

Case Study:

Columbia Sportswear Company

A Journey to Global Business Transformation

Trying Stuff Since 1938

According to the Columbia Sportswear company motto, they've been "Trying Stuff Since 1938." In 2012, however, Columbia decided to try something really big--the largest global business transformation in company history.

The rapidly growing company headquartered in Portland, Oregon, is a leading innovator in the global apparel, footwear, accessories, and equipment markets. But the company was new to the technical training world which prevented them from reaching their goals without a solid program in place.

In 2012, Columbia Sportswear rolled out a new SAP platform in their Canadian subsidiary. Unfortunately, the rollout did not go as planned, according to Myra Lavenue, Columbia Sportswear's Organization Change Management Training Lead. "We did not have cohesive and thorough communication to the users about the changes that were coming. Nor did we have a standard way to train them."

After the Canada project concluded, Columbia Sportswear took a step back. They reflected, regrouped, mobilized and rebuilt, thus launching Global Business Transformation (GBT), the largest change initiative in Columbia Sportswear's history. GBT was originally named Supply Chain Transformation and it was an IT-only initiative. Columbia Sportswear used an outside vendor to

develop all the training materials and conduct the training as well. After realizing this wasn't the way to go, they rebranded the initiative to GBT and brought in the Change Management methodology to get the entire organization involved in the process.

We Have a Winner

GBT transformed business processes and systems by supporting growth and employees, modernized training material, improved analytics, and created world-class customer service to its employees and customers. With GBT however, came a huge shift in the way training was delivered. Instead of sending trainers onsite, Columbia Sportswear trained business process owners who then trained other employees. Columbia Sportswear encouraged those who were super users to step forward to be trained. This train-the-trainer approach prepared trainers to successfully guide end users through the learning process; fostered organizational commitment and buy-in; and established a global super user network to embed departmental expertise.

With almost a dozen systems needing to be trained, Columbia Sportswear utilized ANCILE uPerform™ to create a blended learning solution to support their global curriculum and materials to help with their end user training strategy.

The results: A highly successful project rollout. In fact, between July 2013 and April 2014, Columbia

Sportswear trainers spent over 2,000 hours in train-the-trainer sessions, and developed and implemented a comprehensive training program, including:

150 training courses

65 Business process training courses

85 Hands-on training courses

1,000 uPerform work instructions

250 Hands-on scenario based exercises

284 course offerings for a total of 25,000 hours of training delivered

In recognition of their efforts, Columbia Sportswear won a coveted Brandon Hall Bronze Excellence Award for Best Learning Program Supporting a Change Transformation.

“The training developers worked tirelessly with our super users to create the training documents and adjusted their schedules to meet our demanding needs. The uPerform documents that were created were paramount in our go live success since they were readily available and very thorough. End users were able to utilize these (documents) without having a trainer constantly helping them through the steps involved in their processes,” stated Pat Eaton, Business Process Analyst.

Not Finished Yet

As a result of GBT, Columbia Sportswear has established a Center of Excellence to provide an enterprise-wide framework to achieve their business strategy and to continue to drive adoption and compliance with new systems and processes in preparation for their next release which is scheduled to go live in May 2015.

“GBT continues to bring the company together on a global scale in a way that we never have before. All the systems, processes and training Columbia has implemented have worked to bring clarity to what we do, a deeper understanding of our cross

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functional partners and the impacts we have on them. It has brought us a more streamlined and logical way of thinking, planning, and executing in our day to day. We are spending more time analyzing reports, looking for trends and using them to guide good business decisions because we have one version of the truth. We no longer have to run reports and double check the results with our peers,” stated Sabrina Dean, Manager, Account Logistics.

After things settle down, Columbia Sportswear is hoping to begin utilizing the Rapid Recorder feature of uPerform to more fully leverage the knowledge and experience of their global employees. “For disbursed groups, I don’t have to worry about when they will be here in the office or how I’m going to do overseas, remote training. I can simply assign them a task and they can record something with Rapid Recorder and send it back to me. That is a game changer,” said Lavenue.