportunity, because it is not presented at the time of sale. We expect that our push for increased sales of insurance alone will generate several hundreds of thousands of dollars for our company this year.

## Best Practices

We are currently evaluating several online programs to augment our offerings in expanded classroom trainings as well as expand our currently limited online trainings. We expect to partner with some of the leading e-learning firms such as Skillsoft or Learn.com for the majority of course content. However, we need to determine to what extent their skill set extends beyond industry-specific knowledge. We will evaluate their offerings on a course-specific basis in all cases. Harassment training will likely be implemented by an online training company that is working in collaboration with a law firm.

We have a structured approach to employee learning. In the past, performance appraisals featured one open-ended question that assessed learning needs. We had no systematized way to collect the information, put it in an Excel table, find offerings on behalf of the employees, and then prepare a structured employee development program for the staff.

This year, we created an Excel table that fills up a whole page of the performance appraisal. The managers and employees can put a check mark next to the training they believe could help them achieve their goals within the branch. It could be something as simple as advanced training on our operating

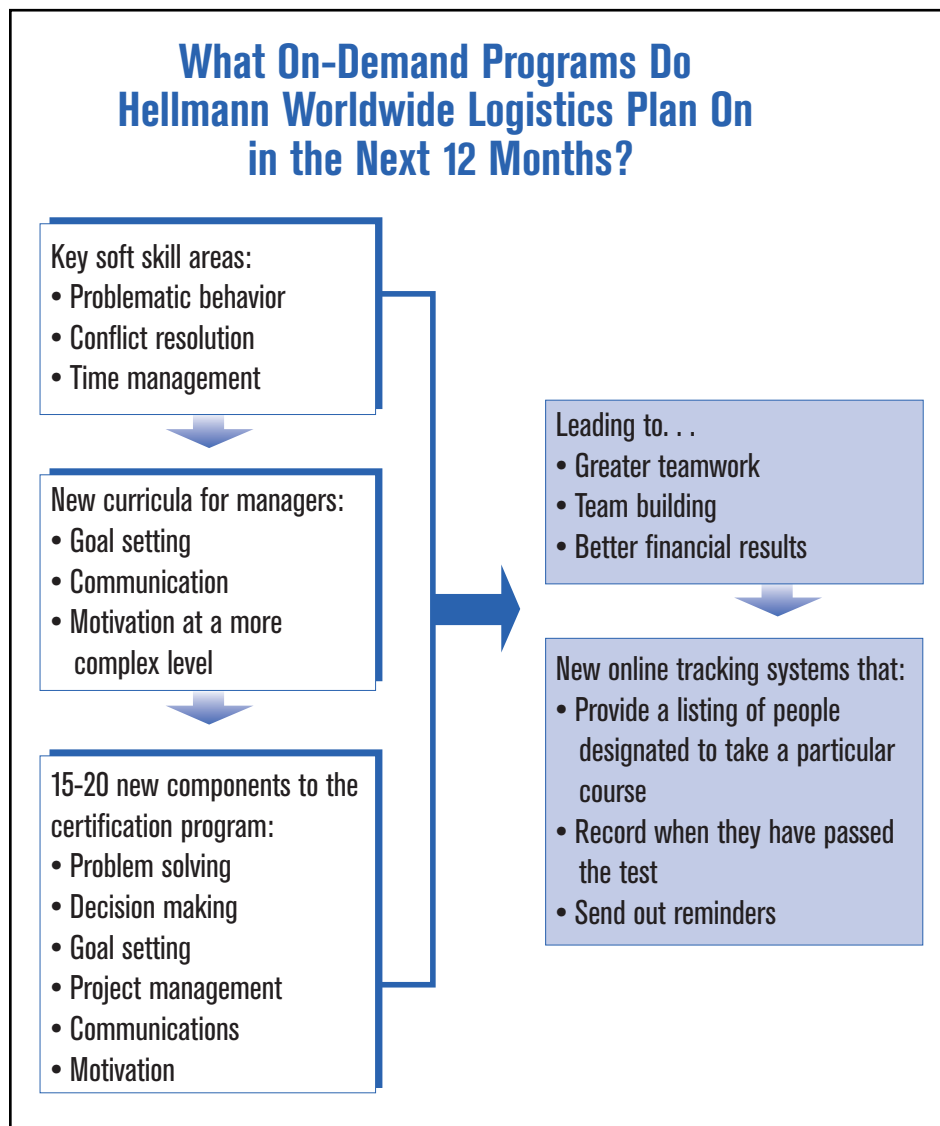
system or as complex as project management skills, negotiation skills, communication skills, and/or business ethics skills to enable employees to achieve more profitability with the businesses that they close.

