Hexaware Technologies: Best Certification Program

Hexaware Technologies Limited

Best Certification Program

November 2023

Brandon Hall Group
HCM Excellence Award
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
GOLD
2023

Company Background

Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Mumbai, Maharashtra (India)
Year Founded	1990
Revenue	Hexaware has stopped reporting revenues post delisting from Stock Exchange
Employees	28000-30000 (March 2023)
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Australia
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	Service offerings: Application Transformation Management, Business Process Services, Customer Experience Transformation, Enterprise Solutions, Business Intelligence & Analytics Services, Cloud, Digital Assurance Services, Infrastructure Management Services & Automation
Industry	Information Technology & Services
Website	https://hexaware.com/

Budget and Timeframe

Budget and Timeframe	
Overall budget	$400 USD
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	10 consultants
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	10 subject matter experts
Timeframe to implement	8 months
Start date of the program	January, 2022

Business Conditions and Business Needs

Business conditions and Business Needs: The IT services industry has been struggling with a shortage of the right skills. This presents tangible risks to every business. While there are resources available well versed in various skills, the availability of a mix of the right skills in the open market is a challenge. Along with the high attrition numbers across the industry, this causes a major challenge. With the rising average employee cost due to external hiring, it has become even more imperative to reskill and upskill the employees within the company.

Thus, to bridge the gap in the skills that the organization needs, a solution was to upskill the employees through a certification program. Rather than hiring new resources with the required skills, the focus is on developing a pool of diverse talents.

The certification program that Hexaware has designed is also its upskilling framework, and it is called Evolve.

Evolve is the primary upskilling program for the entire organization which was designed in collaboration with the L&D team and the Business units. The advanced learning models were created for more than 400 roles and 400 techno-functional learning paths which are validated and tied with industry credentials. The team has also designed robust in-house assessments, which have multiple levels consisting of Choice-based Questions and hands-on practice cases. The consultants are provided with internal job rotation opportunities on getting upskilled which helps them be deployed in relevant projects providing them visibility and an opportunity for faster career growth.
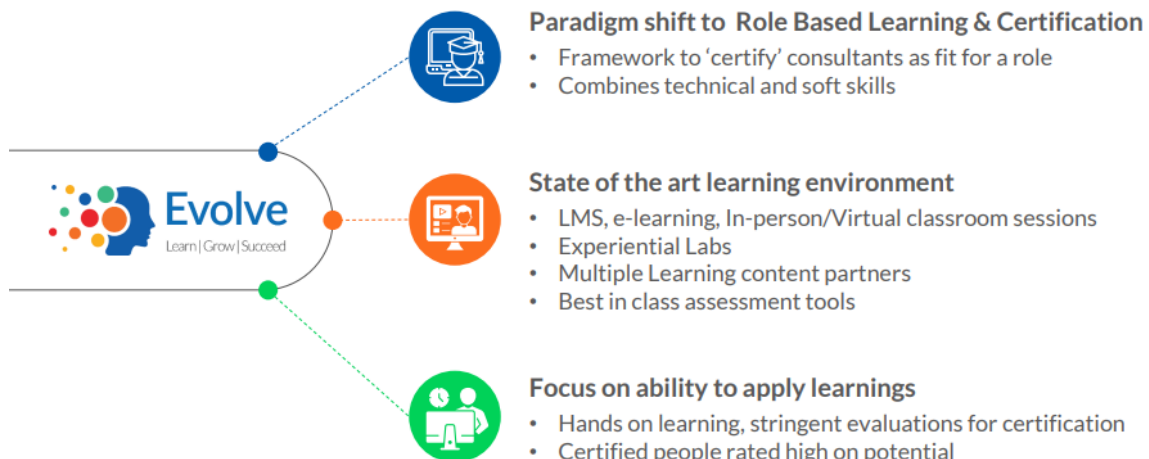
Hexaware has always focused on providing a holistic development plan to the consultants since the commencement of their career in the organization to ensure they are provided with ample growth opportunities and career progression. The learning and training programs help in the overall development of the consultants which caters to their future career and personal advancement both inside and outside the organization. The Development courses and curriculums are customizable for different subsets of consultants, ensuring all-around growth.

Overview

Hexaware has multiple learning initiatives which cover the entire employee lifecycle from entry-level trainees until their advancement to higher roles. These initiatives are designed to prepare the consultants to grow from their present level to their aspirational levels by training them on their Technical, Functional, Behavioral and Soft skills. The core upskilling program at Hexaware is Evolve.

