



ADP Supercharges Sales Performance with Game-Changing Product Credentialing

Automatic Data Processing

Best Unique or Innovative Sales Training Program

December 2024



Company Background



Always Designing
for People®

Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Roseland, NJ
Year Founded	19
Revenue	\$18.1B FY23
Employees	63,000
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	140 countries
Customers/Output, etc. (Key	ADP is a leading global technology company providing human capital management (HCM) solutions that unite HR, talent, time, tax, benefits, and payroll. Serving one



customers and services offered)	million clients in 140 countries, ADP has the experience and scale to customize solutions for businesses of all sizes – from small business to global enterprise – across all industries.
Industry	HCN
Stock Symbol	NASDAQ:ADP
Website	www.adp.com

Budget and Timeframe

Budget and Timeframe	
Overall budget	\$550,000
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	13
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	6
Number of contractors involved with implementation	0
Timeframe to implement	2 years
Start date of the program	7/1/2022

Fit to the Needs

ADP works to empower organizations with insightful solutions that drive business success. It strives to help organizations focus on what matters, with its core values centered upon integrity, innovation, a results-driven focus, social responsibility, and excellence in service. The company also fosters a strong internal culture that exemplifies these values and translates its actions into solid impacts on its clients. It believes in constant improvement, always searching for new and better ways to serve its clients and grow the business. And finally, it thrives on turning knowledge into insight, staying on top of the field and ahead of the curve to drive value for its clients. As a technology-driven organization, ADP’s continued product development remains a top priority for all current and prospective clients. To meet



clients' ever-evolving needs, the ADP Sales teams must articulate and position ADP's solution set while clearly communicating how it will help an organization improve their HR operations.

With revenue expecting to increase **six to seven percent** during this fiscal year, ADP's Sales Senior Leadership Team (SSLT) will place emphasis on the seller's overall product knowledge to reinforce the company's core values and help drive revenue goals. Their approach will lead to a better buying experience for prospects and clients, more engagement during the sales process, and have a positive impact on the client experience when joining ADP. The SSLT also sought external perspective, which includes findings from Forrester, LinkedIn Learning, Whatfix, and Tupper, H. & Ellis.

According to Forrester, "high-performing sales orgs provide 27% more sales training and development activities than low-performing organizations," while "36% of high-performing reps indicate a lack of ongoing development as significant motivator to leave."¹

In addition, the team discovered other insightful statistics that support the development of the strategy:

- When learning happens in the flow of work it becomes "embedded into daily routines...it's no longer labeled as "learning" and instead becomes an integral part of how work happens."²
- A 2018 study by LinkedIn Learning found that 49% of employees want to learn in the flow of work.³
- Digital adoption platforms like Whatfix found that interactive guidance and on-demand support in the flow of work enable adoption resulting in 3x faster time to proficiency and 30% reduction in knowledge discovery time.⁴

Prepared with external insight and numerous conversations and investigation, the ADP Sales Learning Team (SLT) developed a unique tiered product credentialing model to improve the learning strategy. The model involved implementation of a standardized, structured product learning framework that included accountability and a path for achieving excellence.

¹ Forrester. "Forrester 2020 Customer-Facing Roles Study"



The ADP Product Credentialing Program established a standardized approach of product training that supports tiered learning, reinforces key principles, and increases ADP sales representatives' closing rate. After the program's initial success, the ADP SLT expanded beyond the flagship Human Capital Management (HCM) solution, Workforce Now®, into other solutions such as RUN®, TotalSource® and Global Payroll®.

In its initial stages, the ADP SLT implemented the ADP Product Credentialing Program in two Business Units (BUs) that sell ADP Workforce Now® and targeted 10% of the salesforce to receive a badge in the first half of FY23. Since the program exceeded these goals, the team set out to take the program to the next level with the establishment of the following targets:

1. Expand the credentialing program into three additional BUs.
2. Integrate Product 101 courses into five ADP new hire programs.
3. Develop and execute a strategy to teach product demonstration skills.

