

Notes and news

Walmart expands education program

Walmart has expanded its partnership with Cengage, an education and technology company, to offer all employees and their benefits-eligible family members the opportunity to earn accredited high-school diplomas and career certificates.

Offered through Walmart's lifelong learning program, Career Online High School (COHS) is designed to re-engage adults in education and is free for Walmart employees and eligible family members beginning on the first day of their employment. To date, 200 associates have received their high-school diploma through COHS, while another 400 are currently enrolled.

"Walmart was the first retailer to provide Career Online High School to employees and is continuing to lead by expanding the program to family members," said Jonathan Lau, Senior Vice-President and General Manager, skills group, Cengage. "Providing free access to the program for eligible family members of associates is a testament to the success and impact the COHS program has had and to the commitment to workforce development."

"Walmart believes education opens doors," said Brian Poland, Director of Walmart lifelong learning and talent development. "Career Online High School allows employees to create additional opportunities while working at Walmart, and we are excited to provide these educational offerings to eligible family members as well."

Walmart's lifelong learning program provides employees with access to no-cost or low-cost education programs including English as a second language, high-school, career certificates, and a comprehensive college credit for prior learning program. The COHS program is part of Walmart's overall upskilling strategy that integrates training, education and workforce development efforts to create opportunity for associates and their families.

In addition to an accredited high school diploma, program graduates earn a career certificate in one of eight high-growth, high-demand career fields across a wide spectrum, from retail and customer service to certified transportation.

Students have up to 18 months to complete their courses and may be able to complete the program in as few as six months by transferring previously earned high-school credits.

The Walmart lifelong learning COHS program pairs each student with an academic coach, who helps with developing an individual career plan, offers ongoing guidance and encouragement, evaluates performance, and connects the learner with the resources needed to demonstrate mastery of the course material. Classes are supported by board-certified instructors and students have round-the-clock access to the online-learning platform.

Telia simply gets the message across

Building on the recent success of the creative partnership with Wolff Olins to redesign the global Telia brand, Telia Company saw an opportunity to demonstrate how its new brand could extend into the kind of nooks and crannies usually left to legal folk.

Having worked with Wolff Olins since April 2015 on its global rebrand, Telia set the organization the challenge of engaging its 21,000 employees in 14 countries – from Sweden to Kazakhstan – with a new code of responsible business.

Wolff Olins designed and produced the new code in the form of a broadsheet newspaper and website featuring 17 animations that explained the key messages.

Designer Calle Enström, from Wolff Olins, explained: "We decided to acknowledge that codes of conduct are about telling people what not to do at work, but focused on making the tone and design

really fun – something that no one would expect. As part of a much bigger employee engagement and change program – including events and a global e-learning roadshow – the code was a chance to solidify an over-arching creative concept that captured the spirit of the new Telia brand.”

To support the launch, Wolff Olins also created posters, event roll-ups, Rubik’s cubes featuring cartoon characters and a teaser game built on the “don’t share sensitive information” idea.

Design Director Campbell Butler, from Wolff Olins, commented: “It was important that our content found the right balance – ridiculous enough to be surprising and memorable, but not so much that it detracted from the message or caused offence. We tested our initial concepts with Telia staff to ensure the messages would resonate with a broad international audience. It had to strike a caring note – one that helped the reader to do the right thing, rather than dictating a set of rules.”

Some 20,000 staff viewed the code within the first eight weeks of launch. Mahsa Sina, Ethics and Compliance Officer at Telia Company, commented: “Wolff Olins had a unique take on a common business brief. The creative concept has helped the organization to deliver the message in a simple, fun and engaging manner.”

Program helps students to prepare for a retailing career

Procter, a customer-service training provider, has joined an initiative led by the Brunel shopping center, Swindon, Wiltshire, UK, to improve the employability and life skills of students at Swindon Academy.

The project, Retail Codex, was created as a means to engage school pupils preparing for work in the retail industry.