Evolve is a role-based certification program in which 400+ roles are created with learning and certification plans for the consultants to absorb, consume, and get certified. Every role-based certification plan is a careful curation of eLearning, multilevel assessments including multiple-choice questions, virtual labs, case studies and external certifications. The entire framework was designed to establish employee career democratization, giving them an opportunity to choose their career path and focusing on the development of the employees, by supporting them to reach the role they aspire to.

Once the consultant completes the said certifications, he is deemed fit for his role. The certification progress sits at 60% within the organization. This helps to understand the level of engagement of the consultants.

Evolve — Learn | Grow | Succeed

Paradigm shift to Role Based Learning & Certification
- Framework to 'certify' consultants as fit for a role
- Combines technical and soft skills

State of the art learning environment
- LMS, e-learning, In-person/Virtual classroom sessions
- Experiential Labs
- Multiple Learning content partners
- Best in class assessment tools

Focus on ability to apply learnings
- Hands on learning, stringent evaluations for certification
- Certified people rated high on potential

A positive impact of this initiative is the addition to their Performance Appraisal which leads to higher employee empowerment, improved retention rate, and highly motivated consultants. This also enables them to apply for a new role through an internal job posting or to move laterally within the existing roles. Once the consultants realize the organization's efforts in building and establishing their careers, it provides them an intrinsic motivation, making them more productive within the teams and directly impacting the ROI.

USER EXPERIENCE
Enhanced learning portal, MIS Dashboards

BOTTOM-UP APPROACH
Designed training plan based on employee feedback (500+ employees)

TSR REFINEMENT
Technology refresh to current version
More relevance to customer's demands, improving role adequacy
Increased involvement from verticals and accounts

SINGLE Foundation
Common for a band, across Service Lines

ASSESSMENT LEVELS
One level of assessment for all TSRs

LEARNING DEMOCRATIZATION
Consultants can choose the course /Learning plan

LEARNING HOURS
Reduced learning duration

WHAT'S NEW IN EVOLVE 2.0

DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED
Focused on assessment and development, especially for Soft skills

MULTIMODAL APPROACH
eLearning, VILT, Webinar, Workshop, Community, Hackathon, External Certifications, Tie-up with external partners

Continuous Branding & Marketing
Establishing dedicated learning hours
Intensive coaching- Skill of the month, Demand-based VILT

The Evolve 2.0 program encourages the associates towards continuous learning and safeguards them against alarming technology proliferation. This not only enables them to achieve their aspirational roles but also helps to ensure a healthy employee retention rate. The program has been well-received by the consultants and has shown a positive impact on the organization's growth as well.

- **Best in class credentials through the Evolve certificate**: Most of the roles under the Evolve certification are backed by industry credentials such as Microsoft, AWS snowflake etc. These enhance the credibility of Evolve, the role-based certification program and motivate employees to adopt this program.
- **Job satisfaction and employee engagement**: More than 60% of the organization has been certified on various industry-standard certifications and Role-based certifications (TSRs) through Evolve 2.0, which not only imparted knowledge to the consultants but also made it easier for them to transition into various niche job roles. The consultants were able to pursue their aspirational roles after being certified, which provided faster career growth, high job satisfaction and reduced the attrition rate.

- **Developing a highly skilled and efficient workforce in line with customer demands**: During the allocation of a consultant to a project, irrespective of being an internal or external hire from the talent market, the requirements are always defined according to a Target State Role (TSR). This encourages even an internal employee who might be in the lower band within the organization to level up their skillsets and apply for project opportunities. In the case of external candidates, the TSRs are linked to the required skillsets and job descriptions and the hiring occurs in sync with the TSR roles.

- **Great Place to Work certified (GPTW)**: Hexaware has achieved the GPTW certification for the second time in a row and has received a much higher score in the trust index and culture audit component. The talent and skill development unit has been lauded for their relentless focus and committed efforts in building a great workplace culture. This certification has made Hexaware eligible for contending in the list of top IT companies in the country and increasing the brand value in the talent market.

- **Employee satisfaction index**: On average Hexaware has received a rating of 4.6 (out of 5) on all the talent and skill development initiatives. The scorecard re-confirms the employee's satisfaction in the learning methodologies, learning journey and their trust in the L&D team.

- **Increase in the customer satisfaction index**: Since Evolve 2.0 is the annual upskilling program of the organization, it helps the consultants enhance their technical & functional knowledge by providing them an opportunity to reach their aspirational roles. This enables a faster learning curve in developing the resource's skillsets and meeting the project requirements, leading to a higher customer satisfaction index.

