

Ceridian
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E-Learning
Case Study



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COMMITMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Ceridian's E-Learning Success

BY DEBBIE MURRAY

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In April 2001, The Conference Board of Canada, with funding from Human Resources Development Canada's Office of Learning Technologies, launched the Learning Technologies in the Workplace Awards. Ceridian was one of the three winners. This case study illustrates the outstanding and innovative efforts that make Ceridian a winner.

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COMMITMENT AND COMMUNICATION: CERIDIAN'S E-LEARNING SUCCESS

Introduction

Ceridian is Canada's leading employer services company, providing payroll and human resource management solutions to businesses of all sizes. Approximately 2.4 million Canadians, or 16 per cent of the Canadian workforce, are paid through Ceridian payroll services, amounting to 58.4 million payments annually.

Ceridian has used e-learning since 1999. At the heart of its e-learning success is Ceridian's can-do attitude, its linkage to core business processes, strong executive support, learning culture, communications and marketing, and tracked and measured follow-up of learning.

Challenges

Some of the challenges Ceridian faces are very typical of Canadian enterprises that have operations located across the country. These include reconciling and aligning operational objectives with the challenges of geographically dispersed staff, staff shortages, limited facilities and 1,200 employees with different needs. With these aspects influencing service to Ceridian's 38,500 customers, training is essential to customer service and business success.

E-learning was seen as a means of reducing some of the costs incurred with training staff over such a broad geographical area. Travel, time and the costs of some technical certifications consumed a large part of the training budget. When Ceridian conducted an employee training needs assessment in 1999, it found that employees wanted just-in-time training at their desk. Given all of these parameters, Ceridian selected e-learning as a means of meeting this need while reducing some costs. This company believed that

through effective e-learning, classroom delivery and associated training costs could be reduced and the quality of learning outcomes improved.

To get management to support the e-learning effort, Training Specialist Heather Turnbull-Smith met with senior executives one-on-one and presented her findings to the senior executive team. Framing this initiative as a means of achieving corporate business objectives of customer satisfaction, reduced error rates, reduced costs and improved financial performance, Turnbull-Smith was successful at winning executive support.

Workplace learning is recognized as a key to reducing errors. As Lori Mitchell, Director of National Training, notes, "One of Ceridian's goals is to become a zero-defect organization. Giving people the proper tools and adequate time to learn what they need to do minimizes the risk of error."¹ Learning is endorsed by the senior executive committee who established it as a corporate objective, thereby supporting the financial and time requirements for e-learning.

Ceridian's E-Learning Model

While in the past Ceridian has used CD-ROMs for learning delivery, employees now mainly access learning content from their desktop through CeridanNet@Canada, the corporate intranet where they can click on a link to training and find a range of learning resources including the e-learning courses. All employees of Ceridian have their own personal computer with a connection to the corporate intranet. The corporate intranet provides access to an externally hosted Web site managed by an external content vendor. Staff also has remote access from home

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elearning](http://conferenceboard.ca/elearning)

¹ *Masterfile*, Ceridian Newsletter, Issue 10, February 2000, pg. 3.

Ceridian offers 204 non-proprietary courses through Web-based delivery supplied by an external vendor.



through Web-based learning. For employees who can't get quiet time or time away from work to learn, quiet rooms with computers are available.

Ceridian offers 204 non-proprietary courses through Web-based delivery. These courses, supplied by an external vendor, range from Microsoft Office courses like Word and Excel to courses on managing LANs and SQL programming. Ceridian's parent company in the United States uses the same vendor and Ceridian Canada has taken advantage of this to negotiate licenses for the Canadian market. One problem that Ceridian has faced, partially due to the American source for its non-proprietary content, is a shortage of French content. Turnbull-Smith and her team are planning to develop proprietary French content in-house through the use of authorware, and are working with the vendor to develop non-proprietary French content.

Ceridian develops some of its own key software in-house, including its most recent payroll and HR product, Insync, which is designed to move and track accounts between Ceridian and its clients.



One of the main examples of e-learning success at Ceridian is the Insync blended curriculum. Ceridian develops some of its own key software in-house, including its most recent payroll and HR product, Insync, which is designed to move and track accounts between Ceridian and its clients. Because of this, Ceridian needed to train employees in supporting customers who use Ceridian services and software, including Insync. E-learning provided this support to employees and customers.

Ceridian is an information- and communications technology-intensive company, thereby presenting an organic opportunity for e-learning.



Insync certification plans are tailored to each job family. For example, an Implementation Specialist requires 54 hours of on-line modules coupled with 34 hours of classroom and case study modules, while a Prime Help Desk Representative would require only 40 hours on-line and significantly fewer on-line modules. These

certification plans are a job requirement for all customer-facing positions to ensure that Ceridian's customers are getting a consistent level of service from knowledgeable employees. In turn, holding a certificate of achievement breeds employee confidence and satisfaction, and further improves service to (and satisfaction of) customers.

Delivered over the Web, learners log on and bookmark learning as they progress. To date, 60 employees have received Insync certification through the e-learning process with a target of 300 this year, and a total goal of 800. Ceridian believes strongly in the benefits of Insync training. Marci Buchholz, Insync Product Manager, notes, "The people who have gone through the certification process say that it's hard work, but they also say it's really worth it... If we can combine this powerful product with people who understand how to support it, we'll be in a position to lead the market."²

Other e-learning efforts at Ceridian are aimed at technical support staff and administrative support staff. Some administrative support staff receive e-learning in basic computer skills. Ceridian is an information- and communications technology-intensive company, thereby presenting an organic opportunity for e-learning. Because of this, much of the employee population already has the basic computer skills and access to delivery technologies required for e-learning. Now, some basic computer literacy or e-literacy programs are being targeted at some workers. Ceridian offers basic computer training delivered through a blend of instructor-supported e-learning. Staff who need basic computer literacy development can also access computer labs with one-on-one coaching.