Retail Codex is a six-month project that helps young people to understand the many aspects of working in a retail environment. Retail employers increasingly feel that candidates fresh from school lack the life skills needed to make a smooth transition into working life. The program addresses that gap for its pilot audience – a group of teenagers from Swindon Academy. The students experience a series of interactive training modules delivered by Procter. The program culminates in Marks & Spencer, where the students try out their new skills on real customers.

Nigel Webb, Chief Product Officer for Procter and a Lead in the creation of Retail Codex, said: “We are always looking for the right opportunities to help communities as part of our corporate social responsibility. This project means a lot to us as we work specifically with retail companies to help them to develop their people to engage with their customers. We know the importance of recruiting new staff, who are young, skilled and excited about starting a career in retail.

“For us to be involved in supporting Swindon Academy, with the Brunel shopping center and Marks & Spencer, through creating a program that develops the next generation of retail workers is satisfying and rewarding.”

Nicola Clark, the Procter Trainer delivering the program, added: “This program is very rewarding. We are able to share insights and techniques from our commercial experience that the students are really embracing. It is great knowing that we can give them some really practical transferable skills to take away into whatever career they choose.”

The idea for Retail Codex came from Jane Stewart, Deputy General Manager at the Brunel center. She said: “When people think about working in retail they tend to think only about working in a shop, when in reality there are so many functions they can get involved in. Earlier this year we worked with Marks & Spencer to give students from Swindon Academy a taste of designing shop-front window displays and dressing them with their own creations. This type of project can help young people to understand how varied, and valuable, all the different aspects of working in retail can be. The pilot program is being run with Swindon Academy but it is hoped that in the future we shall be able to offer places for students from other schools.”

The General Manager of the Brunel Center, Kevin Gwilliam, said, “This program is incredibly exciting for us; it’s an opportunity to share our enthusiasm for this diverse and rewarding career. If we can attract some new talent into this field as a result of the program, we will be very happy.”

One student attending the Retail Codex launch session said that “it was great to learn about all the sectors within retail and see the way the future is developing – it will give us more options.”

Jane Steenstra, Business, Enterprise and Employability Consultant for Swindon Academy, said: "This is a wonderful opportunity for our young people who are receiving a rare and real quality experience to prepare them for their future careers." Comfort Gyapong, a 13-year student participating in the program, said: "The Retail Codex program is important to me because I want to work in the financial industry and this is a good insight into a customer-facing sector. It is helping to build my confidence and demonstrate that I have the appropriate employability skills. It also helps me to understand how much hard work I have to put in to become successful in my future career."

The Brunel shopping center has more than 100 retailers, cafes and restaurants, from large chains to local, independent stores.

PwC in training partnership

London School of Business and Finance has become the official provider of Association of Chartered Certified Accountant tuition materials for PwC in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The partnership will see the business school as the sole provider of training materials leading to the ACCA qualification to thousands of PwC staff across 29 countries.

PwC is one of the largest professional-services networks in the world, with more than 700 locations in 157 countries. The collaboration will allow PwC to expand the existing portfolio of training opportunities provided through PwC's CEE Academy, the firm's training division in the region. The agreement forecasts a minimum of 5,000 sittings a year.

"PwC has an outstanding reputation in professional services, and we are proud to become an official ACCA provider for its academy," said Vitaly Klopot, Interim Commercial Director at LSBF Professional School. "This is a great foundation for the development of our professional-education division, and an encouraging step forward for the future of our publishing business."

The learning materials will be delivered in hard-copy and electronic format to PwC sites across the region. In order to increase their chances to pass the ACCA examinations, learners will have access to LSBF's exclusive rich-media learning materials accessed through an online learning platform.

With a greater focus on examination success combined with professional development, London School of Business and Finance's ACCA program was designed to help students to distinguish themselves from other accounting and finance specialists, providing the practical skills that employers look for through a wide range of flexible study modes, including full-time, part-time and online. The ACCA program is part of LSBF's portfolio of professional courses, which also includes training courses for the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and the Association of Accounting Technician's qualifications.

