



Learning Leaders

Innovation, Excellence

BY LINDA GALLOWAY

The 2007 Learning Leaders represent a wide variety of organizations. All demonstrate innovation, business impact and excellence in corporate learning.

Following are highlights about each winner, as well as observations from Bersin & Associates judges. Watch upcoming issues of *Elearning!* Magazine for detailed case studies of winners. Bersin & Associates will publish the report, "Learning Leaders 2007: Lessons from the Best," in early 2008.



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Judge: Josh Bersin

"These programs are fantastic examples of what we mean by 'high-impact learning,'" says Bersin. "Each winner developed a program to address a significant operational issue. The programs were based on comprehensive analyses of the associated business problems and specific learner needs. All were accompanied with strong change management, high levels of innovation and business-based metrics. And finally, all programs achieved demonstrable business results."

Rockwell Collins: The Life Cycle Value Stream Program is a complex initiative designed to instill core company values and teach the company's business model and key practices to audiences throughout the corporation. This is an excellent example of using learning to strengthen the company culture, foster competitive advantages and increase customer value. Few companies of this size (20,000 employees) have the discipline, commitment and executive support to tackle such a program.

Wachovia: Its new-hire program for tellers is a 28-hour interactive course that covers all aspects of a teller's job. Its main objectives are to ensure proper job fit, reduce turnover, increase speed to competency and maintain excellent customer service. The learning objectives are clear, the feedback is meaningful and direct, the

simulations are realistic and engaging. In pilots, turnover within the first 90 days was 3.6 percent lower, accompanied by a significant increase in sales credits and reduction in policy violations.

SAP: This company has software developers in six different countries. It developed a six-part curriculum on managing virtual project teams to help project leaders learn how to effectively manage such cross-cultural teams. To appeal to software developers and minimize cultural sensitivities, the curriculum uses an overarching narrative about the imaginary planet Orth, which has challenges similar to those on Earth. The company calculated that the program added approximately \$2 million in value.

Extra Space Storage: Designed to teach sales representatives how to sell renter protection insurance, the Customer Protection Plan sales program is an excellent example of how learning can directly impact business. This simple, low-cost, blended program drove insurance revenue up 140 percent. Weekly e-mail updates, training at sales meetings, well-executed marketing, public recognition of top performers and a continual focus on the key program metrics contributed to its success.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EXCELLENCE

Judge: Kim Lamoureux

"Both category winners exemplify the six best practices found by our research to have significant business impact," says Lamoureux. "These include engagement of senior executives, the identification of specific leadership competencies, targeting multiple levels of leadership and aligning initiatives to business challenges and strategy."

Trinity Health: The fourth largest Catholic health system in the United States employs more than 44,000. Its Leadership Series was developed to help bring two organizational cultures together after a merger and to build a strong leadership pipeline. Courses run from 8 to 24 months and include participants from all disciplines in order to encourage cross-organizational networking. Learning action plans are tied to business challenges, such as reducing missed dosages and protecting blood cultures from contamination.

Business Development Bank of Canada: In 2003, about 50 percent of new first-level managers at this company had been working for less than three years in the organization. Its Transitional Leadership Program targets promising employees who want to move into a first-level management position within the next two years. Participants make a year-long commitment to the program.

TECHNOLOGY EXCELLENCE

Judge: Chris Howard

"This year's winner offers the industry a best-practice blueprint for LMS consolidation," says Howard. "The project was based on a detailed business analysis and relied on a strong partnership with IT. In addition to saving money, the project transformed learning at CA and simplified the work life of every employee."

CA, Inc.: CA's implementation of an enterprise-wide LMS, which replaced nine different legacy systems, is an example of how to do a complex implementation right. Now in use by all 17,000 employees, the solution will be rolled out to customers next year. Integrated with the LMS are technologies for collaboration "rooms," podcasting, virtual labs and classrooms. Financial analyses project a reduction in capital expenses of 57 percent by next year, plus a 57 percent reduction in cost per learner.



LEARNING INITIATIVE EXCELLENCE

Judge: Kim Lamoureux

"These winners — all technology companies — used learning to solve specific business issues," says Lamoureux. "Their goals were well-defined and their metrics business-focused. Interestingly, all initiatives were related to improving customer service and were driven by high-profile, empowered teams formed expressly to solve the challenges."

