



## Learning Team Helps Mahindra Comviva Pick Up Pace

Mahindra Comviva  
Best Learning Team  
October 2018



### Company Background

# Mahindra COMVIVA

<b>Headquarters</b>	Gurgaon, Haryana, India
<b>Year Founded</b>	1999
<b>Revenue</b>	\$130 million
<b>Employees</b>	2114, including 459 contract resources
<b>Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)</b>	Mahindra Comviva operates in over 90 countries worldwide. Major markets are Africa, Latin America, Asia, South America and Europe.
<b>Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)</b>	Mahindra Comviva provides services to more than 130 telecom operators in more than 90 countries. Some of the key customers are: Airtel (worldwide), MTN, France Telecom (Orange), DU (Dubai), IBM and Vodafone. Its product and services portfolio includes: mobile financial solutions, internet and broadband solutions, customer value management, digital lifestyle solutions, business solutions, messaging solutions, managed services and mobile solutions for engagement and learning.
<b>Industry</b>	Telecommunications
<b>Stock Symbol</b>	NA
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.mahindracomviva.com">https://www.mahindracomviva.com</a>

## Budget and Timeframe

Overall budget	\$170,000 (INR 1.25 cr)
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	5
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	20
Number of contractors involved with implementation	15
Timeframe to implement	FY 17-18
Start date of the program	April 1, 2017

## Business Conditions and Business Needs

Mahindra Comviva has representation in more than 90 countries. With more than 90% of its revenues generating from telco operators, the business objectives and strategies are aligned to the needs of the industry. The telecom industry is going through a severe pricing crunch. The operators look for products which are more cost-effective and for services which offer more for less. Hence, the need to upskill the current staff to deliver more is stronger than ever.

Until not long ago, learning was catered to in its most traditional form: instructor-led and mostly need-based/project requirement-based. The need to upskill and groom team members had not been considered as a priority for the line managers. As a result, to have employees go for a workshop on a new technology was not promoted by many against a project delivery deadline. In addition, the needs and learnability of employees have changed with changing demographics of the organization.

### Business Need

To move toward a competency-based organization where individuals are assessed on pre-identified competencies aligned to business objectives (behavioral/managerial and technical/functional) and major decisions for hiring fit, promotions/growth of employees and planning training and development initiatives are based on them. The capability of the people at Comviva will be the key differentiator for Mahindra Comviva as an organization, which will pave the path for being the “business of tomorrows.”

People are more aggressive and they need more options, control and flexibility in terms of when, what and how they learn. As an organization, therefore, it becomes a mandate to not just cater to the traditional ways of imparting skill/knowledge transfer.

To ensure there is more seriousness while attending a training program, selected target competency-based programs were clubbed with assessments. This helps to analyze the meaningful change that any program has to be able to bring about in day-to-day operating levels.

Focus had to increase on not just delivery of a program but delivery of a successful, meaningful, effective and well-received/appreciated program. Therefore, the entire workflow — starting from the definition of the program objective, competencies being targeted, program design and its dissemination to the post analytics — needed to undergo change.

To put higher attention to these areas, automation became a priority, which was done by developing an extremely relevant learning management tool in-house. It has helped in reducing focus on manual intervention for a lot of activities, with reports/dashboards and an extremely user-friendly interface.

## Overview

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Mahindra Comviva is a Lean structure, with one overall head of people and culture success. There is a team of two leads, each with clearly defined roles and domains — one focuses on the technical/functional competencies' upskilling and the other for behavioral competencies. There is a dedicated lead who manages the talent management initiatives across the organization. The person works in sync with the learning leads for establishing clear links between the development needs of the critical talent identified and the planning of learning calendars for coming months.

There is also a team member who manages the learning tool and other operational aspects of all learning programs.

The learning team has been able to show an increase of 7.73% increase in the number of person day per employee against the achievement in the last fiscal year, with a unique person coverage of approximately 80% across the organization (inclusive of both regular and consulting staff). This has been achieved with an 11% reduction in the overall cost without reducing the quality of the programs delivered as measured by the learning

feedback (which is 8.4 on a scale of 10) and by introducing premium programs (higher cost, higher impact with niche training partners) by over 23%.

