Case Study

A Partner to Learning Transformation

A leading aerospace industry company realized their learning transformation efforts could use a helping hand in order to fulfill their vision of becoming a more modern company with a global footprint, an improved learning experience, more speed and agility, and true business alignment. The organization brought GP Strategies in to focus their efforts and launch a company-wide initiative that's still ongoing today.

Joining the Journey

Our aerospace client began their learning transformation journey more than a year before we joined their effort. They had been researching industry data and benchmarking with a variety of comparable organizations to understand how approaches to learning and leadership had evolved. A long-standing company at the forefront of their industry, they now needed to reinvent themselves in a modern future with a global service footprint, an improved learner experience, speed and agility in responding to requests, and better alignment with overall business needs and performance.

As they merged two divisions together—one focused on learning and another focused on leadership—they hired a new vice president/CLO. Housed in Human Resources, this new combined division is tasked with providing performance solutions for learners and leaders across the entire enterprise. They partner with business groups across the company to support a complex array of functions and segments and are continually challenged to do more with less, reduce headcount, and outsource more.

In more than a year of researching and reimagining, they had amassed a wealth of information. They had a clear and somewhat disappointing understanding of where they were in contrast to where they wanted to be. They had established a new learning framework and were beginning to redefine their value proposition but needed help bringing their vision to life and making it actionable.

Getting up to Speed

As our partnership began, we focused on understanding what they had already done. Where we might ordinarily be involved from the beginning to map current state, envision a desired future, and make recommendations, we needed to move quickly through that analysis into action planning. In addition, the new vice president was championing the "voice of the customer" (meaning their internal business partners across the organization) to ensure that how this group chose to move forward truly aligned to what their internal partners needed most.

Through a rapid series of collaborative working sessions (and many late nights), we designed and facilitated a large group summit that combined a cross-section of this new division's work groups with representatives of all key business partner groups across the enterprise. We conducted several highly interactive "co-create" activities to calibrate everyone on learner needs, products and service offerings, learning philosophy, value proposition, and pain points. This validated and refined our Learning Maturity Model assessment of their immediate, mid-range, and long-term priorities. More importantly, the "co-create" activities helped internal business partners feel heard and part of the process.

Our brief initial consultative phase drew to a close with a working list of 11 strategies and 21 process and role-definition categories that needed to be defined. Strategies included topics like governance, learning, leadership development, measurement and analytics, and more. Process and role categories included topics like client services, intake, demand planning and workload prioritization, design and development, learning program management, and others. Some areas were a redefinition of existing strategies or processes, and others would be brand new.

Smoother Starts and Less Churn

We created a roadmap to prioritize everything relative to the business' current priorities. We brought baseline templates like charters, kickoff decks, project plans, and implementation plans. And we collaborated on how we would all work together effectively.

The most important strategies and processes were the first to get attention. While the client was in the midst of organizational restructuring, we created a new service model to help them establish their refreshed approach to serving the larger organization. Concurrently, we helped them think through their value proposition to the rest of the organization and identify a comprehensive set of updated service offerings. Meanwhile, individual project teams tackled each new strategy and process. In each team, we paired a client team lead with a lead consultant who had appropriate subject matter expertise. Numerous additional client team members were identified as active participants or reviewers, and we provided supporting services like project management, documentation, and graphic design. While the idea was that we would do the "heavy lifting," many client team members were excited to be involved. Much iteration ultimately yielded a set of key initial strategies and initial processes. As project teams reached milestones of completion, new teams got underway to address the next priority strategies or processes.

Along the way, a small joint oversight team has been keeping tabs across active projects, helping engage the most appropriate resources, resolve challenges, enable interconnects, and adjust as business priorities shifted. Real-time learning and healthy dialogue helps us adapt as needed to enable smoother starts and less churn as additional workstreams get underway.

While the initial intent to reinvent themselves hasn't changed, the company's business priorities constantly do. Multiple, concurrent large-scale initiatives are underway within the organization and are effectively competing for time, attention, funding, and more. This affects the transformation initiative's progress in time to completion, resource availability within the organization, complexity of interdependencies, and overall prioritization with enterprise imperatives.

Making a Real Impact

In partnership with this client, we've accomplished a great deal so far and have a strong foundation for continued work together. A few highlights include:

- A new service model, value proposition, and set of product and service offerings align the whole division around a refreshed identity.

- New strategies are being implemented for governance, learning, and sourcing. Even more are in development for leadership development and organizational capability.

- New processes are being implemented for intake and client services. Even more are underway for design and development, learning program management, and demand planning and workload prioritization.

- Change management support began as consultation to develop a strategic framework and migrated to tactical hands-on support for a cohesive approach.

- A robust roadmap captures priorities for the next six months plus a longer-term view of strategies and processes still to be prioritized.

- Distinguishing development from implementation helps us mark progress and engage the right resources at the right times.

- Daily operations and periodic strategic planning keeps us on track and aligned as the client's priorities shift.

- Candid conversations about roadblocks and concerns help us bring the right skills and focus where needed and in a timely manner.

- Regular maintenance of programmatic resources (status reports, roadmap, all-up project plan, recurring alignment calls, etc.) keeps everyone aligned across teams that can tend to be somewhat siloed.

Much work is still underway and planned for the future. A constant conversation about prioritization keeps us aligned as business needs evolve, and we are adapting together as needed.

About GP Strategies

GP Strategies is a leading workforce transformation partner—one of the few truly dedicated global providers in the marketplace providing custom solutions. We believe our transformation focus, when paired with deep listening, a customer-centric approach, and innovative expertise, enables our clients to routinely achieve superior business and operational results from our evidence-driven and technology agnostic recommendations.

Whether your business success requires a change in employee performance and mindsets, learning technologies, or critical processes, GP Strategies is the transformation partner you can trust.

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