SumTotal Systems: Within the last year, SumTotal Systems launched two major initiatives, Total Immersion and Total Satisfaction, both of which drove noteworthy business results, including reduced time to competency for new technical and service employees, improved employee retention and increased customer satisfaction. The programs were conceived and developed by a new Talent Management Group, empowered by senior executives to cut through organizational obstacles and to address the underlying factors of customer satisfaction.

Hewlett-Packard Software: This technology giant revamped technical training for internal employees, partners and customers. A new organization, Global Technology Enablement, drove and managed the change, which included a global LMS implementation and the creation of HP Software University. A sophisticated content model leverages SMEs and content for multiple learning audiences to rapidly deliver new product training to key audiences. Two of many impressive business results: training volume has increased by almost 400 percent and average time-to-market for training is now 28 days, down from 120.

CA, Inc.: CA's Security Training Program targets all employees involved in sales, support and services for the company's complex IT security products. The program, which was implemented in 10 weeks, covers positioning, demonstrating, selling, implementing, integrating and troubleshooting. Business impact was immediate. Product sales rose 12 percent, service revenues increased about 25 percent, and problem escalations dropped by 19 percent.

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

Judge: Leighanne Levensaler

"While these winners are quite different,

they both demonstrate strong best practices," says Levensaler. "For instance, Citibank prioritizes its programs according to business needs and uses a consistent and business-focused approach to measurement. The NSTA's content strategy and standards ensures scalability and reusability, and its governance ensures representation and alignment."

Citibank Asia Pacific Consumer Bank: Citibank APAC's regional learning and development system is organized into eight learning academies, each designed to support specific functional areas, such as retail banking, direct sales and customer service. Each academy has its own mission, priorities and curriculum in order to maintain a tight business alignment. The business focus has paid off. Within the last year, Citibank Indonesia moved from seventh to first place in a major customer service survey and Citibank Philippines reduced collections-related complaints by 50 percent.

National Science Teachers Association: The NSTA, which supports 2.1 million U.S. science teachers, takes a highly methodological, systems-based approach to professional development. A board of directors, a council, a representative congress and a corporate advisory board evaluate budgets and initiatives in accordance with the association's five-year strategic plan. The mission of the association's Learning Center is to support the professional development requirements of K-12 science teachers, which vary state by state, with highly cost-efficient and effective online content and other resources.

VENDOR INNOVATION

Judge: Chris Howard

"This was a very tough category to judge because we had many excellent applications," says Howard. "All companies recognized had solutions that had a strong element of innovation — some through use of technology, others by creating new processes or through unique customizations. All winners also brought to us very compelling examples of business impact."

Sonic Foundry (tools): Mediasite is a Webcast presentation tool that provides a very rich viewing experience. Mediasite can capture video, slides and audio. The company has patented the technology used to capture and automatically index and

2007 Honorable Mentions

Operational Excellence

- >> AT&T (www.att.com): Implemented blended learning initiative for sales and service employees and customers worldwide designed to help business customers manage accounts online.
- >> Symantec (www.symantec.com): Launched global employee training initiative to support strategic new product rollout.
- >> RWD (www.rwd.com): Developed onboarding program tightly integrated with its other operational processes.

Leadership Development Excellence

- >> Luxottica (www.luxottica.com): Implemented talent management program to build bench strength in its leadership ranks and share talent across retail brands.

Initiative Excellence

- >> Carlson Wagonlit Travel (www.carlsonwagonlit.com): Devised business game for customer-facing employees designed to show connection between the front line and financial performance.

Vendor Innovation:

- >> Articulate (www.articulate.com): Rapid E-Learning Studio Pro, an integrated suite of three desktop authoring tools
- >> Enspire (www.enspire.com): Account Challenge, a simulation engine designed to develop and improve soft skills for salespeople and customer service representatives
- >> Harbinger Knowledge Products (www.harbingerknowledge.com): Custom Interactivity Building Solution (CIBS), a rapid and cost effective methodology for e-learning content development

