

Re-engineering L&D to deliver Continuous Learning for Effective Performance at Xerox Europe



Introduction

In many areas, but particularly for professional sales people, Xerox had always had a great reputation for developing the best people and their training programme was envied by many, but there was an increased belief internally that perhaps they were living off that hard-earned reputation and that while the world around them had changed, perhaps the approach to learning and development hadn't.

Darrell Minards has been with Xerox for over 20 years and 4 years ago he was appointed Head of Learning & Development for Xerox in Europe. He wanted to re-engineer learning and development so that it would be seen as a thought-leader and a key business enabler. This case study provides insight into how Darrell and his team have changed L&D in Xerox forever.

A New Approach

L&D's remit is broad covering leadership and management development, sales & product training and the Pan-European roll-out of SAP for which Xerox have worked with Assima on a learning technology solution that won the silver award at the recent IT Training awards.

With responsibility for L&D across Europe with different cultures, languages and learning experiences Darrell adopted the mantra of '*Develop Once, Deliver Many Times*' for all his target markets. His strategy really embraces two major elements – the **skills** of their people and their **performance**.

Skills – Darrell isn't a supporter of 'Happy Sheets' which he's banned from internal use! His passion is to ensure that evaluation is linked to business performance and can be easily tracked and managed via their Global LMS. One area of focus is on the right skills for their people at the right time. The other key focus is on the trainers themselves.

He recognised the need to establish a team of L&D 'champions' who would embrace the new way of doing things so he selected the best trainers that he felt had the right attitude in the organisation. These were the highest skilled and most respected individuals who acted as change agents in L&D.

He wanted the business to be 'wowed' by what L&D could do and he recognised that if that meant that some of the trainers would leave the organisation or be re-deployed elsewhere then that was acceptable as part of the need to change. The lesson for many of us is that making a fundamental shift in L&D is not without pain but we shouldn't be afraid to make the necessary changes. They are needed for the organisation, for L&D and ultimately for the individual trainers. The L&D team now at Xerox in Europe is much smaller and 'leaner' than it was 4 years ago.

Darrell also sought out 'quick wins' so that he could demonstrate that L&D was changing and could meet the skills needs of staff in Xerox on a timely basis.

Part of the change in philosophy at Xerox has been to embrace and expand the use of virtual classrooms and collaboration. [Adobe Connect](#) is used for virtual classrooms with [Sharepoint](#) and [LifeRay](#) for collaboration. Although they had the technology, that in itself was not going to transform the way L&D created their learning solutions.

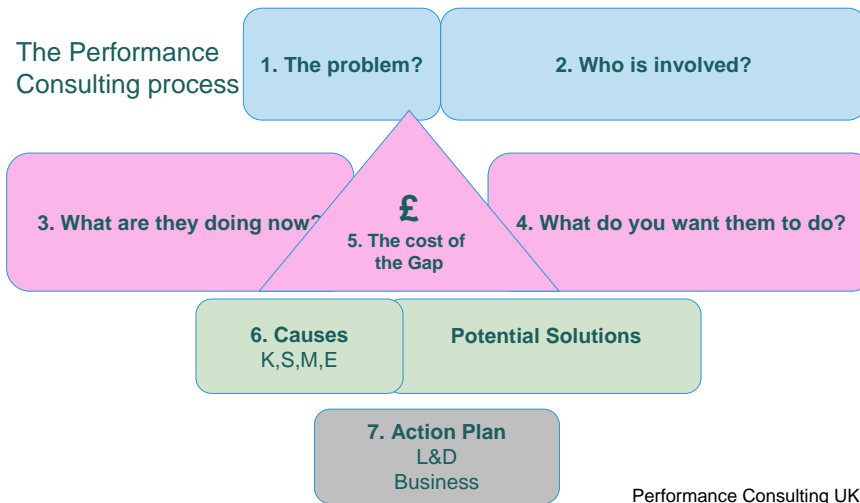
Performance – Training is not always the solution, but it had always been assumed it was. So if a sales manager had an issue with sales performance then his historical inclination was to simply put them through a classroom training course to fix the problem. As they say – *'Just because someone asks for sales coaching it does not mean that it is the right solution'*.

Darrell worked with Nigel Harrison ([Performance Consulting UK](#)) because their approach and model to understanding a performance problem was simple and straightforward. The age old problem of throwing a training course at a problem was fundamentally flawed although ingrained in the organisations thinking so they came up with the phrase 'solutioneering' which is defined as *'when people think they know the solution and what the root cause is'*, so they learnt never to assume. The ability and strength of character to challenge the root problem was crucial to success, and Darrell's experience of the organisation and knowing many of the people, especially sales managers was clearly helpful.

Darrell described three examples as follows:

Example 1 Sales Training - From a presentation that Darrell and Nigel gave at the Learning Technologies 2010 Conference in January here's a slide showing the steps in the Performance Consulting process:

1. Confronting solutioneering



NB: With the kind permission of Performance Consulting UK, the process model can be downloaded for free at this [link](#).

