
ADVANCING CORPORATE EXCELLENCE:
EXEMPLARY PRACTICES IN EMPLOYEE
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

workforceChicago^{2.0}

2005 AWARD WINNERS

workforceChicago^{2.0}

THE BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP*

WorkforceChicago2.0 is guided and supported by the Chicago region Business Leadership Group. The Business Leadership Group is comprised of CEO's committed to learning and development in their workplaces and who understand the necessity and importance of investing in people.

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* Membership as of June 2005

The vision of WorkforceChicago2.0 is to position the Chicago region as the leading talent pool in the country by promoting effective employee learning and development policies and practices. Our two 2005 award winners exemplify this goal. Congratulations to U.S. Cellular and Conference Plus, Inc. We applaud your commitment to exemplary practices in employee learning and development.

The demand for increased productivity and innovation in the global economy has never been greater. And the workforce is now much more diverse and geographically dispersed around the world than ever before. This has had major implications for the skills and knowledge requirements of Chicago employers. In the past, companies needed employees with limited skill sets to perform narrowly defined jobs. Today, companies need employees with technical expertise and business acumen, who are quick learners, team players and adept communicators. Human capital is now a critical economic asset.

These macro trends frame critical needs for employers, regions, educational institutions and working adults. The WorkforceChicago2.0 initiative must continue to proactively prepare for these challenges. A highly skilled workforce, maintained by a training and educational infrastructure, is an invaluable regional economic asset in securing the Chicago region's ongoing ability to attract, retain and grow businesses that offer the best jobs.

Thank you for your involvement in this most important endeavor.



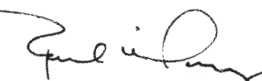
Michelle Sanford
Director of WorkforceChicago2.0, CAEL



Pamela Tate
President & CEO, CAEL



M. Bernadette Patton
*President & CEO
HRMAC*



Paul O'Connor
*Executive Director,
World Business Chicago*



The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) is a national non-profit leader in the field of adult learning and has extensive experience assisting both employers and educational organizations in designing workplace learning strategies. CAEL is headquartered in Chicago and includes over 700 colleges, universities, corporations, labor unions, associations and individuals among its membership.
www.cael.org



The Human Resources Management Association of Chicago (HRMAC) is a forum for human resources leaders, practitioners, service providers, and business executives charged with designing and delivering workforce strategies to drive superior business performance in the organizations they serve.
www.hrmac.org



World Business Chicago is the leading regional organization convening business executives to work collectively to position Chicago in the new international economy. World Business Chicago assists prospect companies to identify how Chicago's business and human resource assets can meet their unique needs.
www.worldbusinesschicago.org

Introduction

In this new millennium, we have seen the rapid transformation of businesses due to the impact of global competition, new technologies and markets, and shifting demographics. As a result, there is greater demand on the workforce to increase productivity and to participate in more phases of operations beyond the traditional one-job-per-one-employee model. These higher expectations for performance have major implications for the skills and knowledge requirements of all employees. Employees with narrowly defined jobs are becoming obsolete and replaced by employees with broad skill sets that reflect technical expertise, business acumen, continuous learning, teamwork and change management. Success in the business world now requires highly skilled, knowledgeable and engaged employees and companies that are dedicated to workforce learning and development.

WorkforceChicago2.0 was created in 2000 by a team of visionaries that understood the importance of positioning the Chicagoland region as a leading talent pool in the country and of building regional commitment to employee learning and development. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) collaborated with the Human Resources Management Association of Chicago (HRMAC) and World Business Chicago to benchmark, recognize and share exemplary learning strategies. The initial seed money for the WorkforceChicago2.0 initiative was granted by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Since then, WorkforceChicago2.0 has been endorsed by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, the Chicago Workforce Board and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development.

The WorkforceChicago2.0 initiative grew out of CAEL's early research, consulting and direct advising services carried out within companies across the country. CAEL found that companies with the most progressive learning and development practices were more likely to retain and attract talented employees. Similarly, alliances between employers, educational institutions, labor unions and government were instrumental in fostering commitment to workforce development among all stakeholders.

