Brandon Hall Group
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS 2022

dentalcorp's Learning and Development Team Sees Nearly 19,000 eLearning Courses Completed

dentalcorp

Best Learning Team

November 2022

Brandon Hall Group
HCM Excellence Award
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
SILVER
2022

Company Background

dentalcorp

Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	181 Bay St, Suite 2600, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5J 2T3
Year Founded	2011
Revenue	$1.0 billion
Employees	7,200
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	Canada
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	Customers are dental care professionals across Canada, services offered are continuous dental education, learning and development.
Industry	Health care
Stock Symbol	TSX: DNTL
Website	www.dentalcorp.ca

Budget and Timeframe

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Overall budget	$45,000
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	6
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	2
Number of contractors involved with implementation	0
Timeframe to implement	4 months
Start date of the program	September 2021

Business Conditions and Business Needs

DC Institute (DCI) is the learning and development arm of dentalcorp, a Canadian Dental Services Organization (DSO), an independent business support centre that contracts with dental practices to facilitate further growth and success. The DCI team provides learning services to a network of over 7,000 dental health professionals across Canada, in both English and French.

DC Institute was created to meet the requirement to train our dentists and clinicians, and we recognized that it was also a great opportunity to create connections and build understanding between our practices and our Support Centre. There is a requirement that health professionals must partake in continuous professional development (CPD) to ensure they remain proficient and competent within their profession. CPD is a career-long obligation for practicing professionals to enhance and expand their knowledge and skill sets and keep current with ever-changing standards, ensuring they deliver the highest quality care and patient experience that safeguards the public and meets the requirements of their regulatory bodies.

Overview

DCI is comprised of six team members with a diversified skill set and professional experience. The DCI team works collaboratively to map training across several different departments, for learners of diverse educational backgrounds at different points in their professional continuing education journeys.

The Learning Team's skills and experience include:

- Instructional design
- Leadership coaching and mentoring
- Process improvement
- Course development and curriculum mapping
- Learning program development and program management
- Policy and procedure development, implementation, and training
- Quality assurance and data analytics

The team works together to provide creative and functional learning services to internal and external stakeholders. Collectively, the DCI team plans, develops, and delivers learning services based upon departmental goals that support the organizational business and talent strategies. Members of the team have a portfolio that focuses upon a specific target audience, which allows for better understanding of the existing skill gaps. dc Institute courses and programs have been integrated throughout the organization using a Learning Management System (LMS). This platform helps DCI facilitate training by creating online courses, grouping related programs, and assigning specific learning plans to distinct groups, to help guide the learners' growth and development. A key theme to all programs is cross-curricular development, where a flow is created amongst the programs to highlight common themes, create a clear educational learning path, and ensure that the clinical and Support Centre team members have a clear understanding of each other's roles, challenges, and measures of success.

The work of DCI ties into the organization's focus of providing support and resources to dental professionals while providing safe oral care to Canadians from coast to coast, in both English and French. Exceptional care for Canadians is focused upon seven pillars, with the core theme being a Leading Learning Approach, which emphasizes the relentless and ongoing pursuit of learning and skill development to ensure a positive patient experience.

A recent goal of the team was to develop and launch a Labor Management Tool(LMT) that helps dental practices manage their labor expenses. A component of this training includes a process for evaluating the performance of Practice Managers (PMs) on how well they manage their labor budget.

The LMT made a measurable impact to the organization. Measures included:

- Offices using the LMT outperformed non-LMT offices by adhering to the budget 40-60 percent more effectively each month.
- The LMT tool helped improve forecasting consistency across the network by 50 percent.