Goals established and achievement:

1. Overall increase in the learning days per employee against a target of four person days per head across the financial year: achieved a total of 107.5%
2. Overall reduction in cost for programs: achieved a total reduction of 6% in costs.
3. Move toward assessment-based programs for 80% of technical programs: achieved a run rate of 100% in the first quarter of 2018. Each of the technical programs is done with a well-defined pre-assessment, post-assessment and the scores are published to the employee along with manager. This is to help understand the progress made.
4. Programs to be more experiential/practical in structure instead of imparting theory: alternate modes of learning have been introduced, which help in imparting of basic theory. Workshops are well-curated, with caselets and activities which are relevant to the organization and the target groups.

The program is well-integrated across the organization. The learning team has been able to engage approximately 80% individual associates through the various modes of learning programs and excludes the coverage made by digital learning programs.

In addition, approximately 700 days of trainings/programs have been attended by mid-senior management at the organization.

One of the bigger impacts is on the very strong links Mahindra Comviva is able to create to the growth/promotions of employees. Sixty-six percent of the employees who have been promoted in the last cycle had attended Mahindra Comviva's workshops on people management as a competency. As per feedbacks, there have been significant improvements made on the people management front, thereby making a stronger case for their promotions.

Approximately 8% of total cost has been spent on certifications and external courses with accredited institutes, which is a significant shift. The certifications are across domains (from a certified L&OD professional by Aon-Hewitt to Certified Scrum Master/TOGAF 9-certified professional to MBA from IIFT, Delhi)

All the efforts and investments made by the learning team have been clearly chalked with multiple discussions on how they finally tie to the organization's objectives. During a workshop which happened in the last year where the CXO and other senior management of Mahindra Comviva drafted the goals and vision for FY22, one of the most strong and significant tracks picked up was the "capability building track." The learning team at Mahindra Comviva first identified the capabilities to be built into its system. The process was a co-creation one, where all the key stakeholders and decision makers were involved in the drafting of each such element. This has been used as a base for framing each program. Each program is being tied to assessments to show an actual change/shift in the competence of an individual.

## **Learning Approaches**

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The most significant aspect for the learning team at Mahindra Comviva is that they do not work in silos. There are strong interlinks created with various groups which act as an input to the learning process.

For example:

- The business HR partners help in identifying core skill needs of any business unit.
- The performance appraisal process itself takes inputs from individuals and their managers on the learning needs and their expectations for every individual on what key competencies needs are to be upskilled in the coming financial year.
- One of the most important ones is the talent management process. The key competencies for Mahindra Comviva's critical talent get identified in this process and talent management works as an input to the planning for the learning team.
- The learning team and other senior management in the HR function ensure regular manager connections which help in identification of the core needs of their respective functions and how can the learning team intervene and help through the process of upskilling.
- Mahindra Comviva has a process of regular HR connections with employees, which are formally recorded on a tool. The platform works extremely well, helping voice the opinions of the employees on what their training needs are or on any particular training program if that needs focus.

- **Existing Vendor Tie-Ins** — At the start of the financial year, for every competency a program outline was created (explained in detail in Delivery of Solution) for every competency and course content (pre-engagement, classroom content and post-engagement) finalized. For each program, there is a one-time effort on course creation and then an annual effort of content update or review (as per requirement).
- **Learning Management System** — A very comprehensive learning tool has been developed inhouse and also integrated with a mobile app. The tool helps in end-to-end operations for the learning team in:
  - Creation and publishing of monthly learning calendar.
  - Sending reminders and providing features to self-nominate/let managers nominate.
  - Sending out calendar invitation to nominated associates.
  - Allowing pre- and post-assessments done both on the web interface and the mobile app.
  - Sending a summary of the pre-post assessment to the associate and manager.
  - Sending no-show mail alerts to associates who drop out of a workshop.
  - Developing pre-defined reports and analytics, helping in drive Mahindra Comviva's focused agendas.
- **Mobile Learning** — Mahindra Comviva adopted an mobile learning app implemented across locations for all associates (both regular and contract). There is a huge gambit of courses curated by engaging with external SMEs and internal as well (wherever applicable). There has been significant uptake of courses across levels and locations. Mandatory courses such as those on prevention of sexual harassment, information security, code of business conducts, etc., have been driven through the same mode.
- **Performance Appraisal Process** — The process has been tied to the learning/upskilling needs of employees. At the end of the annual process, it works as an input for all the learning programs that should be focused on in the year.
- **One-On-One with Managers and HR** — The one-on-one connects for each employee with either managers or with HR also helps in getting formal inputs for