Five Key Goals of WorkforceChicago2.0:

- **Recognize and disseminate leading strategies already in use by Chicagoland employers;**
- **Demonstrate the value of company-sponsored learning and development initiatives;**
- **Build a regional commitment to expanding employee learning and development;**
- **Create a “voice” for the private sector regarding the importance of lifelong learning; and**
- **Strengthen relationships between industry, education and the public sector.**

WorkforceChicago2.0 is guided and supported by the Chicago region Business Leadership Group. The Business Leadership Group is comprised of CEO's committed to learning and development in their workplaces and who understand the necessity and importance of investing in people. Today, there are 21 active members who care deeply about quality workforce development in the Chicago region. As strong advocates of continuous learning, BLG members work to influence peers, foster education and training in their own companies and promote learning within the business community.

Since its inception, WorkforceChicago2.0 has recognized 15 companies, through an annual award process, for their significant contributions to learning and development . Each year, more and more applicants are highlighting their best practices and exciting new developments in the area of adult learning.

A formal process is used to identify WorkforceChicago2.0 award winners. Communications via mailings, phone and email are sent to the Chicagoland business community asking companies to complete an online survey highlighting excellence in employee training and development efforts. This year, we are excited to see an increase in the innovative and creative solutions described by nominating companies.

The focus of the online survey is to reinforce the nine key components of exemplary practices in employee learning and development. Key WorkforceChicago2.0 staff reviewed all applications, and based on specific selection criteria, identified four finalist companies for onsite interviews. Finally, two companies were selected for their outstanding programs. It is with great pleasure that we recognize U.S. Cellular and Conference Plus, Inc. for their exemplary practices in employee learning and development.

Nine Key Components of Exemplary Practice in Employee Learning and Development

- 1. Leadership** vision and commitment
- 2. Aligning** business goals with employee learning
- 3.** Learning and development strategically positioned within **senior management**
- 4.** Leadership development emphasized at **all levels** of the organization
- 5.** Commitment to expanding skills and knowledge **beyond** job-related or technical skills
- 6. Informal learning** opportunities structured at the workplace
- 7. Strategic use** of technology for meeting learning objectives
- 8. Alliances** with educational institutions central to learning strategy
- 9.** Emphasis on **assessment** of impact

Accomplishments

Led by the Business Leadership Group, the WorkforceChicago2.0 initiative has sponsored many efforts to educate other businesses about the importance of learning and development. WorkforceChicago2.0 has received tremendous visibility and has put Chicagoland on the map as a leader in employee learning and development.

New BLG Members

We are delighted to have grown the Business Leadership Group (BLG) for the WorkforceChicago2.0 initiative. As well-respected ambassadors, BLG members refer many of their business peers to WorkforceChicago2.0. More sectors and industries are now represented than ever before. We look forward to the contributions of our long-standing members as they guide new members into this very important visionary role.

Crain's Prints Ads for WorkforceChicago2.0

We thank *Crain's Chicago Business* magazine for donating three ads for WorkforceChicago2.0 that were printed in late May and early June of 2005. We also thank Downtown Partners/Chicago for donating their creative and design time to conceptualize and produce the ads. The ads will be used throughout the year as we continue promotional efforts for WorkforceChicago2.0.

Outreach to Thousands Throughout the Chicagoland Region

Over the last five years, WorkforceChicago2.0 has disseminated more than 2,000 copies of exemplary practice case studies, reached over 500 companies through speeches, presentations and forums, and made over 30 one-on-one presentations to companies and organizations. This focus on regional education regarding workforce development issues is a crucial part of the WorkforceChicago2.0 mission.

WorkforceChicago2.0 Co-sponsors Exemplary Practices Discussion Series

On May 4, 2005, WorkforceChicago2.0 presented a free, tactical workshop to the business community to discuss structuring training and education as a strategic resource. With Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH) as co-host, more than 20 corporate leaders attended to learn how NMH became a WorkforceChicago2.0 company. More workshops representing other sectors are planned for fall 2005.

