



Case Study

WellPoint

Health insurance provider increases employee satisfaction, retention through e-learning

Challenge

According to WellPoint surveys, associate satisfaction at WellPoint's BCBS of Georgia division in 2003 was 62 percent – below the national company average of 69 percent. The company needed to increase associate satisfaction and first-year employee retention through focused, career development opportunities.

Solution

WellPoint's learning and development staff created and implemented the Associate Career Development Program in 2004. The program includes a job-specific competency model, and related learning opportunities, including ILT, in-house book collections and SkillSoft e-learning.

Results

A follow-up survey showed a 15 percent improvement in associate satisfaction, with 35 percent of targeted associates actively participating in the program. Among first-year associates, turnover decreased from 39.7 percent to 28.2 percent, saving the company an average of \$13,000 per employee in lost training investment.

Headquartered in Indiana, WellPoint is a leading health benefits company serving about 28 million medical members and 80 million specialty members in the United States. It has more than 38,000 employees and owns Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plans in 13 states, including California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Virginia and Wisconsin. WellPoint also serves customers through a number of specialty companies and subsidiaries including HealthLink, UniCare and AdminaStar Federal.

In January 2003, WellPoint's Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) of Georgia division evaluated the annual associate satisfaction surveys that include questions about employee satisfaction with existing career development opportunities. The results showed only 62 percent of associates felt the division's learning and development opportunities met or exceeded their expectations, below the company's national standard of 69 percent or greater.

Because associate satisfaction is a predictor of customer satisfaction, BCBS Georgia needed to improve its satisfaction scores to ensure continued high-quality customer service and ultimately low customer defection. In addition, the division spends about \$13,000 per employee during the first year of service to train new associates. It sought to reduce first-year associate

turnover through improved career development opportunities.

LearnPoint and the Associate Career Development Program

Utilizing the company's learning management system, LearnPoint, the learning and development team created a comprehensive, self-directed resource called the Associate Career Development Program (ACDP). Targeted to customer service associates, claims associates, and membership and billing associates at BCBS Georgia, the program uses job-specific competency models to guide associates in developing and implementing personal learning plans.

Each job role has associated tasks, responsibilities and performance criteria that link to specific competencies and learning opportunities at WellPoint. Those opportunities include SkillSoft business skills courseware, internal instructor-led training, on-the-job learning activities, WellPoint shadowing and mentoring opportunities, and self-study books available through the company library.

"We performed a comprehensive job analysis and tied e-learning and other learning opportunities with competencies and tasks," explained Ferdinand Tesoro, director of the operations performance department for BCBS Georgia. "We don't just give you a list of courses; we have you start by identifying what tasks and



Increasing Retention

responsibilities you are having difficulty with and what competencies are aligned with those tasks.”

Associates must first log on to LearnPoint, find their particular job overview and review the description of job responsibilities, competencies and aligned learning opportunities. Next, they complete a personal learning plan that will guide how they begin to develop and improve existing skills and competencies.

To launch and market the Associate Career Development Program, the learning department established the theme Driving for Success, employing the D.R.I.V.E methodology to guide individuals in their learning strategy:

Develop your learning plan

Review your plan with your supervisor

Implement new knowledge, skill or ability

Validate what you have learned

Evaluate your development

“This is a self-directed program,” Tesoro said. “If you have the tools, you are in the driver’s seat and you can take control [of your career development].”

Results

Initially, the learning department targeted about 1,130 associates with the Associate Career Development Program, but has continued expanding to other job roles and departments throughout BCBS Georgia. After the first year, the program exceeded its target participation rate by five percent, with 35 percent of associates completing

personal learning plans and actively taking courses by May 2005. Follow-up surveys conducted in December 2004 revealed associate satisfaction had improved 15 percent.

In addition, WellPoint evaluated change in first-year associate turnover. Among the targeted groups, turnover decreased from 39.7 percent to 28.2 percent, saving the company an average of \$13,000 per employee in lost training investment.

According to Tesoro, the Associate Career Development Program continues to thrive and the learning team devotes time and resources into promoting and reinforcing the program. They produce a quarterly newsletter that highlights employee success stories and comments, and offer prizes and incentives for employees who complete courses and supervisors who reinforce and support the program among their staff. An ACDP scorecard, published in each newsletter, provides a running tally of course completions, registered associates and participation rate.

In April 2005, the program received the 2005 Outstanding Performance Intervention Award from the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), a global, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving work force and business performance. ISPI cited the program’s “excellence in performance analysis, design, development and implementation that includes the communication and marketing techniques used to solicit executive sponsorship and reinforcement.”

www.skillsoft.com



Corporate U.S. Headquarters

107 Northeastern Boulevard
Nashua, NH 03062
Phone: 603-324-3000
800-327-6960
information@skillsoft.com

SkillSoft EMEA Headquarters

Compass House
2nd Floor
207-215 London Road
Camberley
GU15 3EY
UK
Phone: +44 (0) 127 640 1950
Fax: +44 (0) 127 640 1951
internationalinformation@skillsoft.com

SkillSoft Asia Pacific Headquarters

Level 27, 101 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Australia
Tel: +61 3 9653 7484
Fax: +61 3 9653 7373
apac@skillsoft.com