Sales Learning's standardized approach to training included a structure to support varying levels of learning across BUs and aligned to ADP's organizational goals. Prior to the standardized approach, training material for BUs remained separate, which led to varying degrees of learning and differences in the level of product knowledge throughout the salesforce. Using innovation as the guiding principle in ADP's approach to learning, the ADP Product Credentialing Program incorporates employee recognition and gamification through the successful completion of online content. In addition, the team will move toward targeted product demonstration training by leveraging demo tools and providing learning in the flow of work to accelerate knowledge transfer. Since the ADP Product Credentialing Program's inception, the ADP salesforce experienced an improvement in technical product knowledge, helping to drive an increase in sales year over year (YOY).

The SLT surpassed expectations and implemented the new product credentialing strategy in **seven** BUs, which exceeded the target of five BUs. In addition, the team integrated Product 101 courses into **seven** new hire programs as a completion requirement within the first year of employment. Lastly, after pilot testing proved to be a success, the SLT team implemented product demonstration training by leveraging a third-party digital adoption platform.

Design of the Program

Based on the goal of implementing a standardized, structured product learning framework, the SLT designed a learning strategy that incorporates a product



credentialing program to address the shifting expectations of learners and the need to provide right-sized, customized content that meets the learner at an individual level of expertise. The team began with identifying three distinct levels of product knowledge that build upon each other:

- **Foundational 101:** Provides the basics of product knowledge including terminology, product capabilities, the important business problems the product solves or goals it helps a client meet, positioning the right elements for the best deal, the strengths of the feature, and its market differentiators.
- **Advanced 201:** Advances the learner's knowledge and sales skills with a focus on analysis and product demonstration. The advanced content helps the learner identify the right questions to ask a client to best understand their needs and how to deliver a product demonstration tailored to those needs.
- **Specialty 301:** Provides the learner with more detailed information about product functionality, covering a deeper level of technical features and how a customer can leverage them to solve critical business issues.

After identifying product knowledge levels, the SLT began development of modularized, consumable eLearning lessons that included assessments to evaluate the achievement of objectives. Using an eLearning approach allows flexibility for the learner to expand and test their knowledge at a time and place most convenient for them. When deployed via a learning management system (LMS), the menu-driven structure allows for selection of the most relevant courses and topics based on individualized market segment and interests, while also allowing opportunities to identify and address knowledge gaps. The SLT applied best practices for courseware development that engages learners through simulation of real-life customer conversations, provides opportunities and guidance in the content to challenge the status quo, highlights product features, and gamifies key topics to promote learner absorption of information.

A new addition to the program includes the ability for learners to “test out” of courses for which they already have relevant knowledge and experience. The content's design and development aids in setting the learner up for success and applying knowledge and skills immediately in the field. Learners who leveraged the test out option appreciated the flexibility in approach, allowing them to reinforce their knowledge and quickly achieve completion.

Beyond the tiered levels of learning, the ADP Product Credentialing Program also offers a “badge” as a reward for each course successfully completed at the various levels. Serving as a gamification element, badging incentivizes continuous



learning, memorializes the learner's accomplishment, and provides recognition that promotes intrinsic motivation.

While the badge provides a gamified element to motivate the learner, the ADP Product Credentialing Program derives additional value through the public sharing of earned badges on social media platforms and email signatures. The social aspect of badge sharing provides the learner with a means of articulating their knowledge and skill, which builds credibility and status among peers and clients. Additionally, the social nature of sharing a badge encourages others to acquire a badge, which led to an organic increase in participation in the program.

The ADP SLT also worked to create unique methods to engage the learners and leaders throughout the program. In addition to badging and the test out options, the team took an innovative approach to delivering the Advanced 201 course content. In these higher-level courses, learners analyze product capabilities and learn demonstration skills. To facilitate active learning and increase information retention, the SLT established a strategy to engage learners while also providing learning opportunities in the flow of work. As a result, ADP invested in a third-party digital adoption platform that engages learners within the sellers' ADP web-based demonstration tool. The platform enables the incorporation of scripts, videos, and additional contextual help as needed. Building product demonstration training directly into the digital adoption platform enabled the team to incorporate a greater amount of information into the flow of work, at the point of need. Now, ADP sellers can prepare for a live demonstration through simulation of the tools used in performing live product demonstrations to a prospect or client. Historically, teaching sellers how to demonstrate a complex product was a challenge and ADP recognized this as an opportunity to create a strategy to accelerate learning. To conduct a successful product demonstration, the salesperson needs a variety of skills, such as storytelling, use of navigation and transitions, objection handling, and competitive differentiation. Leveraging the third-party digital adoption tool allowed the team to tackle all facets while offering a new, innovative method of learning.