BLG Members Sign Lifelong Learning Account (LiLA) Legislation to Show Support

As representatives of WorkforceChicago2.0, BLG members signed an April 15 letter addressed to Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich to show support for LiLAs. The Illinois LiLA legislation has been an important policy initiative spearheaded by CAEL, headquartered in Chicago. LiLAs, Lifelong Learning Accounts, are savings accounts matched by both employer and employee to fund employees' lifelong learning. LiLAs serve as a portable asset-building approach to closing the gap in public and private financing of ongoing education. The letter, sent to promote these employer-based education savings accounts, highlighted benefits to participating employers and advocated for legislation to launch a statewide demonstration of LiLAs.

WorkforceChicago2.0 Hires New Director

Michelle Sanford joins WorkforceChicago2.0 as its new Director. She brings a wealth of leadership coaching experience and comes with an extensive corporate background. On board since March, Michelle has initiated a number of new exciting activities and will continue to expand the scope and strategic plan for the future of WorkforceChicago2.0.

WorkforcePhiladelphia2.0 Successfully Modeled After WorkforceChicago2.0

Funded by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, WorkforcePhiladelphia2.0 was launched this year. Working from the WorkforceChicago2.0 model, members of the Philadelphia region Business Leadership Group (BLG) have begun to plan the introduction of the nominations survey, the process for identifying firms with exemplary learning practices, and the recognition event for the award winning businesses. The WorkforcePhiladelphia2.0 BLG continues to grow, and we are pleased that the CEO Council for Growth of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce has agreed

to partner with us in the initiative. Other partners include the Marriott Foundation and the Center for Human Resources at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. The Wharton School's Council on Employee Relations introduced WorkforcePhiladelphia2.0 and its survey at their April monthly meeting.

WorkforceChicago2.0 Recognized for Impact on Regional Workforce Development

WorkforceChicago2.0 has been featured in several highly visible forums. Michael Moskow, CEO for the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, highlighted WorkforceChicago2.0 and learning and development as keys to a successful economic recovery in his "State of the Economy Address" hosted by the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and WBBM Radio. Also highlighting WorkforceChicago2.0 was the journalist roundtable audio conference, "Training the Next Generation of Workers: The Win-Win of Workforce Partners." Presenters showed how the WorkforceChicago2.0 initiative helps companies implement strategic learning initiatives to close development gaps and build regional commitment to workforce development.

2005 Award Winners

- Conference Plus, Inc.
- U.S. Cellular

Previous Award Winners

WorkforceChicago2.0 has recognized many leading firms for their exemplary employee learning practices including:

- Allstate Insurance Company
- Argonne National Laboratory
- Bank One Corporation
- Bimba Manufacturing Company
- Camcraft
- Dunlee Inc.
- Ernst & Young
- GolinHarris
- Motorola
- Northwestern Memorial Hospital
- S&C Electric Company
- ShoreBank
- Northern Trust Corporation
- TruServ Corporation
- The University of Chicago Hospitals and Health System

Conference Plus, Inc.

2005 AWARD WINNER



History

ConferencePlus, a subsidiary of Westell Technologies, entered the market in 1988 as a premier retail and private label provider of audio conferencing services. Recognizing the opportunity for growth and expansion in the conferencing sector, ConferencePlus added web and multipoint videoconferencing in 1996, and two years later established its first international subsidiary in Dublin, Ireland. In 2001, ConferencePlus moved into new custom-designed headquarters in Schaumburg, IL. These new facilities take full advantage of the latest in fiber optic network and digital switching technology. Today, ConferencePlus provides audio, web, and videoconferencing solutions that are utilized by organizations for collaboration, virtual meetings, third-party facilitation and webinars. *CEO Tim Reedy explains, "Our success, in large part, is due to our efforts to shift from traditional career pathing to offering increased training and development*

opportunities and implementing new business models for learning. All of our employees are experts in their respective areas of work, not only from a technological standpoint but in problem solving and critical thinking on behalf of our clients. As a customer focused organization, ConferencePlus employees have a significant impact on our bottom line and are key to the growth of our business."