As soon as we get the charts back, we put the results in tabular form within Excel. Then, we build training programs online or in classrooms based on our findings. We have a library of videos, CDs, and DVDs on elements such as leadership, safety issues, and legal issues, which we can show either

individually or in combination with one another in a classroom-training atmosphere.

## The Future

In the next 12 months, we plan to introduce more on-demand programs. People will be able to select online programs in key soft skill areas such as dealing with problematic behavior, conflict resolution, and time management. We will also be looking at developing curricula that addresses goal setting, communication, and motivation at



a more complex level for our operations managers, branch managers, and corporate managers.

The second part of our certification program is a classroom learning environment with an outdoor element. We are going to be expanding the on-demand portion and the online portion with 15-20 offerings focused on problem solving, decision making, goal setting, project management, communications, and motivation that will lead to greater teamwork, team building, and ultimately better financial results.

We also intend to set up an online tracking system for these learning needs. If somebody is slated to receive communication and motivation training, we will track their progress on these modules with this tool. The system will also allow us to send out reminders to

## Top Demands

Our top three training programs are very specific to our industry. They are required programs related to the security and safety demands for handling freight. These trainings allow the Department of Homeland Security and the Transportation & Security Administration to verify that people who are in contact with cargo have received a certification in security training. I don't consider them on demand, but they are quite interactive. The on-demand programs that will get attention are going to be in the areas of project management, communication, negotiations, sales techniques, and dealing with problematic behavior.

make sure people have taken the online program and passed the test upon completion.

## Benchmarking

We try to find measurements to gauge the success of each training. We lump motivation, communication, team building, and teamwork together in a leadership element that we measure in various ways. We use 360-degree performance appraisals

and we also look at the retention of individuals in the branch. When we implement safety trainings, we look at the number of workman's comp claims before and after the training. For OSHA training, we look at the number of incidents. For sales training, we look at the return on investment measured by the increase in sales volume and profitability. ■

# Thomas D. Posey

Senior Vice President, Organizational Capability, Wells' Dairy, Inc.

*New technology will allow people to do training in real time. They can start it, stop it, and complete it at their own pace.*

Thomas D. Posey  
Senior Vice President,  
Organizational Capability  
Wells' Dairy, Inc.

## Programs

We ultimately view profitability as being dependent on the quality of our people and our performance culture. Although we have only recently begun to focus on the developmental culture, we have a Blue Bunny University as well as a new OD director. Many of our programs are in their infancy right now.

We do conduct some production training that addresses action learning, safety and maintenance training, and levels of certification regarding maintenance. We also have a lab for computer-based trainings, video programs, and instructor-led training.

We are currently spending a lot of time with clients trying to understand their needs and conducting gap analysis. With the clients, we are developing trainings that are

tightly focused and targeted, with our clients' needs in mind.

## Support from Senior Management

Organizational capability is in a great place right now. We have leaders in operations, sales, finance, marketing, purchasing, and logistics that are clamoring for our services and expertise.

Our leaders at Wells' Dairy know that they are not going to be successful as individuals, teams, departments, or collectively as a corporation without working with OC to deliver the four components of talent, development, performance, and goals. We are essentially operating in a "pull" environment with our client organizations bringing our services into their groups.