the programs to be designed or as a feedback on how the learning team is working. It helps in keeping the team honest and on track for achieving the end objectives.

- **For International** — For locations where it is difficult to conduct formal ILT programs, alternate mediums like a WebEx or Microsoft Lync are used to deliver a learning program.
- **Webinars/Virtual Classrooms and Online Courses** through partners like Udemy/CourseEra, etc. — For programs which are difficult to conduct internally, even for population in locations with larger employee base, options are explored of sending employees for various webinars/virtual sessions or online courses. Employees choose the relevant course as per their requirements and needs
- **Internal SMEs** — There is a defined list of internal SMEs, which is updated on a regular frequency. The internal SMEs are utilized for delivery of few programs and also for vetting and validating the course contents and trainers fit for any training program.

The model of the learning is dependent on multiple factors, including but not limited to:

- The competency itself (whether the competency can be acquired through sharing of best practices, etc., only or through practical experience or practicing in a classroom type environment).
- Location of the associates (if the location is such where an ILT is not possible to be done, alternate modes like a WebEx or a webinar or external workshops and certifications, etc., are exploited).
- Target group, audience, expectations on the outcomes of the program.

## Delivery of Solution

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### The Design and Delivery Process

- The entire process kick-started with the conversations with senior management on the capability building.
- Focused group discussions and bunker sessions were conducted to define each and every competency which was to be attributed to every role.

- A definition for each competency, its key elements and how would the learning be imparted then is decided.
- With this framework, three to four vendors are reached out to and a program outline is created.
- After multiple discussions and on assessing the capability of the vendors for delivery of an effective program, a program is finally crafted with a clearly defined pre-engagement, program-related caselets or examples along with an assessment strategy. This step is done with the help of internal SMEs.
- Programs then are inserted on the learning calendar as per the requirements and published, then opened for inviting nominations.
- Communications are sent to all target group associates sharing information about the key objectives of the program and what would be the outcomes, etc. For courses tied to a mobile learning course as a pre-requisite, relevant updates are sent out on the same.
- The pre- and post-assessments are mostly objective in nature and a result are easily adapted on both the web interface and mobile app.
- Vendor governance is an important factor for ensuring the quality of programs is maintained. Regular connects and understanding of the performance in the past are done frequently.

## Highlights

- Competencies are strongly linked to course design.
- Based on various inputs such as the PMS process, individual development plans and managers and business inputs, the programs are inserted into the calendars to meet the timelines for the business.
- Training effectiveness is not limited to just a feedback taken from the participants in the classroom/after a mobile course completion. Post-assessments also are done to check the transfer of learning to an individual. An assessment on completion after three to six months is done with both the manager and individual to check for the effectiveness and the actual translation of the learning on their work. This has been a significant improvement in Mahindra Comviva's learning process. Assessments at the end of a workshop now are being done for 100% of



technical programs and are in the process of being implemented for 100% of behavioral programs as well.

- The learning team is a well-oiled machine, which has been one of the biggest levers in ensuring that the critical talent needs are addressed. This is not limited to any specific region, but globally.
- An average of 9 training programs for every competency have been planned in the highest employee base locations (Gurugram and Bengaluru).
- On a feedback survey done with managers of the critical talents, an impact score of 7.9 was received and above from all and average participant feedback is at 8 and above on the effectiveness of the program.