Cultivating Experts by Providing a Mix of Formal and Informal Training

The story of ConferencePlus is one of providing exceptional customer service and a consultative approach to conferencing. This approach is made possible through the progressive training and development of its labor force, creating subject matter experts at all levels of the organization. ConferencePlus focuses on employee training and development to drive the results that continuously improve the customer's experience.

conferenceplus™

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Name	Conference Plus, Inc., a subsidiary of Westell Technologies
Industry	Professional Services
2004 Employees	257
2004 Employees Chicagoland	220
Location	Schaumburg, IL and Dublin, Ireland
Revenues	\$45 million
Year Founded	1988
Web Address	www.conferenceplus.com

All ConferencePlus employees, regardless of tenure, position, or prior education, are guided through a highly structured learning process that enables them to become both expert users of cutting-edge technological tools and responsive customer advocates. The ConferencePlus Training and Development process, a mix of formal and informal learning activities, is made up of six pillars:

1. The Everyone's a Leader at ConferencePlus Curriculum:

A great leader does more than just do a job well; they inspire and develop others to do a job exceptionally. These courses target new and future leaders in preparing them for additional responsibilities such as basic tools for leading and building a team, career self-reliance, coaching, continuous performance review, building trust, decision-making, conflict resolution, financial skills and concepts, business writing, critical thinking, presentations, and managing employee relations.

2. The ConferencePlus Essential Skills Curriculum:

Designed to train skills necessary to perform the essential functions of working at ConferencePlus — operations training, company specific training, product training, handbook training and more.

3. Real-time Mentoring Program:

Some skills are learned best by spending time with people who do the job day-in and day-out. This program is designed to provide structured mentoring opportunities to both new and not so new employees and may be part of cross-training, learning skills for the first time, or just to provide perspective on different activities going on in the organization.

4. New Hire Orientation Training:

Key to joining any new organization, this training is designed to provide new employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful on the job. *“The goal is that every new employee will step on the floor and know exactly what they are doing,” says ConferencePlus Training Manager Dave Barnett.*

5. Just-in-Time Department Specific Intervention Strategies:

Training or development intervention strategies that specifically target one department to meet a skill-based or relational need that is unique to a department. These activities can range from a department specific training need, to teambuilding, to facilitation for process improvement.

6. Relationship Building and Knowledge Sharing Activities:

These activities are geared at breaking down barriers between departments and/or individuals and can take on many forms such as teambuilding activities, conflict mediation, role clarification and many others.

Combined, these six pillars form the backbone of this “expert cultivation” through the development of both business and personal skills.

In addition, ConferencePlus offers full-time employees up to \$10,000 per year for formal education activities from an accredited and approved university, college or technical school. Upon management approval, reimbursement is offered for any coursework related to ConferencePlus activities. Part-time employees similarly are offered tuition assistance; those

working at least 25 hours have \$3,000 per year for coursework, and those under 20 hours, \$2,000.

“My supervisor was very supportive of my taking classes that allowed me to assume more responsibility and move forward within the organization. Even though he knew it might lead me to move to another area of the company, he was still extremely encouraging and allowed me the flexibility to meet class schedules.” Alison Shirley, Account Manager



Participants in “Capitalizing on Individual Difference in the Workplace” learn in a fun way!

Strategic Use of Technology & Cross Training

Because ConferencePlus is in the business of understanding and utilizing the potential of web-based technology, it is not surprising that a hallmark of its learning activities is its strategic use of the company’s core technologies in the delivery of training. Large group meetings and learning opportunities happen in live and virtual space, utilizing high-end technology to continuously increase everyone’s familiarity with the tools of the trade. Self-paced on-line learning modules are available 24 hours per day to all employees, a system that has an extremely effective impact on the “dead time” that employees have between conferences or customer consultations. Self-paced modules include “Providing Exceptional Customer Service,” as well as more technical modules like “Audio Matrix Phase I.”