² Masterfile, Ceridian Newsletter, Issue 9, December 1999, pg. 3.

Learners who prefer a self-paced, individual approach to learning have found e-learning to be much more conducive to their learning style.



For technical staff, where certification in technical training on one course for one employee can run into the thousands of dollars, e-learning is a way of augmenting classroom learning and practicing tests. Heather Turnbull-Smith notes that in the case of technical certification, e-learning is “a way to bridge the gap between what you can learn on your own and what you need to learn in a classroom situation. That way, we can invest in training much more wisely.”³

Ceridian’s use of e-learning—either on its own or as part of a blended learning approach with traditional classroom training—has support among employees. Learners who prefer a self-paced, individual approach to learning have found e-learning to be much more conducive to their learning style. Lori Corrigan, a Lotus Notes Administrator with an extensive, instructor-delivered, university education, noted that she “preferred to learn” through e-learning because of its flexibility and because she found absorption and retention of material through e-learning more effective. Still others found e-learning a way to fit professional development and learning into a hectic work schedule that would not otherwise accommodate the large commitment of time involved in classroom learning. Barb Pietryka, a Support Analyst, said, “I love learning this way” because she can learn from home and because she prefers learning on her own at her own pace. Patrick Hood, a Regina-based Account Manager, praised e-learning because it allowed him to get training despite his distance from the Winnipeg head office and because he could fit learning into his busy schedule. Hood also found the learning relevant and helpful when he

needed it, thus fulfilling the original need for just-in-time desktop training.

Ceridian continues to offer classroom training. In fact, classroom training makes up 80 per cent of learning delivery time, while e-learning makes up 20 per cent. Ceridian supports a blended learning approach, with some content, such as technical training, delivered this way. E-learning at Ceridian adds value to the learning process when time, learning styles and specific needs are paramount.

Integration and Communications

Communications and marketing of e-learning to employees is pivotal to Ceridian’s success. Trainers regularly communicate with managers and employees, and support their e-learning efforts. Ceridian Canada’s President, Richard Ball, who helped roll out the e-learning initiative, continuously communicates the importance of training to employees.

Part of this effort consisted of employee discovery sessions, in informal and comfortable settings. For example, a game modelled after “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” was used to inform employees about the new delivery method. Employees also discussed individual learning styles and how e-learning is a complement to each of these styles. The Ceridian newsletter regularly communicates learning and e-learning information. Weekly voluntary quizzes are administered through e-mail and the intranet for Ceridian bonus dollars that employees can use for Ceridian promotional merchandise. These popular quizzes test knowledge acquired through e-learning.

Accountability/Measurement/Use

E-learning success is secured through measurement and incentives that track

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A game modelled after “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” was used to inform employees about the new delivery method.



³ *Masterfile*, Ceridian Newsletter, Issue 10, February 2000, pg. 3.

Ceridian employees track their learning through a certification plan that managers and employees develop together. The certification plan ensures completion, accountability and retention of learning as well as recognition and reward.

Ceridian's Canadian operations are regarded as the model for all international Ceridian operations, and its e-learning efforts are no exception to this.

A tight labour market in Winnipeg makes retaining and training employees a key business issue.

adoption and usage of e-learning. Ceridian employees track their learning through a certification plan (accessible through the intranet) that managers and employees develop together. The certification plan ensures completion, accountability and retention of learning as well as recognition and reward. Employees receive monthly report cards for motivation and progress monitoring.

Ceridian also has a Learning Management System (LMS) that integrates and tracks the learning and outcomes that form the certification plan, through a Web-accessed database. The LMS is a key means of determining adoption and progress of learning content. For example, test scores are tracked. For non-industry certified courses, staff who score 80 per cent or higher receive a credit. For industry certification, tests are conducted externally at approved test centres. All of this is tracked in the LMS. The data collected are reported confidentially to learners, their managers and training staff.

Ceridian's Goals for the Future

- In-house development of proprietary content—Ceridian has purchased authorware to develop content with employee content experts and training experts.
- Increased use and certification through e-learning delivery, especially on Insync training.

Keys to Success and Sources of Innovation

So what are the keys to success that make Ceridian an innovative e-learning

award winner? Other organizations can learn from the following:

- Ceridian's clear vision and commitment to action and employee decision making;
- executive support for learning and employee development, positive work/life balance and a strong learning culture;
- communication and marketing of e-learning—awareness, roll-out, constant communications;
- an information- and communications-intensive core business process. Technology is key to core business at Ceridian. Money doesn't move physically; instead computers move accounts virtually. Employees are already comfortable with using technology to do something that was done physically before (i.e., moving money and payroll), so learning isn't as much of a stretch; and
- tracking and certification of learning rewards learners and breeds accountability and adoption of e-learning.

Ceridian's Canadian operations are regarded as the model for all international Ceridian operations, and its e-learning efforts are no exception to this. Being an employer of choice is a strategic corporate objective that underpins the management and business philosophy of the organization and extends to its commitment to employee learning. This objective is especially relevant in Winnipeg where a tight labour market makes retaining and training employees a key business issue. Ceridian's e-learning program exemplifies how e-learning can benefit a company and a community.



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