Learning Leaders Vendors*

- >> Akamai (www.akamai.com) — high-performance content delivery
- >> Allen Communication Services (www.allencomm.com) — performance consulting and needs assessment
- >> Blackboard (www.blackboard.com) — online learning course management
- >> Books24x7 (www.books24x7.com) — on-demand business, technical and engineering content
- >> Centra (www.centra.com) — virtual classroom platform (now part of Saba)
- >> Enspire Learning (www.enspire.com) — custom interactive simulations
- >> Gallup (www.gallup.com/consulting/40/Gallup-Consulting.aspx) — Q12 Engagement survey
- >> Harvard Business School (http://harvardbusinessonline.org) — Harvard ManageMentor reference tool on business topics
- >> Interwise (www.interwise.com) — Web conferencing provider (now part of AT&T)
- >> OutStart (www.outstart.com) — Evolution LCMS
- >> Plateau (www.plateau.com) — LMS
- >> Pulse Learning (www.pulselearning.com) — customized learning solutions
- >> SumTotal (www.sumtotal.com) — TotalLMS, TotalLCMS
- >> SkillSoft (www.skillsoft.com) — off-the-shelf courseware
- >> Surgient (www.surgient.com) — virtual lab applications
- >> Vangent (www.vangent.com) — consulting, systems integration and human capital management solutions

*Not all applicants specified vendor names.

synchronize what the presenter says (both audio and video) with visual aids (RGB-based presentation content). Mediasite automatically creates searchable online content catalogs that index and organize presentations, making it a valuable component of a rapid e-learning solution.

Mohive (tools): The e-Learning Publishing System is a Web-based authoring tool with features that support collaborative content development and actual workflow. Customers can rapidly create courses around product launches, compliance and process enhancements. Site licenses eliminate the need for multiple desktop licenses and further encourage enterprise-wide collaboration. Content is XML-based, so it can be integrated with leading LMSs.

Regis Learning Solutions (tools): SimPort simplifies the creation of interactive, complex simulations. The tool reduces costs and development time and gives customers the ability to maintain and modify simulations on their own. Simulations are SCORM-compliant for LMS integration. This is a tool that makes it much more practical and efficient to include simulations in learning.

Kognito (platform): This smart platform creates realistic scenarios for development of interpersonal skills through the use of virtual characters. Kognito goes beyond the typical branching storyline approach to simulations and instead utilizes a complex rules engine and behavior feedback mechanism. Learners can employ multiple strategies and tactics to accomplish objectives and receive detailed feedback upon conclusion.

Plateau (platform): iContent addresses many of the most problematic challenges related to content management. The iContent portal enables organizations to find, preview and buy titles from top content providers. Organizational content assets are securely stored and managed in a single repository. Plateau's offering includes services for testing and updating content, managing multiple providers and content integration. Per-transaction pricing models give customers the ability to predict and control costs.

SkillSoft (platform): KnowledgeCenters give companies a way to immediately implement on-demand learning through easy-to-navigate learning portals. Each KnowledgeCenter includes a variety of resources (articles, courses, books, simula-

tions, etc.) selected by a SkillSoft SME and updated monthly. Learning roadmaps guide learners with different skill levels.

KnowledgeCenters cover topics such as Six Sigma, Microsoft Office, leadership and C#.

Vangent (business process): This company created a rigorous new teller training program for Bank of America to increase standardization and impact quality assurance. Based on a Level 4 performance analysis, the program includes e-learning, coaching, job aids and job shadowing. New tellers also have an opportunity to practice key skills before using on the job. The results are impressive. Error reductions and improved accuracy in end-of-day balances is anticipated to save the company more than \$15 million.

Ninth House (business process): Ninth House offers customized blended programs for leadership development that are both scalable and engaging. The programs combine high-quality online courses; classroom work sessions and materials; InstantAdvice, a performance support system; and evaluations and metrics. The company use of blended solutions provide a comprehensive learning experience rather than a one-time learning event.

PulseLearning (business process): This Learning Leader created two rapid content development processes designed to reduce the time-to-market and development for technical training and minimize the time required of SMEs. By addressing these challenges within the context of the courseware development lifecycle, PulseLearning brought significant improvements to its client, software giant CA, Inc. Development productivity increased by 52 percent, time-to-market was cut by half, and SME involvement was dramatically reduced.

Bluepoint Leadership Development (business process): The Leadership Experience workshop addresses the skills required to shift from mid-level to enterprise-level leadership. The workshop focuses on topics such as influence, change management, organizational design and coaching. But the real innovation comes through in the customized approach in adapting materials to clients' cultures, organizational structures, business challenges and goals. The company frequently links its program to other third-party programs for comprehensive solutions. 