Improving the learning culture of the organization: The Evolve framework ensured that consultants are allowed the opportunity to attend training and certifications according to the current market trend and are not restricted to a set of specified learning content. The certification completion was directly tied to their career progression, which encouraged a pull-based learning approach rather than a push-based approach. The programs were hosted virtually, and the employees could attend those anytime, anywhere, according to their convenience. This way the workforce had become more agile and responsive to organizational changes and a culture of self-learning had been established.

Design of the Program

Evolve 2.0 is a role-based certification program that consists of e-Learnings followed by a stringent 2-level assessment process - Multiple Choice-based Questions (MCQ) and Case study/Virtual Lab. One of the initial steps towards building this program was the detailed discussions held with the heads and the SPOCs of the competency groups and verticals.

At Hexaware, there are five verticals (industries) and five horizontals (technology groups). Verticals include various industries like Banking, Financial Services, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Insurance, and Transportation. On the other hand, Horizontals include technology groups like Application development, Business intelligence, Infrastructure Management, Cyber security, Customer Experience and Enterprise services.

Based on these services each group has its own set of Subject matter experts and practice heads, who gave insight into what software & services are in demand from the client and what Hexaware needs to upskill their resources on. Taking these inputs into consideration and with their heavy involvement in the creation process, the content for Evolve was curated.

Foundation Role (Foundation 2.0): Consultants were first classified into roles based on their years of experience and internal grades, and as per that they are mapped to mandatory Foundation-level courses. The course plan provides a repository of trending technology and industry-related topics for the consultants to choose from. For e.g. A Technical Member is provided with relevant courses for their upskilling, and they must choose a minimum set of skills on which they are evaluated. This ensures democratization in learning and letting the consultants choose their learning journey. The certifications comprise of eLearning which are online reference materials and a Multiple Choice-based assessment, to ensure proper understanding of the courses. In certain cases, for the consultants involved in Account Management and Delivery team, business-related case-studies are also a part of their evaluation process.

Post completing Foundation certification, the consultants need to take up the TSR (Target State Roles) certification.

Target State Role (TSR 2.0): TSR certifications are designed by the L&D team in collaboration with the Business units and competencies, e.g., Big Data Analyst, e-commerce specialist, UI & UX designer, Database Track associate, etc. This certification enables the consultants to level up in their specific roles and have faster career progression. TSRs are of two types, Base TSR and Aspirational TSRs, one which is recommended by the Business units, and the other is choice-based as per the consultant's aspirational role.

Irrespective of Foundation or TSR, a consultant needs to follow the below processes to complete their Evolve certification. Also, to ensure its dedicated adoption, evolve is linked with the employee's appraisal cycle, and the number of certifications achieved positively impacts their potential rating, promotion, and career progression within the organization.
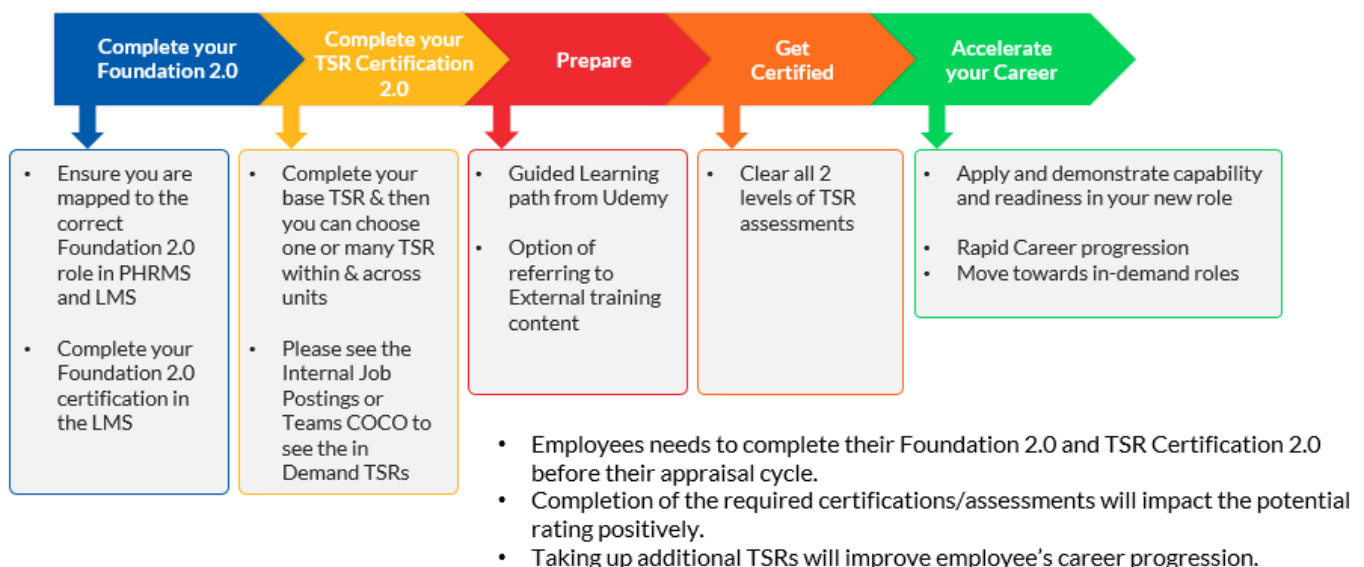
e-learnings: The Role-based certification consists of 2 modules, the first being an e-Learning course where the content is provided by one of the best online learning and teaching marketplaces in the industry. The e-learnings reference materials are optional for the employees and the main focus is on the assessment. The content can be accessed anytime, anywhere as per anyone's convenience. All in all, the learning framework provides an engaging experience that helps in building the learning culture.