Throughout the development process, the SLT partnered with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) across the product, technology, and product marketing teams to ensure consistency in product features, messaging, and differentiators. The SMEs participated in formative content reviews and provided feedback regarding content accuracy and message delivery. To navigate the challenge of differentiated feedback, the SLT developed and implemented a change to the review process that allowed SMEs to focus on specific topics within a designated review period. After submission of feedback, the SLT would review the comments, contact



reviewers to address any questions, and determine which comments the SLT would address immediately versus the next revision cycle.

Another innovative approach that the ADP SLT leveraged as a unique way to reach learners was the use of an internal streaming platform. The streaming platform hosts a series of focused micro-learning videos developed to reinforce and support the learning strategy. For each specific topic, the SLT created short episodes to share valuable information or relevant features that would allow the learner to quickly upskill their knowledge. Incorporating the streaming platform helped maintain an elevated level of learner engagement and provided alternative learning opportunities for the entire salesforce.



Delivery of the Program

The ADP SLT took a multipronged approach to the Product Credentialing Program delivery. The team strategically and selectively examined delivery strategies, such as looking for ways to incorporate learning into the flow of work while also making content easy for the learners to access. The SSLT made product course completion a requirement for all sellers, which required collaboration with Sales Leadership and BU partners critical in the success of the required product rollouts. The team had to determine how to incorporate the ADP Product Credentialing Program into the required training for new hires as well as the tenured associate learning path.

The team developed custom approaches to meet the needs of each BU while considering the nuanced needs of both new hires and tenured sellers. One BU decided to do a phased rollout over time for tenured sellers, whereas another BU decided to approach it as a “day of learning” that incorporated conversation points and best practices sharing among the sellers. For new hire requirements, the team consulted with each BU as they examined the holistic view and considered the best placement of the required courses in the new hire journey. They also paid special attention to ensure proper timing within the experience so learners would not be overwhelmed, ensuring they retain the highest amount of knowledge and skill possible. Where requested, the ADP SLT also delivered instructor-led sessions to support and reinforce the knowledge.

The ADP Product Learning Libraries use a unique and effortless strategy to drive learners to the extensive badging courses available in the program. Sellers can access the library through a performance support tool popup embedded within ADP’s customer relationship management (CRM) system. Even without formal notice, the team discovered that the popup notification created organic traffic into the program. When the SLT prepared for the broad rollout, the team ensured it aligned with BU initiatives and gained Sales Leadership support to reinforce and regularly communicate the importance of the program. Both the SLT and Sales Leadership monitored progress and completion reports, which helped to drive increased participation and enhance the program’s success.

The SLT faced the additional challenge of acquiring the product knowledge needed to develop a tailored solution. In the past, the team shared resources from other areas (e.g., product development, product marketing, sales support) who were considered most knowledgeable on ADP products. However, using resources



outside of the Sales Learning organization was not a sustainable solution, as the team did not have oversight or direct management of their expertise. To navigate this challenge, the SLT decided to add product experts to its team. The addition of new members to the team required a business case submission to the SSLT to support monetary investments in additional headcount and expansion of the team. With solid results and proof points, the SLT received the approval to invest in additional headcount, which allowed the team to accelerate expansion of the program. The product expert's integration into the development process required several workflow changes to strategically gather, incorporate, and validate product expert content and review feedback; however, their participation contributed to the accelerated development and deployment of the program.

