

BASF

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT IS KEY TO REMAINING A TOP INDUSTRY PROVIDER

CHALLENGE

Cost-effectively build management capability across a globally distributed workforce.

SOLUTION

Rolled out *Harvard ManageMentor* with tailored delivery for different audiences.

RESULTS

Increased reach of program to 80% of employees and reduced direct training costs by 30%.



With an objective to remain the world's leading chemical company, BASF delivered more frequent and consistent management development opportunities to employees around the world.

AS THE WORLD'S LEADING chemical company, BASF recognized it needed consistent management training and leadership development to continually excel in its core competencies.

Prior to 2005, the company's learning model relied on instructor-led classroom training, which had yielded some negative feedback from participants. Many felt the value delivered through the existing program did not offset the opportunity and real costs incurred by taking employees away from their jobs for training. BASF determined that it was urgent to implement a training and development program that would be broad-reaching, relevant, cost-effective, and easily accessible to a global workforce. After an exhaustive RFP process, BASF partnered with Harvard Business Publishing to roll out *Harvard ManageMentor* modules as part of a blended learning program.

AUDIENCE: Company-wide, 10,000 employees

PRODUCTS & SERVICES USED: *Harvard ManageMentor*®

INDUSTRY: Chemical

MAKE LEARNING AN INTEGRAL BUSINESS PROCESS

BASF had specific objectives for its new development program beyond reaching a distributed workforce cost-effectively. The learning had to be relevant so managers and leaders could apply the concepts on the job immediately. The learning program had to be integrated with performance and talent management as a business process. And it had to show a demonstrable, visible impact on employees.

BLENDING LEARNING WITH BEST PRACTICES

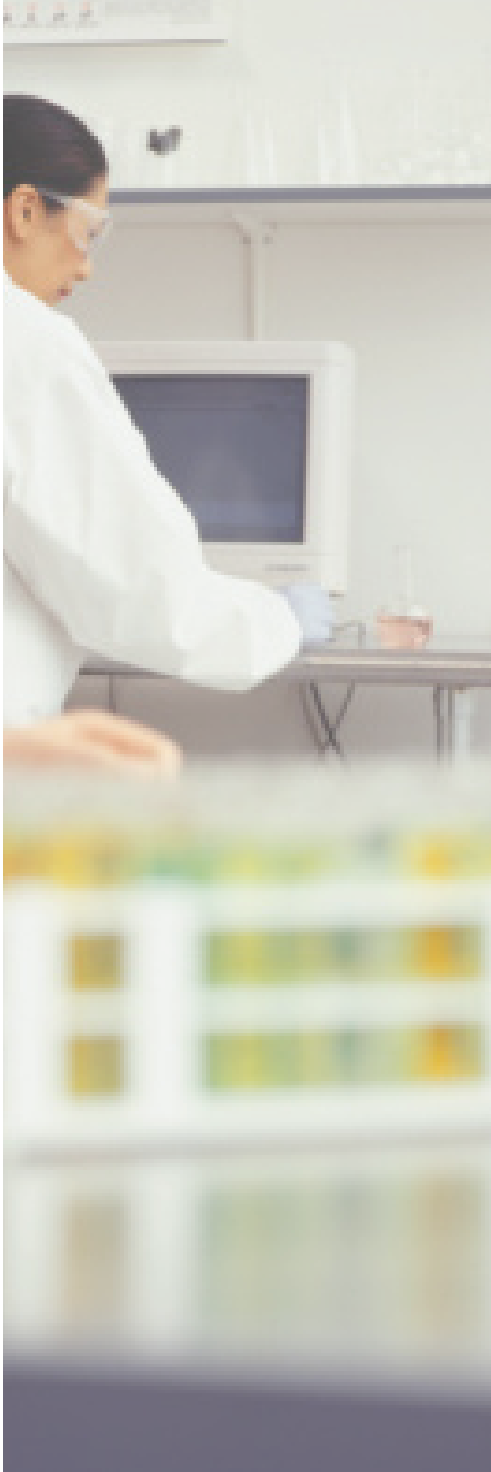
Working with Harvard Business Publishing to find the best way to reach its leaders, BASF rolled out online learning modules from *Harvard ManageMentor*. In some instances, online learning was meant to replace classroom training; in other cases, it extended learning with a blended approach that included pre- and post-work content and tools. The product also served as a quick-reference repository of best practices for more seasoned managers. The easy-to-use features were directly in line with BASF's philosophy of using the same tools for learning and just-in-time reference.

A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO TARGETED LEARNING

Harvard ManageMentor addressed the development areas critical for BASF's managers and leaders. Through regular upgrades, BASF has ensured that its managers will have access to the latest thinking on management topics, plus the most innovative technology, such as video, mobile learning and interactive exercises.

“HARVARD MANAGERMOTOR allows for quick learning before immediate execution.”

— Sundar Subramaniam, Manager, Learning and Development, BASF



Content and tools are mapped to BASF’s leadership competencies. The learning team has tied the program to key business processes and milestones, such as performance reviews and monthly corporate priorities. Learning and development are achieved through several approaches:

- Online, self-paced learning
- Blended learning through facilitated “*Harvard ManageMentor* Cafés” that provoke lively discussion and help participants apply the learning more directly to BASF’s business
- A repository for knowledge management and reference

The learning team has taken some creative approaches to drive usage and adoption. Dedicated learning kiosks in BASF offices encourage employees to sign up for time on a computer dedicated to *Harvard ManageMentor* and allow them to learn away from distractions such as phone and email.

“The use of a learning kiosk to sit and go through the modules really helped. Employees are taking ‘learning breaks’ within their workday, and seeing people at the kiosks prompts others to use them.”

BASF has also incorporated *Harvard ManageMentor* into its on-boarding and new supervisor training to help managers focus on key skills tied to BASF competencies. An overall leadership learning curriculum was created associating *Harvard ManageMentor* courses to competencies used in performance management and career development. The company’s 360° evaluations now include specific learning opportunities.

BLENDING LEARNING FOR APPLICABILITY ON THE JOB

Specific business groups request workshops on topics such as coaching, financial concepts, and performance management that are relevant to their employees. BASF has found that combining the online learning with live discussions is a powerful learning experience for managers. The link to the business is very clear, and public discussion makes employees more accountable to learn and practice the concepts on the job.

PILOT PROGRAM SUCCESS

Implementation of *Harvard ManageMentor* yielded significant ROI benefits:

- Reduced direct training costs by 30%.
- Increased reach to 80% of employees.
- Decreased indirect training costs (travel, overhead) by approximately \$100,000 in the first year.

One manager’s perspective sums up the program’s effectiveness:

“This blurs the difference between reference and learning. Managers don’t have to spend a long time in the classroom and later struggle to find a way to apply it.”

Following the program’s initial positive impact in North America, BASF expanded the program to global implementation across Europe, Asia Pacific, and South America.

LEARN MORE

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