Step 1 is to understand the problem so they ran a problem analysis session with the key players to analyse the real problem. They needed to understand the 'performance gap' and achieved that through an interactive workshop which allowed them to effectively brainstorm the problem and how to address. By taking this approach it revealed the following:

1. Confronting solutioneering

The performance gap

Existing Performance

In transition to strategic account selling

Disconnect between target driven and people driven performance

No picture of what good looks like

Sales Managers do not have time to coach, know what to coach and not measured or rewarded for coaching

Desired Performance

A clear picture of what good looks like

All business groups hitting their performance targets in the right way

Implementing sales process and tools as the way to achieve performance

Driving and capturing growth

The cost of the gap
Not driving or capturing growth



For Internal Use Only



The result was that when they asked the focus group if more sales coaching training would help solve the problem the answer was an unequivocal no. In fact they felt it may even make things worse because managers already felt guilty that they were not spending enough time coaching. The process was invaluable revealing that they needed help with:

- Guidelines on how much time to spend with their staff
- Consistent sales process
- Opportunities to receive skills coaching themselves
- A more flexible and effective sales induction programme
- More involvement from managers in induction

In addition, the sales executives accepted their responsibility for management solutions around shared processes and motivation and L&D agreed to re-vamp the sales model and induction introducing new learning technology and application. Both agreed to involve managers in changing their behaviour. Interestingly Darrell was not afraid to stop training if the necessary business actions were not in place

Example 2 Workflow Software – For this technical training they would normally put analysts in a lab with a trainer. It was good but costly so they had to rethink. They created a training programme using virtual classrooms with exercises in-country which reduced the travel costs significantly but not the quality of the learning. 70 analysts have been through the new programme.

Example 3 Leadership & Management – They may have stopped the old approach but they still need to provide skills training so they use Adobe tools to create e-learning modules on coaching and then use a virtual classroom. Those participating in the programme then go away and practice and come back to a virtual classroom for 'live role plays'. In effect they are participating remotely using webcams with instructors providing coaching and mentoring.

For Darrell and his L&D team the message is

Performance focus + new tools = continuous learning for effective performance
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Overcoming Resistance & Continuous Learning

Darrell had to overcome a lot of inbuilt preference to just 'do it'!

The link to continuous learning at Xerox is with Performance Consulting at the core with experiential learning (70%), coaching/mentoring (20%) and formal training (10%) wrapped around it.

L&D have focused on skills as much as technology and have embraced visual thinking, vocal techniques and learner engagement skills.

Their 'momentum' sales induction programme was conceived to encompass the wider "sales system", from junior sales to senior Directors, and they've achieved alignment and buy-in by business groups to a common approach. They began with sales induction which consists of an 8 week programme of experiential, coached and

formal learning activities with 6 weeks knowledge and skills practice in their sales environment and 2 weeks skills application in the classroom. The actual programme flow is 4 weeks in a virtual class, 1 week in the classroom, another 2 weeks virtual and then a final week in the classroom.

In one recent example the trainer was in Leeds, the Subject Matter Expert (SME) and Account Manager were in London with delegates in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Beijing. All hooked up via Adobe Connect in real time. It really does shrink the planet and brings the right people together at the right time.

Evidence for Change – Impact & Benefits

The true testimony of success is being able to measure and quantify the business benefits that have resulted from re-engineering L&D @ Xerox Europe. Here are some of the key achievements:

- Cost savings in excess of £5 million. Apart from the obvious travel cost savings individuals would often arrive at the centre on the day and feel tired as well as having to take more time away from their normal job.
- Over 300 virtual classrooms were delivered through 2009 to over 3,500 delegates across all business groups.
- The new induction programme has resulted in the best prepared inductees.

*“This received the best feedback we have ever had. The process is now **embedded in our business and everyone talks the language and uses the tools to great effect, this has undoubtedly resulted in incremental business in 2009.** The induction course was received well and clearly has many benefits from a time to deliver and cost saving perspective”*

Peter Taylor – Director & GM, Large Enterprise and Production Business Group

As part of their ongoing evaluation programme Darrell and his team will measure the real impact in 6 months time as they seek estimates of financial savings and business performance improvements.

- Managers are now truly engaged and L&D include a Managers pack in inductions. Historically the rating for L&D averaged 3.2 out of a possible score of 5 – now its 4.1 based on their new programme.
- They are setting and managing expectations successfully.
- They have increased efficiency, management engagement and coaching and achieved a faster time to performance.

But perhaps the greatest testament to the work of Darrell and his team is that now L&D is seen as a **key enabler to business performance**. They are now seen as an innovative team and Darrell is being rewarded for creating an environment in which individuals feel that they can take risks, make mistakes and learn from them for the benefit of everyone.

Top 10 Tips for re-engineering Learning & Development

1. Challenge pre-conceptions and past ways of doing things
2. Adopt a performance consulting approach to identify the core problem and agree the most appropriate solution
3. Secure commitment, engagement and participation from key stakeholders
4. Harness learning technologies to optimise available time and reduce costs
5. Be creative and innovative
6. Demonstrate business impact and measure contribution
7. Align the learning solution (where appropriate) to key business needs and objectives and be seen as a 'key enabler'
8. Identify key 'champions' and agents of change within L&D
9. Be strong and have faith in your team
10. Don't be afraid to make the changes needed for the ultimate benefit of the organisation, L&D and the individuals.