## Best Practices

We are making great strides on our computer-based training, with some best-in-class video training modules, and our job skills trainers are embedded in operations and maintenance. These trainers develop standard operating procedures that are directly focused on the needs of production workers and first-line people.

We motivate employees to take advantage of on-demand learning opportunities. In operations, we



**Thomas D. Posey**  
Senior Vice President,  
Organizational Capability  
Wells' Dairy, Inc.

*"In the last few years, our on-demand offerings have increased because of the Blue Bunny University learning culture climate. In the three years that I have been here, they have doubled."*

- With company since 2004
- Over 20 years in the HR field
- Previously VP of HR at Trane (St. Paul, MN)
- Former director, corporate labor relations, Anheuser-Busch
- B.A., philosophy, Youngstown State University

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offer pay increases when training is completed as well as the ability to move into different promotional opportunities. In maintenance, we also have pay increases and a chain of promotion for completion.

## Feedback

Every program has an evaluation that is computerized and paper-based. When we get the feedback, we look at both quantitative and qualitative data about the training. We store this data in a database that is standardized so that we can

## Communication

We have just dedicated a skilled individual to internal communications. We are doing a great job externally from a PR point of view. As we get deeper into our learning and development culture, our internal communications person can help us communicate our offerings. As part of our employee value proposition, we are giving people opportunities to develop.

compare apples to apples as far as how various training programs are meeting our needs.

## **New Programs**

In the next year, we plan to introduce new on-demand programs. The more information we have regarding needs analysis, the more we will know about what we should accomplish within the organization. There will be specific programs around supervisory training, continuous improvement, lean manufacturing, and Six Sigma.

## **Constraints**

The challenges we presently face in developing and implementing on-demand programs involve constraints in resources and the programs' costs. We do a priority analysis with clients to determine which offerings will have the greatest return on investment, the greatest need, and the greatest potential benefit.

## **Technology Improvements**

In the next year, we are going to offer more computer-based training, including specific instruction in equipment and procedures that people can pull down in real time when they need it.

## **Wells' Dairy to Offer New On-Demand Courses in the Next Year**

Supervisory training

Continuous improvement

Lean manufacturing

Six Sigma

Most of our courses are instructional. An instructor takes individuals through the training. New technology, however, will allow people to do training in real time. They can start it, stop it, and complete it at their own pace. We believe that technology will improve the delivery and the action learning associated with it.

## **Benchmarking**

We do not spend a lot of time benchmarking against other

companies; when we do perform such comparisons, it is for specific and targeted reasons. For instance, if we were to benchmark a company to learn more about how they were delivering on-demand learning, we would look to best practice performers and then do our best to understand the outcomes of the learning/training. We have always tended to focus on better ways to achieve lasting outcomes rather than copy the activities of others. ■

# Ideas to Build Upon & Action Points

## *I. How Can On-Demand Learning Programs Help Your Company?*

Given the constantly changing nature of the markets, technologies, and regulations in today's business world, your employees must continue to acquire new skill sets as well as knowledge in order to perform their jobs effectively. Often, however, there isn't enough time or adequate resources to conduct formal trainings. On-demand programs, which are delivered primarily, but not exclusively, through the Web, can help fill the gap by offering consistent training that people can access on a flexible basis in the following areas:

- Compliance and recertification in order to stay up to date regarding HIPAA and safety best practices
- Tutorials for improving performance, such as in controlling costs and improving customer satisfaction
- Skill enhancement, such as conflict resolution, business practices, and communications
- New technologies, such as patient records systems for clinicians
- Professional development programs for managers in goal setting, project management, and supervisory strategies

## *II. The Bottom Line*

To stay competitive, companies must continue to invest in enhancing their employees' skills and knowledge. Any company that wants an effective and efficient way to increase the knowledge base of its employees should consider offering online trainings that people can access and engage at their own pace. But how can you determine if the trainings are paying for themselves? Key financial considerations are:

- What economies of scale, speed, and access have been achieved by offering trainings online versus in traditional classroom settings?
- Since offering courses over the Web, how much has your company saved in training costs (e.g., trainers, travel, lost productivity)?

