Brandon Hall
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Citigroup's 30-Minute eLearning Tackles Unconscious Bias

Citigroup

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Company Background

Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	New York NY
Year Founded	1812
Revenue	$68.4 billion (2017)
Employees	208,614
Global Scale	More than 160 countries and jurisdictions
Customers/Output, etc.	Citigroup provides consumers, corporations, governments and institutions with a broad range of financial products and services, including consumer banking and credit, corporate and investment banking, securities brokerage, transaction services, and wealth management.
Industry	Banking, financial services
Stock Symbol	NYSE: C
Website	https://www.citigroup.com

Budget and Timeframe

Overall budget	$55,400 + $80,000 for translations
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	~30 employees
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	~15
Timeframe to implement	4 months
Start date of the program	October 14, 2016

Overview

Citigroup's "Building an Inclusive Culture" course is an interactive, 30-minute eLearning program for all Citigroup employees whether individual contributors, leaders, people managers, or client-facing.

The first step in this project included a strategic review of the existing storyboard content, audience beliefs, and stakeholders' expectations for the online experience. The audit allowed the learning team to devise an instructional strategy that teaches relevant content and identifies content gaps that SMEs could fill. The outcome enabled the team to better define learning objectives, key messages, and the desired culture.

- **Audience's current belief.** Learners may feel that creating an inclusive culture and recognizing bias is "corporate's" responsibility rather than something that exists in their everyday life and decisions. The concept of diversity is typically thought of only in a traditional sense (gender, race, age, religion, etc.) and not in the more implicit ways, such as non-native speakers, remote workers, and interoffice differences (back-end office versus client facing).

- **Citigroup's desired expectations of the training.** Citigroup wants learners to realize how unconscious bias is an everyday topic, naturally engrained in their actions and decisions. Being aware of these dynamics and biases as a part of human nature will help learners be better at what they do.

For learners, here are key reasons to minimize unconscious bias:

o   more effective at your job.

o   team interactions will improve.

o   colleagues will be more effective.

o   able to identify and act on opportunities more effectively.

o   learn something new about yourself.

Learning Objectives

- The 30-minute eLearning course has several learning objectives:

- Raise awareness of unconscious bias and insider/outsider dynamics.

- Increase understanding of the business case for a diverse workforce and inclusive culture.

- Enable participants to define and recognize concepts of unconscious bias and take actions to prevent its impact in the workplace.

- Increase knowledge of how to promote an inclusive culture.

- Increase engagement with this topic more broadly.

- To support the objectives, the learning team incorporated a variety of elements in the online experience:

- Personalized elements that accommodate different learning styles.

  o   Learners enter their names at the start of the course. Then, at appropriate places, the course uses their names to keep them engaged in the content. Learners' brains become more attentive when they're addressed specifically.

- Storytelling about different types of automatic associations and the concept of unconscious biases shows how to minimize their impact on Citigroup's efforts to build a diverse workforce and inclusive culture.

  o The course includes a narrative and challenge. As a transition to the opening story, a sequence of images depicts driving to the office, entering a building, and walking to a desk before switching to a view of a computer monitor. The monitor shows a slide with a quote from the CEO about diversity and inclusiveness. A few seconds later an IM window opens.

    ▪ Onscreen text appears as an IM dialogue on the IM window display.

    ▪ A text- and-conversation thread builds on the screen in the same way an IM conversation works on a computer device and sets the tone of the learning experience.

    ▪ The opening conversation illustrates the audiences' potential current beliefs and opens the door for discussing unconscious bias.

  o Throughout the course, learners chat via IM about their experiences.

Figure 1: Learners Chat
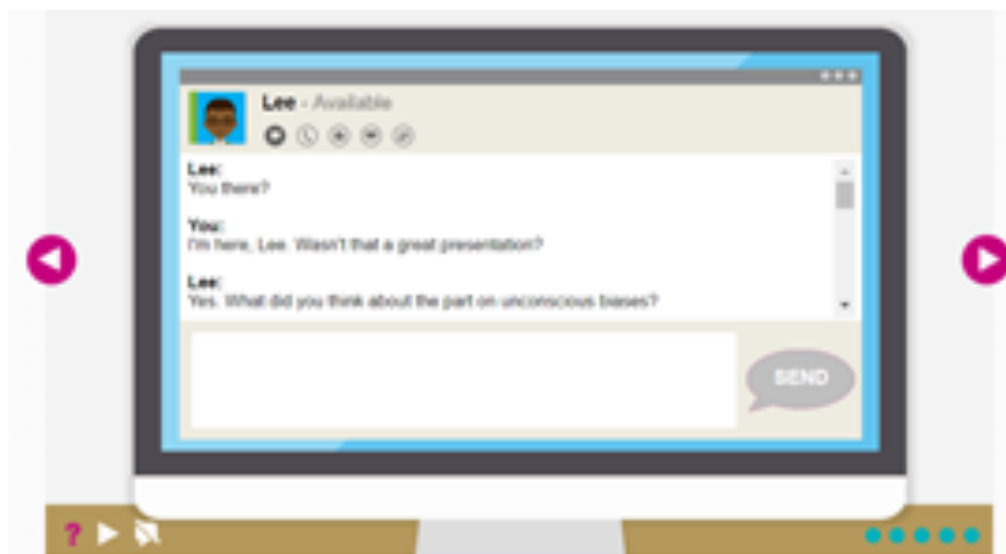
Source: Citigroup

- o The learning team used common workplace situations to illustrate the types of workplace biases and group dynamics in action.