All employees are welcomed and encouraged to explore other departments of ConferencePlus that may interest them. For example, a Meeting

Consultant might have an interest in the Human Resources department, or a Multimedia Specialist might want to explore consulting with customers. An employee involved in “cross-training” may regularly spend as many as one day a week in a department other than their own over an extended period of time. *“The benefits are huge,” said Paul Madej, ConferencePlus Director of Human Resources. “With a truly flexible workforce, employees can step confidently and competently into another department when needed.”* Employees are kept interested, departmental teams get the benefits of another point of view, and managers know who they can pull into their departments for special projects or to fill staffing gaps.

Leadership and Vision

Tim Reedy, President and CEO, has been at the helm of ConferencePlus since 2002. Bringing with him an extensive background in managing high technology, high-growth businesses, Reedy joined ConferencePlus from MCI Conferencing, where he served as Vice President of Marketing, Finance and

Information Technology, and before that, had a distinguished career with tenures at Darome Teleconferencing and Ameritech Mobile Communications. Reedy believes that lifelong learning is crucial, from early childhood through late adulthood, and he is proud to have ConferencePlus be a part of providing the ongoing learning his employees receive. ***“Educating the workforce has benefits for everyone. At ConferencePlus, it helps us retain good employees by teaching people how to do their jobs better and by creating the loyalty that comes from the investment”, says Reedy.***

Although a firm believer in traditional chain-of-command management structure, Reedy believes education empowers employees to make decisions at the point of service delivery. The entire management at ConferencePlus professes a strong belief that ownership is transferred through knowledge. This, in turn, gives its employees the self-confidence and power to efficiently resolve all types of customer issues.

Reedy’s leadership style requires visibility and involvement in learning and development and he meets and discusses its importance with employees through group “Lunch and Learns” and quarterly “All Hands Calls.” Throughout a two year cycle of the “Lunch and Learn” program, Reedy has the opportunity to speak with each and every employee in a small group

of 10 to 15 employees. The “All Hands Call” functions like a stockholders meeting for the entire ConferencePlus workforce, providing the opportunity for every employee to be informed and heard in the organization. Through these activities employees learn about the company’s performance firsthand from the CEO. Also, Reedy is able to communicate the value he places on training and development and how they individually impact the business.

What’s the payoff for a company making such a large investment in its employees? In addition to retaining good talent, senior leadership at ConferencePlus believes that learning and development improves business efficiency and saves time and money. Their experience has been that employee retention increases with educational investment and training, and decreases hiring costs in the long run. In the last year ConferencePlus has experienced a 40 percent reduction in turnover in the sales organization. ConferencePlus believes that invested and engaged employees care more about the quality of the company’s work and services which ultimately will have a positive impact on the bottom line. ***Says CEO Tim Reedy, “We strive to be an Employer of Choice. The value of ConferencePlus is based on people, technology and processes. A customer can buy the technology elsewhere, but it’s our people and processes that make the difference in our success.”***

U.S. Cellular

2005 AWARD WINNER



History

Founded in 1983, U.S. Cellular initially served small- and mid-sized markets. Over the years, the company has grown to serve major metropolitan areas, such as Chicago, Milwaukee, Oklahoma City and soon, St. Louis. This expanded reach, combined with its customer satisfaction strategy, has fueled company growth. Today, Chicago-based U.S. Cellular Corporation serves more than 5.1 million customers in 148 markets in 25 states. In 2004, U.S. Cellular added 627,000 new customers to its network, sustaining a five-year compound annual growth rate of 15 percent. The company also reported a 19 percent increase in operating revenues to \$2.64 billion.