- When is it more cost-effective to continue with live trainings (such as in cases where demonstrations are required)?
- Are employees practicing the cost-saving or revenue-enhancement strategies that are outlined in your tutorials? To what effect?
- How have your on-demand trainings contributed to employee retention and development?

## *III. Must-Have Strategies for Developing Your Company's Learning Programs*

Even with today's technological capabilities, you will still not be able to deliver every training online. Part of the craft in establishing effective employee and management development programs lies in choosing the medium that will prove most effective in delivering content and building skills. Approaches that have proved useful in establishing such programs include:

- Gathering information during the performance-appraisal process regarding which trainings will help the employee meet their next goals
- Partnering with leading e-learning firms such as Skillsoft or Learn.com to develop content — and evaluating those companies for the skill set that they can offer
- Continuing live trainings in cases where personal interaction is an integral part of the learning process, such as for sharing personal experiences and demonstrating techniques
- Maintaining libraries of videos, CDs, and DVDs on essential topics related to your industry, including safety and legal issues
- Tracking employees' progress in their trainings, and sending reminders when necessary
- Assessing the value of trainings through 360 performance appraisals, retention levels, employee performance, and workman's comp claims

## *IV. The Golden Rules for Motivating Employees*

You've established online learning programs that your employees can access and take at their own pace. Now, how are you going to encourage people to take advantage of these opportunities, especially in cases where the trainings are not required? The following strategies have proven effective in increasing employee involvement with company-sponsored learning programs:

- In environments where incentive bonuses are offered, providing online calculators that employees can use to calculate their bonuses if performance and education goals are met
- Linking promotion and advancement opportunities to participation in training programs
- Giving raises at the completion of training
- Offering credits that can be redeemed at either a virtual or actual company store
- Raffle off prizes to the first people who access a new course

## *V. Essential Take-Aways*

On-demand learning programs have many advantages. They offer consistent training across the company for a fraction of what classroom trainings cost, they allow employees to proceed at their own pace, and they can be monitored for activity. Setting up such programs and ensuring that they're used is not, however, without challenges, which can include:

- Determining which courses are amenable to online presentation, and which are not
- When resources are limited, identifying the offerings that are needed the most and/or will yield the greatest return on investment
- Designing content that's appropriate for people of disparate ages, educational levels, and learning styles
- Accommodating employees who speak different languages
- Connecting with employees who lack Internet access at home ■



## 10 KEY QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS

- 1 What are your company's current profitability goals? How do they differ by product or service line? If not, why not? Have they changed over time?
- 2 What standard operating procedures are currently in place to drive profitability? How effective are they? How is this measured?
- 3 What types of on-demand learning programs are currently available to your employees? How are they delivered? What are the relative advantages to the on-demand format versus traditional classroom models?
- 4 What role does HR play in developing on-demand programs to achieve profitability goals? What type of support does HR receive from senior management in developing programs for employees?
- 5 What are your best practices for implementing on-demand learning at your company? How are results measured? How often?
- 6 How do you motivate employees to take advantage of on-demand learning opportunities? Do you offer incentives for participation? Why or why not? How do you elicit employee feedback on the programs?
- 7 To what extent have your on-demand offerings increased in the last five years? What factors do you attribute to this increase? If they have not increased, why not?
- 8 In the next 12 months, do you plan to introduce new on-demand programs? How were these chosen? How do you plan to notify employees of the new offerings? How will these new offerings serve profitability goals? What level of participation do you expect? Why?
- 9 What challenges does your company presently face in developing and implementing on-demand programs? How can HR help address them? To what extent is cost a challenge? What type of technological challenges, if any, do you face?
- 10 In the next 12 months, how do you plan to use technology to improve your on-demand programs? If you plan no improvements, why not? How will technology enable more employees – even those in remote areas – to access the programs?