Postillion earns LPI accreditation

Postillion Hotels, in the Netherlands, has become the first major Dutch hotel group to be officially accredited as a learning facility by the Learning and Performance Institute (LPI).

Erik-Jan Ginjaar, Director, Postillion Hotels, said: "We are honoured to be the first learning facility in the Benelux region to receive the LPI accreditation. For the past couple of years Postillion staff have worked towards this accreditation with dedication and therefore I am proud to reward them with this achievement. Our meet-work-stay concept has been and will be a core focus of all Postillion Hotels, and offering high quality learning facilities is an important aspect within this concept."

Edmund Monk, Managing Director, LPI, said: "Having the LPI's impartial, internationally recognized accreditation assures prospects that Postillion Hotel venues provide everything they need to hold successful learning events. The accreditation demonstrates not only the quality of the facilities and services, but also the organization's commitment to quality and standards."

Henriette Kloots, Global Channel Manager, LPI, said: "I am pleased that we have our first accredited learning facility in the Benelux region. Although learning and development is making a transition towards more online and remote ways of learning, classroom training will always stay in place - and maximizing the learning outcome is highly dependent on the facility."

The LPI is a self-governing, not-for-profit professional body for workplace-learning specialists. The institute was established in 1995 and since then has grown on an annual basis. Today it has thousands of individual members and hundreds of accredited learning organizations.

Postillion has hotels in Amersfoort-Veluwmeer, Arnhem, Deventer, Dordrecht, Haren-Groningen, Utrecht-Bunnik, Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

Training smoothes technology-transfer project

Clarity Consultants has completed a successful training program created for a major global pharmaceutical firm responsible for a drug that fights blood disease.

Clarity Consultants was hired to work as both a training and product manager on the firm's technology-transfer project from one of its US factories to a new factory being constructed in Europe.

For years the pharmaceutical firm's US factory had been the sole producer of the company's successful drug to combat a persistent blood disease that at best was a lifelong nuisance and at worst was potentially fatal. With the patient population growing, and with the drug's success spurring increasing demand in the global market, the firm decided to expand. The company wanted to identify exactly what was being done at the US site, then train a contingent of several hundred of its European employees so that, upon their return to Europe and completion of the new factory, they could begin operation and production immediately.

Upon learning that the US factory operated year-round in three shifts – day, night, and overnight – and that staff were trained only to the tasks for that shift, the Clarity consultant initiated a new training method that allows for employees in Europe to be able to work on any shift. The new method trains the European employees in every step of the production process for the drug, resulting in the European factory being able to run with a full-time-equivalent staff reduction of at least 15 percent compared to the US factory. The new training program has also allowed the time taken to be cut down by two-thirds.

The new drug was approved in rapid succession in Canada, the European Union and the USA. "Clarity Consultants made a huge difference to the program and we could not have done it without them," said the firm's US training manager.

Healthcare employees get the right blend of learning

Virtual College and Avery Healthcare have agreed to work in partnership to provide a blended-learning approach to the training of over 3,000 members of staff. The current Avery face-to-face training will be supplemented by an e-learning platform from Virtual College.

Avery Healthcare operates 44 residential, dementia and nursing-care homes throughout England. It has a high focus on staff induction, ongoing training, skills enhancement, individual career development and staff retention.

Following a competitive pitch, Virtual College initially ran a successful pilot of online staff training across three of Avery's homes.

A wide range of online learning resources, tailored to the care sector, will now be delivered to all staff across the Avery Group, covering topics such as safeguarding, infection control and fire safety. In addition, Avery's new members of staff will be able to use online content from Virtual College resources, designed to meet the requirements of care-certificate qualifications.

This training will be delivered via Virtual College's learning-management system, Enable, which has been branded to Avery's blended-learning program, called Aspire.

Sandra Stark, Director of Care and Quality at Avery Healthcare, commented: "To deliver the high standards of quality care synonymous with Avery Healthcare, we need to ensure that our staff are trained to levels which meet and go beyond statutory compliance requirements. This investment in online training will help to provide quality standardization across our group, complementing the work of our face-to-face trainers and enabling them to focus their skills on delivering practical skill-based training and development of staff competencies."