## **Measurable Benefits**

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While this document has highlighted most of the measurable benefits for Mahindra Comviva, here are some more:

- The learning team has been instrumental in the ramp up of critical talent. More than 500 individual development-related conversations have happened throughout the year. An average investment for these critical talents is at 4.55 person days each against the company average of 4.31.
- Both managers and employees who have been involved in the critical talent process are highly engaged and have shared a feedback score of 80% plus on the efforts made by the company.
- With continuous engagement and focus on the line managers and helping them be more empowered and independent (through various programs), there has been a significant increase in the overall employee satisfaction score by 4%.
- Sixty-six percent of all the employees who were promoted (within mid-senior management levels) had attended workshops on people management by the learning team. There was a clear measurable difference in their approach and their ability to manage higher level roles post the workshops, which worked as an important factor in their promotion discussions.
- The efforts have helped in developing certified professionals in various fields of technology and management. For instance, about 26 certified Scrum masters have

been groomed and they are now helping develop best practices internally at Mahindra Comviva.

- One of the most successful programs has been on “customer handling and engagement.” The key elements identified for this competency were:
  - Acknowledges and understands customer pain.
  - Calm and matured in conflict resolution.
  - Collaborates for a timely solution.
  - Timely and transparent stakeholder communication.
  - Manages and delivers expectations; balances needs and constraints.

For this particular program, both mobile based learning and ILT were integrated. Earlier, the modules were covered through multiple one-day ILT programs, which were not effective and did not ensure transfer of learning. With the new approach, the basic level of knowledge is transferred through the mobile learning course. Assessment is conducted at the end of the program, which has seen an average score of 85%. Therefore, the ILT program has been elevated to the next level with more practical and hands-on experiential learning. On an L3 assessment conducted with key stakeholders of the employees who attended, 100% of the managers have rated a positive impact of 8 and above on a scale of 10.

On a cost effectiveness aspect, two or more ILT programs have been concluded into one ILT program along with a mobile course. This has led to a straight 50%-plus reduction in cost.

## Overall

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### Key Findings

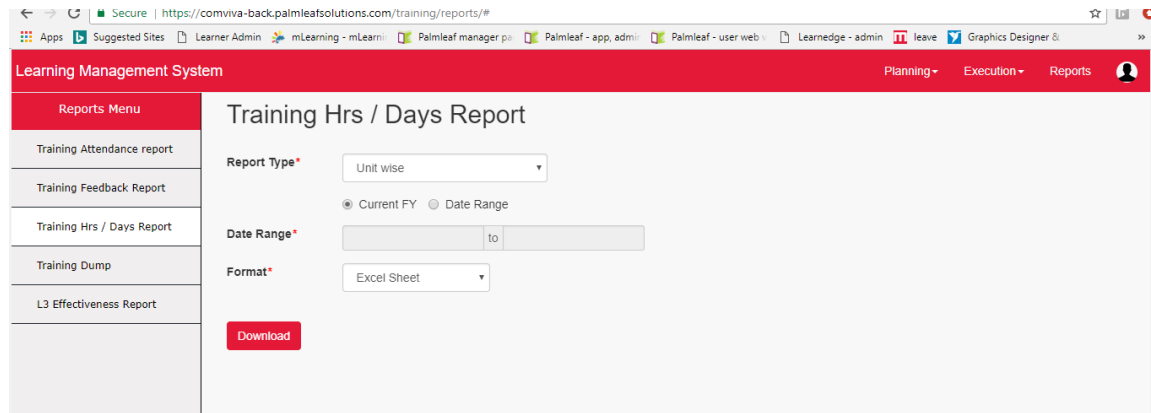
- A lot of initiatives are kick-started by organizations. Many teams start to segregate tasks, put in efforts and try to ensure that it is implemented. It seldom sees daylight. To avoid this, the approach Mahindra Comviva followed was to do bunker sessions, get everyone in the same room, have focused discussions and close the entire project in one go. A lot of the initiatives were kick-started only because of this approach.

