



Alliance Data re-energizes employee training with Lynda.com

Alliance Data Systems is the engine behind loyalty and marketing campaigns for more than 1,000 consumer-facing companies worldwide across a wide range of industries including retail, travel, pharmaceuticals, financial services and automotive. Based in Plano, Texas, the Fortune 500 company has 17,000 employees.

Challenge: new, engaging on-demand learning

Like many big companies, Alliance Data purchased several online learning providers to keep distributed employees trained on technology, business and creative skills.

But the complexity of maintaining several sources of eLearning—from providers whose content was increasingly stale—motivated the learning and development (L&D) team to replace at least some options with a single alternative offering.

“We had a lot of old legacy contracts I was renegotiating,” said Jeff Krone, learning solutions manager. “They were promoting IT training, for example, that was 45 to 60 minutes long. It was very robotic. It was ‘page turner’ and boring, and nobody wanted to take it. It looked like it was from 1994.”

This came as the company sought to increase new-manager training among high potential employees and enhance leadership classes with high-quality companion content, Krone said. “We want to retain these employees, let them know we see their potential. We wanted to invest in them.”

Solution: Lynda.com from LinkedIn

Interest in a new eLearning solution grew when Alliance Data acquired another company, Conversant, Inc., which was using Lynda.com from LinkedIn. A decision was made to extend access to Alliance Data employees—in part to test its potential.

“It was an easy decision,” Krone said. “The Lynda.com user interface is fantastic compared to what we had. And it works better on mobile.”

Alliance Data wanted to see if the availability—and value—of Lynda.com might spread among employees by word of mouth, Krone said. “We let our people choose.”



AllianceData.

Challenge

- Existing eLearning content was boring and dated
- Needed to invest in talent and retain high performers
- Wanted to supplement in-house new manager training
- Needed on-the-go training on mobile devices

Solution

- Thousands of engaging, on-demand courses for all employees
- Bite-size tutorials for just-in-time microlearning
- Easy-to-use, intuitive user interface
- Works on multiple mobile devices with downloadable courses

Result

- Online learning re-energized, LMS use doubled
- Employees answering their own questions within minutes
- Users discovering relevant topics to learn on their own
- Employees learning on any device, with or without connectivity
- Employees say L&D providing a valuable benefit

Result: training employees prefer

In short order, Lynda.com had a big impact. Employees embraced the service, and usage took off.

“On a grand scale, Lynda.com has re-energized online training,” Krone said. “People said, ‘I didn’t even know we had this. I can’t believe more people aren’t using this.’”

“Lynda.com is growing on its own,” he said. “I don’t have to market and push it out. It’s being pulled. I haven’t seen that with our other vendors and content providers. That to me speaks volumes.”

LMS use at Alliance Data has doubled as total Lynda.com view times increased from an early measure of 200 hours per month to 500 hours after two years.

Average viewing time per employee in the first six months was 16 minutes per session and two years later 22 minutes, both measures underscoring that Lynda.com is used largely as Krone intended—in bite-size chunks for just-in-time microlearning and finding quick answers to questions as they arise.

Lynda.com quickly became employees’ favorite on-demand learning option, Krone said, noting users often log in for one helpful tutorial then poke around and discover another.

The easy-to-use, intuitive Lynda.com interface propelled this success, Krone said, adding some users have logged hundreds of views. “We thought we’d have to do this massive amount of training. We didn’t have to do any. Employees figured it out.”

One such employee is Jodi Hartman, a senior IT program manager, who said she uses Lynda.com often: “I have the Lynda.com app loaded on my iPad and iPhone. I download courses for offline viewing. Lynda.com quickly gets me up to speed on new technologies I need to help my team work more collaboratively and efficiently.”

Bite-size Lynda.com videos also complement the new manager development curriculum at Alliance Data, supplementing in-person training and successfully mapping to all of 22 employee competency goals prescribed by the program.

Lynda.com functions as a value-added employee benefit. Alliance Data encourages employees to log in and learn for as long as they want when they want—on the job, after work and on weekends.

With Lynda.com, the L&D team at Alliance Data gains valuable visibility into how employees learn, Krone said. “The backend reporting feature is fantastic. Course and video rankings tell me what people are doing and where their interests are.”

Looking ahead, Alliance Data plans to increasingly create and assign personalized training to further promote individualized employee development. Lynda.com lets users build instructional playlists and also features Learning Paths—series of courses on specific topics curated by subject matter experts.

With Lynda.com, Alliance Data provides employees with engaging on-demand training they can explore on their own at the office or on the go.

“Lynda.com is a success story,” Krone said. “People here are talking about it. Every time I get asked for more licenses or ‘Can we build a curriculum using this?’ I say, ‘Yes, let’s do it.’”

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Learning Solutions Manager
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