In April 2000, John E. "Jack" Rooney became the President and CEO of U.S. Cellular. With a focus on customers and customer satisfaction, Rooney and the U.S. Cellular leadership team set about creating a new business model for the company — the Dynamic Organization (the D.O.). The D.O. puts customers at the top of the "organizational pyramid" with the associates

who serve the customers next. Corporate leadership forms the base of the structure that supports the efforts of all associates. U.S. Cellular believes that its frontline associates are the lens through which customers view the company. Therefore, the role of the company's leaders is to create an environment in which associates are motivated to learn and grow and deliver the best customer satisfaction in the wireless industry.

Satisfied Associates in the Dynamic Organization

What fuels this internal emphasis on the associate? At U.S. Cellular, the associate is the most important company asset. Developing each associate to his or her highest potential ensures that everyone within the organization understands what U.S. Cellular is ultimately striving for: creating the "Ideal Customer Experience."

This business philosophy makes workforce training and development an important focus for the company. The D.O. has become the marrow of the U.S. Cellular culture; this transformational



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Name	U.S. Cellular
Industry	Telecommunications
2004 Employees	7,500
2004 Employees Chicagoland	1,771
Location	Chicago (corporate), nationwide
Revenues	\$2.64 billion
Year Founded	1983
Web Address	www.uscellular.com

leadership philosophy is the foundation for the company's success and the foundation for the emphasis on learning and development. *Noel Hornsberry, Area Sales Manager, says, "With Jack came a huge training, learning and development emphasis. He brought focus, structure and passion to the organization. The D.O. is a way of life at U.S. Cellular."*

Training at all levels is important and all courses are linked to the company's vision and mission — the D.O. Training modules are constantly created or adapted based on the feedback and requests of associates. Company communications, be they memos, trainings, rules and regulations or just casual conversation, all strive to provide the "why" behind decisions, policies and changes instead of just the "who" and "what." U.S. Cellular believes that only an informed work force can connect with customers in an authentic way.

Learning and Development at U.S. Cellular

U.S. Cellular uses a variety of formal and informal training methods to support working within the D.O. Informal learning includes peer-to-peer training, mentoring and coaching. Formal learning includes internally generated workshops and seminars as well as tuition reimbursement for undergraduate- or graduate-level coursework. The basics of the tuition reimbursement program are:

- \$5,250 pre-tax reimbursement per year
- 100% reimbursement for FTE, 60% for PTE
- Employees eligible after 3 months continuous service and performance rating of "Meets Expectations" or higher. Depending on the program, the associate may have to pass the course with a 'B' or better.

A series of week-long seminars and hands on classes called the "Leadership Development Curriculum" are tailored to each level of leader-

ship. This curriculum includes "Management Essentials," "Servant Leadership Workshop," and "Performance Planning and Evaluation." The essential training is called the *Leadership Development Workshop* and is referred to as a comprehensive panacea by leaders in the organization. This is the course outline for the "LDW."

Leadership Development Workshop

OVERVIEW: This course is designed to teach leaders about leadership in the Dynamic Organization. Specifically it covers:

- How leaders impact the development of a Dynamic Organization
- How Dynamic Organization leadership behavior influences others and how leaders can become better role models for the people they lead
- How new leaders can more effectively transition to management and the pitfalls to be aware of
- How leaders can most effectively determine what associates need from them to be successful
- How leaders can communicate more effectively to improve working relationships and sustain performance
- How leaders can apply the key elements of performance management to bring out the best in others
- How leaders can develop effective action plans to help associates overcome performance difficulties

AUDIENCE: Front-Line Coaches & Store Leaders

DURATION: 5 days

The "Leadership Development Curriculum" is not only open to leaders but in part to associates. The "Consultative Selling" curriculum follows:

Consultative Selling

OVERVIEW: This course exposes Retail Wireless Consultants to consultative selling techniques and why this approach is critical in today's wire-



Participants in “Retail Dynamic Beginnings” prepare for a store opening by learning about sales, systems, ethics and the Dynamic Organization.

less sales environment. Building upon basic selling skills, associates will learn intermediate to advanced techniques in key areas such as:

- Building rapport and establishing customer trust
- Conducting an effective needs analysis utilizing a consultative approach
- Recommending and explaining solutions and how the solutions benefit the customer
- Overcoming objections
- Closing the sale effectively
- Leaving customers with a lasting impression and creating an IDEAL experience