Learning Approaches

The broad and diverse skillsets of the Learning Team allow for effective and creative collaboration. DCI recognizes that leveraging resources effectively begins with identifying the unique strengths and abilities of its members to maximize collective potential. Responsibilities are assigned to team members by expertise, skill set, and knowledge, where cross-skill collaboration is encouraged to ensure continued creativity of the programs. The DCI team leverages its resources effectively by systematically assessing existing resources, identifying the need for additional information, and/or creating novel tools and resources to address the needs of the organization and the stakeholders they serve. To select new models and learning programs, the team determines the professional needs and interests of its learners through a formal needs assessment process, resulting in the development and delivery of relevant curricula. The following methods are used to analyse the needs of the target audiences:

- Annual Needs Assessment Survey: An annual survey that solicits input from the target audiences about their educational needs as well as preferences in delivery methods.
- Course Evaluations: A set of targeted questions to measure course effectiveness as well as recommendations for further study. These evaluations follow every course/presentation.
- Ongoing Communication: Emails and phone conversations with the representatives of each audience, faculty members, or subject matter experts. These conversations are ongoing and are a part of job responsibilities for DCI team members.
- Focus Groups: Ad-hoc meetings with the representatives of the target audience on a specific issue, which are conducted on an as-needed basis.
- Planning Committee Meetings: Formal, quarterly meetings of the members of the Planning Committee, where the issues of educational needs are discussed and analysed.

The Learning Team takes a systematic approach to design and develop educational courses/programs. To ensure effectiveness of every program the following four fundamental elements are taken into consideration in the planning and development stage:

1. Target Audience
   - For whom is the program developed?
   - What are the characteristics and scope of practice for the various members that make up the dental team?
2. Learning Outcomes
   - What information needs to be conveyed or skills acquisition taught, to represent a positive and impactful difference in job performance?
   - Will the program achieve the necessary learning outcomes?
3. Learning/Development Process

   - How is the subject content or skill best learned?
   - What are the development activities and instructional strategies and modes of delivery, including, but not limited to, eLearning, webinars, and workshops.
4. Evaluations

   - How does the team determine the extent to which learning was achieved?
   - What formal and informal methods does the team use to evaluate training effectiveness?

These four fundamental components are the framework for the systematic design and development approach of the team.

When developing courses, the first step is to identify the learning gap or need, which establishes the objectives. The team then analyses the audience and decides what knowledge and/or procedures must be included in the course for the learner to meet the established objectives. The objectives serve to inform the content and design of the program and are also used to assess learner achievement, creating a 360° feedback loop allows critical reflection upon the original need and whether the content modality and medium of delivery was appropriate. DCI's team of instructional designers, learning specialists, education developers, and subject matter experts all have essential roles in the design and development process. Subject matter experts complement the work of the team across the various dental disciplines to provide current, evidence-based information about content, and resources relating to all aspects of the topic and its delivery. DCI synthesizes the information to produce innovative and engaging programs, enabling the learner to integrate the learnings into their scope of practice. Throughout

the planning, design, and development process, the DCI team seeks input and works collaboratively with an advisory board.

The team uses a combination of instructional design models. Learning programs can look remarkably similar, creating a challenge to ensure learner engagement, and for that reason the team is always looking for ways to make courses more innovative and digestible with measurable stickiness of objectives, as evidenced through post-program performance improvements.

A significant focus for the Learning Team is to think about how the instructional material developed will be implemented, ensuring a positive end-user experience. The DCI learning team considers:

- How the learner enrolls in the course.
- How the learner navigates the course.
- How the learner provides feedback.
- The follow-up communication after the course.
- How the impact of the training is measured.

The team considers the specific learning objectives set out by the identified need when deciding upon instructional design, such as proficiency of a skill, or fluency and retention of new knowledge. The team places an increased focus upon the learner, recognizing they might require more flexibility in the format and/or learning method. Considering the broad variety of learners and taking their knowledge and experiences into consideration, allows the development of programs where there is flexible and easy access that foster engagement and self-directed learning. The dentalcorp clinical and administrative teams have representation from countries across the globe where many of them have trained in other languages and may be accustomed to different learning methods. In addition, to support cross-cultural awareness, the programs must ensure that concepts are presented in a digestible and practical manner, to foster clear and fluid communication across clinical and administrative team members.