Throughout the program's delivery, the team accounted for varying levels of seller knowledge and experience using a test out option. The test out option also provided an avenue to help overcome potential learner resistance. Learners who felt they already had the prerequisite knowledge could demonstrate their expertise by passing an assessment. In addition, the program awards mini badges for small feature topics, which allowed learners to earn small achievements during their learning journey. Once learners completed all necessary courses, they became fully credentialed and awarded a badge from the third-party digital credentialing platform. This social badging mechanism provided ADP sellers with a means of communicating their product knowledge, which led to an expansion of their client network, additional sales opportunities, and increased sales. In addition, the awarding of badges increased interest in the program and motivated sellers to participate due to the value it brought to their colleagues.

Once the SLT had all content in place, solidified the badging mechanism within the LMS, and completed a pilot with a third-party credentialing provider, they began to invest more effort into the next phase, which involved using a third-party digital adoption platform to facilitate product demonstration training. The SLT predicted that leveraging this platform would help accelerate the knowledge gain of the sellers on a complex topic (e.g., product demonstration) that requires numerous skills to master. After a successful pilot, the SLT plans to incorporate the digital platform into the required first year new hire curriculum. The ADP sellers will be eligible to receive a live demonstration code only after they have successfully completed the necessary Product 201 courses, which helps them meet the credential needed to serve as a Sales Advisor.



Another challenge the SLT faced was the shift to a completely new strategy for required training. Many steps were taken to address this challenge. One successful strategy included the SLT partnering with the SSLT to deliver a unified, consistent message to the learners. It involved a unified “it starts at the top” approach with regular communication and updates from Senior Leaders. Offering badges as rewards to demonstrate expertise, expanding professional networks, and helping to increase uncovered sales opportunities also provided intrinsic motivation to the sellers. The team also regularly communicates with the BUs and Senior Leadership to report results and share learner sentiment. Additionally, reporting also serves as a key factor in the approach to the program; custom dashboards provide quick and easy access to view course completions and provide the SLT and Sales Leaders up-to-date information to support rollout efforts. The dashboards provide completion rates, assessment scores, and the ratio of test out versus traditional learning modules.

Measurable Benefits

The successful ADP Product Credentialing Program exceeded expectations based on Sales Learning’s established goals. Leaning into Kirkpatrick Levels of Evaluation, the team looked at learner reactions, assessment scores, learning transfer as it relates to on-the-job performance, and return on investment (ROI). Overall adoption of the Program increased tremendously since inception with **57,304 individual badges awarded** as of March 2024. The team designed, developed, and deployed training of **77 product features** across five of the largest product platforms since the program started, with continued expansion efforts to include additional BUs and advancement into Advanced 201 and Specialty 301 level courses. Moreover, the ADP SLT worked with the individual BUs to incorporate the product training as required for all new hires while also tackling a larger BU-wide rollout to tenured sellers. Since the strategy for each BU differs, the team needed to modify the product training requirements to address the specific needs of each area. As a result, **1,623** sellers (which represents **20%** of the sellers across ADP) are fully badged or certified at the Foundational 101 level and received public badges for sharing via social media channels using ADP’s third-party credentialing provider.

The SLT also regularly analyzes assessment scores as another key set of data points to determine program success and ensure the learning content hits the mark.