MCQ assessment: The first level of assessment consists of Proctored Multiple-Choice Questions which is used to evaluate the consultant's basic understanding on the Foundation courses. The proctored assessment is provided by an external vendor, who executes the end-to-end process and evaluation report for the assessment. After successful completion of the same, the consultant can move on to the second level assessment.

Virtual Lab: The second-level assessment requires the consultant to solve case studies relevant to their project roles or building Full stack applications in a Virtual Lab environment. Before taking up the final assessment, a practice lab is provided to the consultants for them to gain hands-on experience in a similar environment.

Post completing the 2-levels of assessment, an individual becomes TSR-certified.

Following is the certification journey of Evolve 2.0:

Complete your Foundation 2.0	Complete your TSR Certification 2.0	Prepare	Get Certified	Accelerate your Career
• Ensure you are mapped to the correct Foundation 2.0 role in PHRMS and LMS • Complete your Foundation 2.0 certification in the LMS	• Complete your base TSR & then you can choose one or many TSR within & across units • Please see the Internal Job Postings or Teams COCO to see the in Demand TSRs	• Guided Learning path from Udemy • Option of referring to External training content	• Clear all 2 levels of TSR assessments	• Apply and demonstrate capability and readiness in your new role • Rapid Career progression • Move towards in-demand roles

- Employees needs to complete their Foundation 2.0 and TSR Certification 2.0 before their appraisal cycle.
- Completion of the required certifications/assessments will impact the potential rating positively.
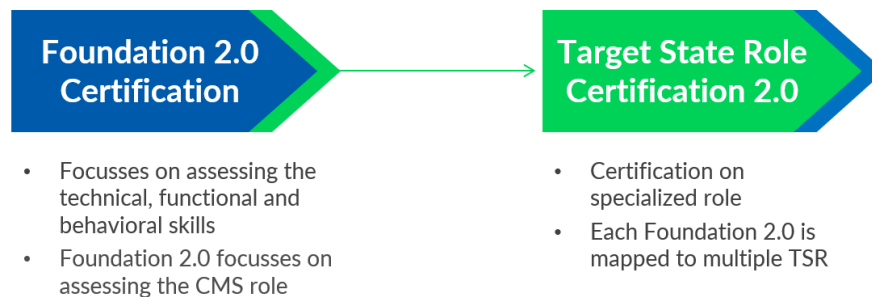- Taking up additional TSRs will improve employee's career progression.

Delivery of the Program

The LMS - Learning Management System - at Hexaware is where the learning programs are rendered and designed as curriculums. Every role is a curriculum in the learning management system.

Hexaware collaborated with the Technology group heads and the Senior Leadership team in promoting an encouraging learning environment and revamping the learning process to make it more choice based.

EVOLVE CERTIFICATION

Foundation 2.0 Certification

- Focusses on assessing the technical, functional and behavioral skills
- Foundation 2.0 focusses on assessing the CMS role

Target State Role Certification 2.0

- Certification on specialized role
- Each Foundation 2.0 is mapped to multiple TSR

ASSESSMENT LEVEL

MCQ
MCQ based, assessment post eLearning

Case Study
Simulation, case studies, project and role plays based assessment

The employee can thus choose which certification to select once he enrolls. Learnings are delivered either through the online learning source Hexaware has tie-up with or VILTs (Virtual Led Instructor Trainings) for the various kinds of role-based certifications. Once the learnings are completed, the assessments are taken through an external party that Hexaware has tied up with.

Once the MCQ assessments are cleared, employees must also complete a Virtual Lab based assessment. A virtual lab is linked to an Azure lab like an IDE (Integrated Development Environment) that consists of all the software required for them to do the assessment. For example, employees may have to build an application or write a piece of code, data archival, designing or analytics depending on the role certification chosen.