- To create a better reach, participation and collective long-term involvement of the target audience, it is always helpful to create initial awareness and buy-in of senior management, target audience and participating members. A simple group discussion or brainstorming session on the topic prior to the learning session helps in creating the right stimulus in the minds of the people and brings them in thinking mode before the workshop. Co-creating the course outline and structure make the process participative and bring in the right involvement of the target audience. Overall socializing and creating buzz increase the interest, involvement and long-term retention of learned concepts of any training program.
- An individual development plan creates the link in people's mind between learning/awareness and development/knowledge enhancement. The message is simple — the organization is spending time, efforts and focused energy in the development of an individual. This one-on-one engagement goes a long way in creating a deep entrenched involvement and retention of the individual. A personalized plan for critical role holders helps in focused and fast-tracked coverage of the skill development needs and Mahindra Comviva puts a sharp focus on arranging customized learning workshops on required skills to help enable this focused skill development as the link is directly impact business continuity and productivity.

## The Way Forward

- **Business Intelligence** — Tracking and measuring the various cuts will help get a better coverage across geographies, domains and roles. It also will help in better tracking, course correction and improvement on workshops where feedback is not very satisfactory. As a result, the Mahindra Comviva is in the process of working on a more intelligent system, which will help in getting the right reports — thereby increasing focus on the core work of the learning team.

Figure 1: Training Hours and Days Report



Source: Mahindra Comviva

- The most critical element which will be on radar for this year and going forward is the development of the leaders. Programs focused on development of existing leaders on specific competencies for each individual and for the next in line leaders will be done by tying in with premium institutes and professionals across the world. An initial level of buy-in has been created with the senior leaders and there is confidence that Mahindra Comviva will be able to make the giant leap very soon.
- To create a more serious involvement toward self-development and upskilling year after year, stronger links to promotions and growth of an individual — be it horizontally or vertically in the organization — will be done. This will help to ensure that individuals also are clear and are aligned to how they can invest and focus on their self-development, leading to overall progress.
- To increase coverage across geographies — especially where the presence is sparse and conducting an instructor-led classroom program becomes difficult — digital programs help a lot. The more interactive, local language customizable and comprehensive the digital programs, the better the results. A larger library of these courses is being created and will help in increasing penetration, which will be much more than the achievement of this year.
- Being a product organization, it is important for Mahindra Comviva to ensure that base-level knowledge on each of the products from the folio is well-understood by people across the organization. The focus is on building product videos — a quick ramp-up solution for new joiners, as well as people from different units. It

also acts as an easy solution to update the entire organization on the product enhancements, new features addition, roadmap demos, etc. This will go a long way in making sure that the knowledge is not limited to just a classroom.

**Figure 2: Supporting Data/Analytics**

Person days achievement against target						
	Avg Person Days					
	FY18	FY17				
Actual Person Days	4.60	4.53				
Actual Person Days (excl induction, digital courses)	4.31	4.00				
Achievement	107.75%					
Unique coverage of associates across						
	FY18	Employee base	Achievement			
Unique learner count (excluding digital)	1687	2122	79.5%			
Quality of programs - feedback scores on 10						
Program Feedback Score	FY18					
Overall average feedback	8.41					
General	8.55					
Behavioral/Managerial	8.58					
Technical/Functional	8.03					
Increase in premium programs coverage						
	FY18			FY17		
	Total	Premium	% of total	Total	Premium	% of total
Unique Programs (not events)	189	35	18.52%	129	30	23.26%
Reduction in cost						
	FY18	FY17				
Cost per person (INR)	9198	9794				
Reduction :		6.1%				
<b>IDP Roll out and critical talent development discussions (refer to sheet titled IDP progress)</b> 1. # of unique IDPs rolled out in FY'18 = 161 2. # of engagement conversations with IDP participants and managers = 520 3. %age of participants (A7 and above) sent for premium programs = 81%  <b>Critical talent development</b> 1. Avg person days investment per IDP participant = 4.55 2. %age of IDP participants in Green = 98%						
	FY18					
No.of Behavioral training events	74					
Total no.of attendees	1167					

Source: Mahindra Comviva



## About Brandon Hall Group

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Brandon Hall Group is an HCM research and advisory services firm that provides insights around key performance areas, including Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, and HR/Workforce Management. With more than 10,000 clients globally and more than 25 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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