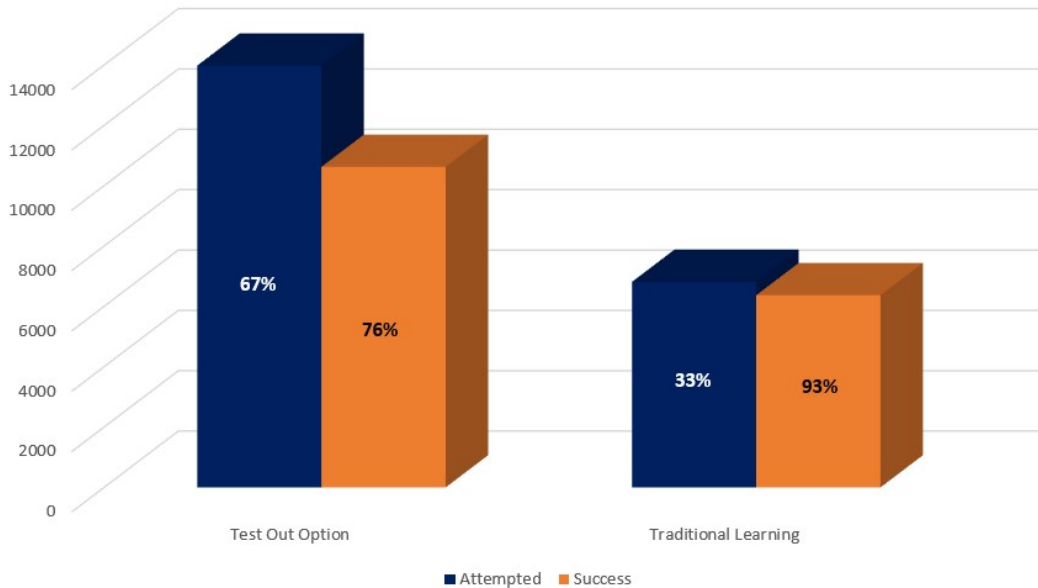


Figure 1. Example of the Test Out vs Traditional Learning Assessment percent of ADP sellers.

Confidential – for judging purposes only.

In addition to the participation levels and number of fully certified sellers, the team identified other measurable benefits the ADP Product Credentialing Program supports. ADP finished FY23 with a revenue increase of **9%** to **\$18 billion** over the previous year, helping to demonstrate seller success and their level of product knowledge. When ADP sellers show more knowledge of the product suite during interactions with clients and prospects, it leads to an increase in their comfort level, which then leads to an increase in sales. In particular, the team looked at a comparison of the Closed Won Average Dollars year over year (comparing July through Dec FY23 and FY24) for sellers in Global Enterprise Sales (GES). After implementing the ADP Product Credentialing Program, GES experienced a **52%** increase in average closed won dollars for badge earners, which indicated tremendous growth. The team also examined first year Annual Sales Performance (ASP) year over year (YOY). The ADP Sales team saw an increase in YOY between **10%-42.6% in first year ASP** where the new hire learning strategy implemented the ADP Product Credentialing Program as a requirement. The ASP data shows positive return on investment to the SSLT, who plans to continue to invest in the expansion of the program.

In addition to success in the sales figures, learner sentiment also played a key factor in the measurement of the program's success. ADP Worldwide Commercial Operations launches an annual Modern Seller Survey to all sellers. From the most



recent survey (November 2023), the SLT saw a significant improvement in the scores related to product training (which implemented the ADP Product Credentialing Program). The survey results indicated that out of all ADP BUs, sellers rated a **68% improvement** in product training as outlined in the results in figure 5.

The SLT also surveyed learners who participated in the ADP Product Credentialing Program. Out of **664 responses**, two specific questions highlighted the sentiment of the learners participating in the ADP Product Credentialing Program:

Question	Net Promoter Score
"How likely is it that you would recommend this course to a friend or colleague?"	8.344
"I am confident I can apply what I learned to be successful in my role."	8.516

Survey respondents also shared feedback by answering the question, “How can we change or improve this course to make it more valuable?” The ADP SLT reviews the feedback to identify patterns and consider suggestions for improvement.

The following notable learner comments validate the success of the team’s new approach to the ADP Product Credentialing Program.

"Probably one of the best courses I've taken. Absolutely loved it. I was tempted to take the test out option, but I'm glad I went through all of it. Great job with this training. "

"I absolutely loved this learning! It's the best way I know how to retain information, so I appreciate it!"

"I think the ADP Run 101 was a good course specifically because of the hands on training part. Being able to walk through it with the course and clicking on where I needed to go helped it sink in a little better."

Since adopting a new way of learning involved a major cultural shift for the sellers, the positive feedback played a critical factor in evaluating the success of the ADP



Product Credentialing Program. The ADP SLT will continue to invest in a unified approach to product training with plans to design, develop, and deploy badged content for ADP's other major product offerings. The team will also continue to focus on innovative techniques to present product training to learners in the flow of work.

Overall

After the ADP Product Credentialing Program rollout, the team reflected on key findings related to what worked well, lessons learned, and opportunities for future development.