Through Hexaware's Strategic Partnership with different OEMs such as Microsoft, Amazon, Oracle, Snowflake etc. the organization enabled skill development on various in-demand technology stacks and certifications such as Cloud, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, DevOps, Big Data, Analytics, etc.

Hexaware has validated the defined roles and required skillsets by interacting with industry benchmarked partners like Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and NASSCOM. Also, the management has considered the recommendations from the Future Skills initiative by the NASSCOM team, which was well-aligned with Hexaware's newly defined roles and skills.

Measurable Benefits

Hexaware's upskilling initiatives are directed towards empowering the consultants by ensuring they are certified in various on-demand technologies and skills. Multiple factors are measured such as how many certifications have been taken up by the employees and how many employees got certified. As of now, the certification progress sits at 60% within the organization. This is a good indicator to understand the engagement levels of the employees.

Below are the impacts Hexaware measures:

- **Engagement levels and attrition**: This allows the organization to understand if there is any correlation between engagement levels and attrition. It is identified that the consultants are more engaged when they comply with the organization's norms of reskilling. Thus, the progress of certification completion under Evolve is taken into account.

- **Fungibility Index**: Hexaware measures the fungibility index of the employee. The more the number of certifications, the more the ability of the employee to move across projects where they can perform well. Such employees are given more weightage during appraisals. This in turn helps them advance their career growth in the industry.

- **Reduction in Average employee cost**: Although there is no direct correlation between upskilling and reducing the average employee cost, an indirect impact is evident. Upskilling employees and giving them the opportunity to work in areas of their interest increases their engagement level and thus reduces the possibility of attrition. This in turn brings down the capital spent on hiring from external sources, therefore decreasing the average employee cost. Hence, the average employee cost reduces because attrition slows down resulting in giving the internal resources an opportunity to move across different projects.

Hexaware's recruitment process is also in-line with the pre-defined Target State Roles, and hence when an employee gets certified the organization receives the opportunity to fulfill the demand internally. This acts as a win-win situation for both the organization and the customers. The customers are presented with a highly skilled workforce for their project, who are well-trained in niche skill areas. Also, the organization's external recruitment cost is reduced and internal hiring results to improved project utilization.

Overall

Hexaware believes that as compared to a single form of learning, learning at Hexaware must be versatile. This implies that there should be multiple ways of delivering learnings to the resources. This will keep them engaged, and interested and stimulate their mind as they take in the knowledge. The goal is to help them gain skills that will help in the advancement of their career.

At Hexaware the Learning & Development team is agile. The team works as an agile community and take responsibility for the resources. They keep up with the trends in technology and are open to feedback. Keeping in touch with employees on a regular basis, they hear their feedback, and wherever necessary are quick in implementing the changes in the programs.

Also, to understand the pulse of the organization in relation to these programs, feedback, surveys and one-to-one connect sessions had been triggered which helped in enhancing and re-building the learning culture.

Future: Even though the ultimate goal should be that the consultants get certified, the path to get there also matters to a great extent. Instead of being a monolithic structure, the mode of learning should be divided into multiple skills. This in turn will help them absorb it easily and apply it in their field of work. Thus, at Hexaware, a multimodal approach will be followed that includes Hackathons, instructor-led programs, quizzes, learning videos, learning bytes, and external certification.

Hexaware further aims to enhance the program to make it employee friendly such that the consultant would be motivated to explore and will be encouraged to learn through this upskilling initiative. Thus, Hexaware strives to make it more micro, leveraging it with LxP - Learning Experience Platforms.

In Hexaware, the Learning & Development team no longer plays the role of operations but have become very core to the business. Upskilling the employees indirectly affects their performance in the organization leading to better results and thus profit. As they play such a critical role, the plan at Hexaware is to improve the knowledge level of the team as well. Hexaware believes that the team should have basic knowledge about certain digital skills such as Cloud and understand technology at a deeper level as well.

While building the learning culture, rather than a top-down approach, Hexaware plans to work on it from the bottom. In the lifecycle of an employee, there is only a limited amount of time during which the management might not be able to be involved in their day-to-day activities. This is the reason Hexaware aims to improve the learning culture from the bottom, following a bottom-up approach. The one-on-one connects, surveys and weekly sessions have given insight into the mind of a consultant. This can be achieved by working on certain factors such as how to keep the consultants engaged, getting the pulse of the resources, understanding their likes and dislikes, and keeping in constant touch with them.

About Brandon Hall Group™

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 30 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.

Membership
Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Professional Certifications
Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

SOME WAYS WE CAN HELP

Advisory Offerings
Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards
Three annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM
uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.