AUDIENCE: Newly Hired Associates

DURATION: 2 days

Trainings on new technologies are offered when a new wireless product or service becomes available. Workshops, classes, and seminars are designed by Human Resources and customized based on the associate feedback received

through the “Annual Talent Review” or the annual “Culture Survey.” An example of this type of feedback was the desire to learn how to look at one’s career as a whole journey rather than as a series of jobs or positions and how an associate might pro-actively manage her own career. To meet this request, U.S. Cellular will offer a new workshop in June of 2005 entitled, “Your Career Is Your Business” and will aid all participants in creating customized development plans.

Scott Robinson, Store Manager, began his U.S. Cellular career as a sales associate and has taken every opportunity to learn and develop in his tenure with the company. Robinson reported that 40 percent of the associates in his retail store are taking advantage of the tuition reimbursement program and many regularly participate in the internal learning opportunities. Robinson himself has grown immensely through the learning opportunities offered to him. *Robinson stated, “I’ll probably use that knowledge for the rest of my life; I know I will.”*

Leadership in a Dynamic Organization

The Dynamic Organization is a visionary model. *As Tom Griffin, Senior Director of Leadership and Organizational Development, explains, “It’s a journey and an ideal.”* The “D.O. Journey” states that customer satisfaction will yield positive business results through the mechanism of satisfied associates who are fully supported by leadership. It takes a special kind of leader to work in this environment, and promoting from within is a priority for U.S. Cellular. Selection and internal application processes are well explained and transparent. At U.S. Cellular, Human Resources is responsible for finding and developing the leaders who build the D.O. They look first to the talent inside the company, and when leaders are hired externally, the interviewing and assessment process is rigorous.

The vision of leadership at U.S. Cellular is clear: leaders are teachers, servants, models, and strategists. Leaders create cultures, and the culture at U.S. Cellular is palpable. The vision put forth by the U.S. Cellular executive team holds all leaders in the company accountable for creating an open, process-oriented, and interactive culture in which all associates can succeed.

It is an **open culture**, meaning that the leadership is very accessible. Each of the company’s executive leaders visit associates in the field at least once a month to hold question-answer sessions, first with frontline associates, and separately with local leaders. The CEO invites associates to phone him directly and to take advantage of “Listen Jack,” an e-mail box associates can use to communicate questions or thoughts directly to Jack Rooney. Two-way or face-to-face communication is defined as U.S. Cellular’s preferred way to communicate with associates at all levels in the company. This access means that learning between and among all levels of staff is an everyday occurrence, that associates feel (and are) heard by senior leader-

ship and that leaders are held accountable for the decisions that are made and implemented.

It is a **process oriented culture**, meaning that constant growth and change are expected, and the processes, resources, and tools for growth must be available for associates. This includes formal classroom training and one-on-one coaching, both for job skills and for D.O. understanding and commitment.

It is an **interactive culture**, meaning that across geography, departments and functions, U.S. Cellular is one team. All departments are represented on major project teams. Both associates and leaders identify themselves as U.S. Cellular employees first and experts in respective fields second. When learning and development is supported for all levels of staff, the knowledge gained is communal. *Lily Stasik, Senior Director of Operations Integrations, explains, “My expertise is what I bring to the table for U.S. Cellular and its customers. The education you receive when working with great leaders is usually underestimated in the workplace. Here, we are both teaching and learning from each other every day.”*

The Results

While the company’s strategy is to grow profitably, customer satisfaction is the most important metric. Engaged, committed, well-trained — and therefore satisfied — associates create the “Ideal Customer Experience.” When the emphasis is on the values held and the behaviors exhibited, then increased sales revenue follows.

U.S. Cellular has been following this Dynamic Organization model since 2000. The first quarter of 2005 was the best in U.S. Cellular history, showing that the overall investment in training and development of employees does indeed affect the traditional bottom line, revenue.

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