

THE CHALLENGE: WHAT DO THE EMPLOYEES ACTUALLY NEED?

- A new learning management system (LMS) was being deployed; the previous system would be retired.
- Leadership selected the system based on IT and auditing needs: legal requirements for documentation of annual “check-box” training participation. There was no information on how employees used the system or which features were useful.
- Within an organization of 8000 employees, four very different user groups would share one system.
- None of the groups had been informed that the present LMS was going to be retired.
- High-security organization: typically closed-door offices with no open, central meeting places. Information communicated only via emails, briefings, or meetings.

THE TECHNIQUE: EMPLOYEE SURVEY AND FOCUSED OUTREACH

- Create an online survey disseminated to all employees to obtain overview of most useful LMS features.
- Use survey as part of organizational communications effort to inform of upcoming changes.
- Monitor response rate across all four groups for semi-equal participation.
- Review survey data and conduct focus groups for more information on targeted areas.
- Incorporate requirements needs into system configuration.
- Review data and information for change management strategy.

THE INTERVENTION

- Online survey querying 8000 employees, including staff, managers, and system administrators.
- Target the questions correctly: designed survey items to obtain actionable data concerning possible features for supporting organization-specific learning and performance needs.
- Structure the survey well: built survey to enable monitoring of four different organizational groups—and splice data for greater insight into differences or similarity of needs.
- Investigate assumptions: followed up on data in focus groups to get deeper understanding of whether there was an understanding of what was most useful.
- Follow-up: whether through communications in support of the roll-out, focus group participation, or change management activities, demonstrated to the employees that their feedback was valuable and has been read and considered.

THE RESULTS

- High response rate: achieved 85% survey participation from system administrators; comparatively high participation from other user groups.
- Leadership engagement: received multiple requests from senior executives requesting meetings and briefings to discuss change impact as well as new tool availability.
- Requirements configuration: extensive and surprising input into which features would be useful in day-to-day learning management.
- Change management and communications: both focus groups and survey results revealed concerns of employees and informed both strategy and content of change management and communications.
- Organizational culture: in a low-communication culture, the survey set a new standard of both informing outward about a change, as well as informing leadership of employee needs.
- Year-later follow-up results: LMS system demonstrated higher access-and-use data than its predecessor.