Deloitte University North gets off the ground

Deloitte has formally launched Deloitte University North (DU North), a learning and leadership-development center designed to inspire tomorrow's leaders by bridging real-world experiences and active learning.

"At Deloitte, creating a leadership culture focused on the development of our people is one of our highest priorities," said Punit Renjen, Deloitte Global Chief Executive. "Deloitte University North joins a proud tradition of Deloitte University centers across the globe. Located in Toronto, the center is in an international business hub and key market for the development of future leaders."

More than a classroom, DU North offers an experiential learning experience, made possible with technology-enabled classrooms, live interpretation services and business leaders in the classroom leading courses.

"At Deloitte University North we are building the leadership skills of our people, not only for their individual development, but also for the benefit of our clients and the broader business community," said Duncan Sinclair, Vice-Chairman and founding Dean of Deloitte University North. "By developing bold and talented leaders we are helping to ensure that Canada will have the top-tier talent it needs to position the country for future success."

According to Deloitte's recent report "The Future Belongs to the Bold," Canadian companies need to be more courageous and take a strong position on issues such as leadership development if they are to compete, and win, globally.

"Leadership development is a critical issue for the future of our country," said Frank Vettese, Managing Partner and Chief Executive of Deloitte in Canada. "For Canada to grow and prosper, businesses need to be willing to take calculated risks to disrupt themselves in the service of better shared outcomes. Deloitte University North will help us to get there."

DU North builds on the success of the Deloitte University Leadership Center in Westlake, Texas; Deloitte University Asia Pacific in Singapore; Deloitte University Europe, the Middle East and Africa in La Hulpe, Belgium and Chantilly, France; and Deloitte University in Hyderabad, India. Its curriculum mirrors the programs that are delivered annually to Deloitte's 244,000 employees, while at the same time tailored to the Canadian market. In 2017, over 8,000 key clients, community leaders and Deloitte employees from across the Americas and around the world are expected to participate in DU North programming.

Lake Nona welcomes KPMG LLP

KPMG LLP has unveiled plans to build a learning, development and innovation facility on a 55-acre campus at Lake Nona, Orlando, Florida.

"At KPMG, we are passionate about developing our people and creating growth opportunities for them," said Lynne Doughtie, Chairman and Chief Executive of KPMG LLP. "This facility is a significant investment that will ensure our partners and employees continue to have access to leading-edge learning and development opportunities to enrich themselves, stay connected to our inclusive, innovative culture, and remain equipped to deliver the highest quality in this fast-changing marketplace. Delivering a world-class training experience also is an investment in our ability to attract and retain the best talent."

Consistent with KPMG's focus on anticipating and understanding emerging trends, the facility's innovation center will provide an immersive learning experience that will enhance the skills KPMG employees bring to client situations.

The facility also will feature 800 guest rooms, fitness and outdoor recreational facilities, and multiple food and beverage venues – creating a forum for learning and innovation within a larger community that focuses on inspiring human performance.

"Our center will be the cornerstone of our learning and development strategy, which will continue to blend in-person training and virtual options," said P. Scott Ozanus, Deputy Chairman and Chief Operating Officer, KPMG LLP. "It will give our partners and employees the benefits of

alternating between classroom and field-like training environments for an experience that is interactive, innovative and collaborative.”

KPMG expects to create at least 80 positions to work at the facility. An additional 250 third-party contract operator positions are likely to be created. KPMG did not disclose terms or estimated costs of the center, which it plans to complete in late 2019.

Lake Nona includes companies and organizations committed to advancing developments in the areas of sports and human performance, health and wellness, education, and technology. Created by Tavistock Development with its parent company, the international private investment organization Tavistock Group, the community has attracted business innovators and residents committed to creating an environment that inspires human potential through collaboration.

“Lake Nona has become an economic engine for our region,” said Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer. “KPMG’s learning, development and innovation facility will build upon Lake Nona’s development success, creating more new jobs for Floridians and bringing a continuous economic boost to our community.”