DCI delivers learning programs in a variety of formats/mediums, including hands-on courses, webinars, live training, and e-Learns. When the team designs programs, it considers the data garnered, what medium best fits the training content, and how training outcomes can be validated against the goal (meeting the original need). During the design process the team ensures that they engage internal and external stakeholders, to garner feedback and make adjustments, allowing the team to improve the process in real time, thereby optimizing the learning experience.

The team recognizes that to be successful in implementing learning solutions there needs to be significant planning and attention to detail. Based on the identified need, the team

then selects the appropriate delivery medium for the training program. A prototype design allows the feedback to be obtained from stakeholders and end-users to identify possible challenges which can include:

- Personal Barriers: People who may struggle with the time/motivation for self-directed learning or are resistant to a particular delivery method.
- Learning Style Barriers: A fear training will not suit their learning style or that they may not be successful in meeting the educational objectives.
- Content Barriers: Challenges here include the depth of content and the challenges of choosing the best-fit method of course/program delivery.

DCI works closely with stakeholders, especially department heads, to ensure they have a clear understanding of their roles in socializing course offerings and the need for continued learning. Communication must be continuous with real-time feedback mechanisms to ensure success. Learners are continuously evaluated, and their feedback considered to ensure program goals are realistic and achievable and meet their requirements.

Delivery of Solution

The Labor Management Tool (LMT) is an example of a project where the Learning Team implemented an eLearning solution that fit the business needs of the dentalcorp Practice Development team to benefit the organization.

In early 2021, the Practice Development Team was tasked with creating a process to help dental practices manage their labor expenses. Part of the process would include evaluating the performance of Practice Managers (PMs) on how well they managed their labor budget.

The expectation was to have the PMs complete the LMT monthly, using upcoming appointments and team members' schedules to determine the number of hours required to provide optimal patient care. Almost immediately, gaps identified learning and development needs:

- Refresher training to use of the LMT.
- Leverage resources to train Practice Managers across the network.
- Find an efficient way to roll-out the upcoming changes and updates to the LMT.

As a first step, the DCI team scheduled a meeting to gather information and better understand how this initiative impacted the organizational strategy. The Practice Development Team was looking for a self-serve training solution to minimize the time spent in training and limit the number of inquiries about the LMT. They were also looking

for training to take a complex topic new to the PMs and present it with step-by-step instruction.

Following the initial meeting, DCI drafted a learning strategy that included:

- A summary of the problems to solve.
- The requirements from the Practice Development Team.
- The target Audience: Practice Managers.
- The learning outcomes - Upon completion of training, PMs will be able to:
  - Describe the steps to use the LMT.
  - Forecast both dentist & dental hygiene productions, using data from both their financials and practice management software.
  - Develop best practices for controlling and reducing labor costs using the LMT.
 - Locate additional resources.

Proposed learning solution:

- A modular approach using micro–eLearning to answer the top two questions: How to forecast labor hours and how to use the LMT.
- Since the PMs are emailed the customized link to access the LMT, micro-eLearning links were also included in that email.
- The eLearn will reside in DCI's LMS so that course completion can be tracked and provide a scheduled monthly report completion to Practice Development.
- New PMs will have this course added to their profile in the LMS to ensure completion.
- The table below summarizes the micro-eLearning modules and provides a brief overview of the content.