What Worked:

Learners responded positively to the incorporation of gamification into the course material. The learning team constantly looked for ways to engage the learner and include different activities to weave throughout the coursework and reinforce objectives. Test out options that allowed the team to offer a customized learning experience also proved successful. The SLT found the learners were more engaged and appreciated the opportunity to demonstrate their pre-existing knowledge and move ahead to a new topic. The third-party digital adoption platform will continue to be a key focus due to positive learner feedback, and the team continues to receive requests to expand upon the Advanced 201 demonstration focused training. Sellers want to improve and sharpen their skills, and the SLT stands ready to build on innovative techniques to further enhance the program. As the program matures, ADP will expand into maintenance strategies and enhance the learner experience through additional tools and technology used for courseware development.

Lessons Learned:

The program required flexibility from the team members and willingness to adjust accordingly based on source material and internal product knowledge. The initial plan for the ADP Product Credentialing Program seemed straightforward; however, as the team started to build out the content, they uncovered needs for additional support and resources (such as an internal partner or the need to bring additional SMEs onto the team). Moving forward, the team realizes that internal support through the addition of team members with product knowledge will be critical to stay on schedule and ensure technical accuracy. The team will also focus on content maintenance since the ADP product features change often. The



establishment of standard operating procedures and guidelines will support the volume of revisions required and ensure courses remain relevant and up to date.

Additionally, as the team leveraged other internal parties as part of the review and approval process, they determined they needed to provide more visibility into the process at all levels. With the volume of content that required review by other stakeholders, the team developed strict guidelines and procedures to support a solid, simplified process for all reviewers. Since reporting and accountability play key roles in the success of the review, delays were minimized. Communication with stakeholders and Senior Leadership during the review cycles played a critical role in keeping the team aligned to deadlines.

Outlook:

The successful deployment of the ADP Product Credentialing Program to include the program's infrastructure, key connection points, and collaboration processes, will serve as the baseline for future product training efforts. The program also includes a maintenance strategy that incorporates product expert reviews at scheduled intervals and regular updates to content and assessment questions to ensure sellers receive the most accurate information. Moving forward, the ADP Product Credentialing Program will continue as a requirement for all new sales associates as part of the first-year experience. Tenured sellers will also be required to complete content regularly.

As the SLT builds more product content, the SSLT will play an instrumental role in its continued support. Other enhancements to the program include specific leadership involvement and enhancing the learner experience using tools and application/practice outside of the eLearning environment. As the program matures, the content will shift into key topics such as product demonstration skills and competitive intelligence.

Throughout the ADP Product Credentialing Program rollout, the team identified additional use cases, including external audiences such as ADP Value Added Resellers (VARs and ADP Marketplace Partners). As resellers and partners, becoming more familiar with ADP's products will aid in partner sales efforts, which benefits both organizations by leading to more joint sales. To meet the needs of resellers, the SLT designed and deployed the ADP Product Credentialing Program with a long-term strategy in mind. They first examined reseller territory, repurposing product courses for the external ADP VARs. The repurposing of the content allowed the team to accelerate the production life cycle, providing resellers



with the critical information needed for their partnership with ADP. Additionally, the alignment of the internal and external programs will allow for program expansion while minimizing time and resources required for development.

The SLT also continues to invest in efforts to ensure learners and leaders have visibility into the ADP Product Credentialing Program. The team worked with developers to create a dashboard that provides visibility into courseware completions and badges for sellers and leaders:

Currently, sellers have access to the information in the LMS, and the team plans to incorporate it into an internal platform where sellers access all of ADP's seller tools. After testing and development finishes, the dashboard will allow the team additional visibility and offer quick, easy access to learners in the flow of work.

Overall, the successful ADP Product Credentialing Program initiative far exceeded expectations by surpassing the expansion goal into three additional BUs and integrating into the new hire programs of five BUs. In addition, the YOY increase in revenue, increase in average closed won dollars, and YOY increase in ASP spoke volumes for the need to further invest in the program. Both the SSLT and sellers would like to see additional content rolled out, to include more ADP products in the program and incorporation of more complex topics and specialty areas.



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**EXCELLENCE
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CASE STUDY



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