  - **Peer to peer.** The learner is asked to give peers feedback in advance of annual review meetings.

  - **Tech savvy.** The learner must select a group member to head up a technology initiative.

  - **Candidate criteria**. A committee was created to recommend one of two candidates for a project manager role.

  - **Convergence**. Overseas staff are joining the learner's group. The learner must decide how to handle procedural differences.

- The 30-minute course is available in nine languages:

  - Spanish
  - Portuguese
  - Polish
  - Russian
  - Japanese
  - Thai
  - Simplified Chinese
  - Traditional Chinese
  - Korean

- During design and development, it was important to keep cultural considerations in mind. The learning experience had to be diverse and appropriate for the global audience.

- The course, developed in Lectora, uses music, sound effects, and audio narration with transcripts available in the course player. A low-bandwidth version (no audio narration, music, or sound effects) also was produced to accommodate the regions where internet coverage is limited.

- Music, sound effects, page transitions and object-motion animations help make the experience immersive and engaging. The background music played during the introduction helps to evoke emotion, and sound effects provide cues for question options or menu buttons, feedback answers or text boxes, selection of items, and instruction prompts.

Screenshots

Figure 2: Splash Page

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Figure 3: Navigational Tips

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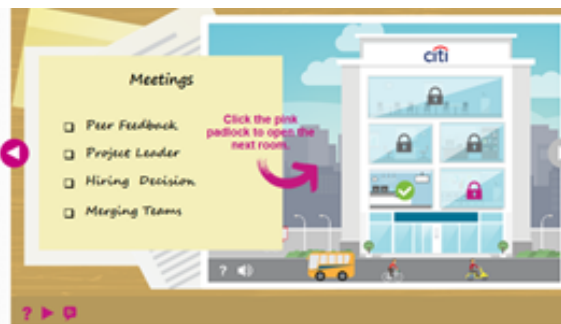### Figure 4: Learning Objectives

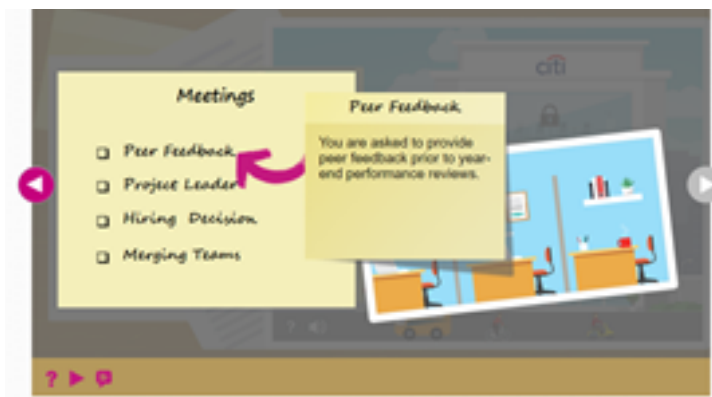### Figure 5: Revealed Information Screen

Source: Citigroup

Figure 6: Meeting Interactivity to Reveal More Information

Source: Citigroup

Figure 7: Revealed Content in Meeting Interactivity

Source: Citigroup

Overall

Based on experiences with other eLearning programs, the learning team set out to develop a course that employees would want to complete and recommend to their colleagues. Because diversity and inclusion are complex topics, it was essential for the Citigroup and GP team members to build trust among all project members so everyone felt comfortable giving candid feedback. Developing this close partnership enabled the working group to maintain a clear vision for the training scenarios and other interactive elements.

The program's evaluations reflect the effectiveness of the team's efforts to create engaging and informative learning. As of April 2017, 75% of the 208,614 employees invited to take the training had completed it.

Highlights from the evaluation showed:

- 98% of respondents agreed they learned something new, found the course relevant to their roles, and would recommend it to others.
- 99% agreed they'd be able to apply the skills they learned.

Sample of Comments
- "This is the best class I've had in 13 years at Citigroup. I believe it encompasses everything employees and managers need to communicate and work well together. I'm happy that my employer encourages this type of learning and behavior in the workplace."

- "Made you think of things you never really thought could make a big impact."

- "Instead of simply establishing the common 'Us V Them' dichotomy, the course was able to illustrate paths/skills that can be used to overcome a traditionally polarized topic."

- "The format made me much more attentive... instead of watching a conversation take place, it was much more participatory. I like that I got to make choices and see how those choices played out."

- "It prompted me to question my own unconscious bias both inside and outside of the workplace."

About Brandon Hall Group

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