Modules	Content
How to create a Forecast (job aid)	• Discuss the different methods to retrieve production numbers in your patient management system • Convert the materials prepared as a job aid
How to forecast monthly hygiene and DDS production using data from your Profit & Loss statement –(eLearn)	• Review the three steps: • Show an example • Build a simulation exercise so that learners can practice
How to use the LMT (eLearn)	• Staying within budgeted labor costs using the LMT • Review the different scenarios + options the PM can take i**f forecast production is:** • *Similar* • *Lower than previous month* • *Higher than previous month*

Measurable Benefits

The measurable benefits of the LMT that made an impact to the organization included:

- 85 per cent+ of the organization's comparable general practice offices are using the LMT each month to help forecast production for the organization centrally, allowing the organization to provide guidance regarding the labour requirements to ensure safe patient care.
- Offices using the LMT outperformed non-LMT offices by adhering to the budget 40-60 percent more effectively each month.
- The LMT tool helped improve forecasting consistency across the network by 50 percent.
- The LMT tool is a proof of concept of new solutions that will be built into Workday, the organization's new human capital management system.
- The DCI training helped reduce a significant portion of training requests so that the Practice Development Team can focus upon continuously fine-tuning the processes and provide better support to the organization's practices.
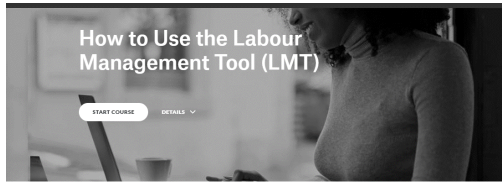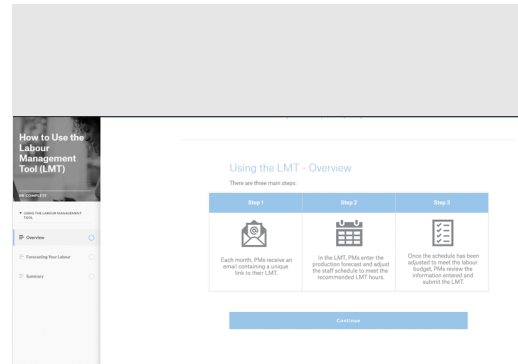
Overall

Overall, the team's greatest impact was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the world was in lockdown, DCI was working behind the scenes gathering scientific information, distilling research, and creating learns to educate and support front-line staff so they could safely care for Canadians in need, in the face of very fluid changes in protocols.

Safety, for both employees and patients, was of the utmost importance, and the DCI team had to pivot quickly to an online format. When clinical teams found themselves at home under lockdowns, which varied not only between provinces, but cities too, DCI was able to provide them with opportunities to advance their skills and knowledge through self-paced and virtual learning. The teams at dentalcorp had to ensure that its workforce was equipped with the most current information and skills they required to provide emergency care and the eventual return to the provision of non-emergent care.

In March of 2020, DCI pivoted to a virtual platform, not only to support network colleagues and provide them with an opportunity to connect, but also to make continuing professional development accessible to professionals outside the organization at a time when access to CE offerings was non-existent due to social gathering restrictions.

DCI highlights for 2020 included:

- Over 18,894 eLearning courses completed by healthcare professionals across Canada.
- Over 21,777 CE credits issued for all forms of training (e.g., webinar, eLearning)
- 800 new accounts self-registered in the system.

This pandemic provided the team the opportunity to explore new ways of accessing knowledge and acquiring new skills. The DC Institute is refining a flexible, innovative learning ecosystem that is scalable and sustainable, while meeting the current needs of the workforce. DCI will be offering more of its training content in a microlearning format,

where the knowledge is delivered in short bursts, targeting a specific learning objective. Learners can access these programs on any platform they choose, from a laptop to a tablet or mobile phone, allowing them to learn at a time and pace that is convenient for them

A key learning and development trend that has emerged as a result of the pandemic is Social Learning. Social Learning breaks free from traditional models and instead leverages social connectedness and communication. DCI will be leveraging the power of over 7,000 learners, to create more social opportunities for education. Learners will engage with each other, sharing knowledge and best practices through study clubs, social channels, and discussion boards. Learners will be encouraged to create their own content and post it on learning platforms where others can access and benefit from it and productive interactions can be fostered across the entire country

In a constantly changing environment, learning strategies will need to remain flexible and responsive as priorities evolve. DCI is committed to supporting the community of dental and corporate professionals with the training, development, and support they need to deliver optimal patient care to Canadians.

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