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| **Sprint Connect, LLC** | | |
| **C**hallenge | **A**ction | **R**esult |
| About Us Sprint Connect, LLC is a 50:50 joint venture between Overland Park, KS based Sprint Corporation, and London based, Dixons Carphone, the UK’s leading electrical and telecommunications retails and services company with more than 40,000 colleagues across nine countries, including the UK and Ireland.  Dixons Carphone has over 75 years of Consumer Electronics and Wireless Retailing experience and is recognized as a global retail innovator with world-class retail expertise.  In a former joint venture with Best Buy, the company helped launch Best Buy Mobile.  With home base at the Sprint World Headquarters, Sprint Connect launched last February, 2016 with the lofty goal of opening 200 plus Sprint retail stores over the next several years, in five targeted markets across the US.  The goal of Sprint Connect is to leverage the most exciting and innovative elements of both companies working together to create a new” Best in Class” Retail experience with the opening of 150 new Sprint-branded stores each year.  This growth and expansion across the nation is to help fuel Sprint’s retail transformation by providing an Awesome Customer Experience (ACE).  With Sprint Connect, all operations, systems, training and support have been a grass roots effort to build and create a new company, incorporating the best of both companies.  The joint venture has been built by teams from the UK, Sprint Connect Corporate colleagues and contracted vendors. Building a new company, while opening new retail stores, sourcing, hiring and training has been a “sprint”, requiring collaboration, thoughtful and swift decision making, leadership (without titles) and an entrepreneurial, “roll up your sleeves and do what needs to get done” adventure.  Since May, 2016, we have successfully on boarding and trained around 599 Retail Colleagues! With the Head of Learning & Development, Tracy Roudebush, and her team including Amy Swaminathan, Training Consultant and our Training Coordinator, the team worked with internal partners (Sprint University) and external vendors, including contracted facilitators to plan and manage the execution of 80 plus two-week training sessions, preparing colleagues to open over 80 retail stores (May, 2016-Febrary, 2017).  Challenge This past November, Sprint Connect Sr. Leadership challenged all lines of business to cut our operating budget by millions.  For Learning & Development, we were challenged with cutting training costs significantly, without impacting the training experience to set up our colleagues for sales and transactional success. Before the budget challenge we had a contracted company that sourced training venues and managed packing and shipping all technology kits (laptops with Sprint systems), training materials for participants and traveling training supply kits to set up a branded classroom. In the beginning, we had up to 10 simultaneous training sessions in 10 cities where there would be a new store opening.  We had to look at our 10-Day New Hire, costing around $15,000 per two-week training session. We had to quickly propose a plan with savings for immediate review.  Our proposal, summarized the challenges:  • High costs (training venue, travel and vendor fees)  • Part Time Retail Colleagues: 80-hr training commitment is a challenge  • Training Content coverage is very wide, creating lack of colleague confidence on the products, plans, purchase options we sell most often  • Systems Training: No ability to simulate end to end transactions in all three key systems: RMS Lite, RQ4 & Q-Pay (none of which are connected)  Our key objectives were summarized in our proposal:  • Deepen focus on what we sell the most (products, plans, purchase options)  • Ensure colleagues receive required compliance training to ensure we win and operate in the right way  • Provide management teams operational content around critical daily, weekly, monthly rhythms and routines  • Create e-Learning resources to better teach & explain the three key systems: RMS Lite, RQ4 & Q-pay  • Transition facilitation responsibilities to internal resources  • Reduce training time/days and eliminate expenses | Action To address performance/training gaps, there was dedicated focus on the curriculum redesign.  To achieve cost/time savings, our 10 Day New Hire for Retail Sales Consultants, typically held in hotel venues, would now be sourced at Sprint University venues (where possible) and would be redesigned to 5 days.  Analysis To achieve our objective, cut costs without impacting the integrity and value of the new retail colleague training experience, this required a new curriculum design.  To do this, Amy Swaminathan, lead designer, worked with internal business leaders and SMEs to align content to performance goals and expectations. In addition, L1 surveys from participants were reviewed to pull the topics that were identified as value-add and to bucket any content or training concerns.  Furthermore, the training session feedback, provided at the conclusion of each training session was evaluated. This analysis pulled out what is working, what isn’t, what must stay, and what needs work in the content and training program.  Design To redesign the curriculum, the first priority was to meet with core leaders to identify the best way to close gaps in performance and in training.  This meant working closely with the following groups:  • Retail Operations (aligned training objectives to new processes, system updates, operational expectations and resources)  • Marketing (worked with graphic designer to redesign our training templates and collateral to mirror Sprint Branding—a fun, comic like look/feel that is used on all Employee Value Proposition collateral and recruiting website)  • Finance (aligned training to compensation plan, focusing on performance-based goal setting to maximize earning potential)  • Retail Reporting (Time & Attendance, Key Performance Indicators, Balanced Scorecard Reporting and to clarify expectations)  In tandem with the design planning, there was also design planning for a new online eLearning tool that would provide a hands-on overview of sales process, incorporating three separate systems/tools that are not connected live.  This side-project included sourcing and onboarding a contractor. Connecting the contractor with the appropriate SMEs and business partners to provide the context, screen shots and consult.   Development  The first version of training was provided to us by Sprint University, used in their retail new hire training. Before the Sprint Connect Learning & Development team was in place, there was a vendor contracted to blend the Sprint content with the additional elements brought to the JV by Dixons Carphone, including the Awesome Customer Experience journey and more.  In addition, there were NEW systems, and none of them were interconnected. All this, in a rapid turnaround to begin training this past May.  In response to our budget challenge, the extensive analysis, design and development was the first for Sprint Connect.  The development included designing content, writing facilitator notes, ensuring training objectives were aligned with business goals and fulfilled in the training content/experience.  We did this in an agile cycle providing content to review to SMEs/Business Leaders, and then responding quickly with incorporated edits. The entire redesign & development for the five-day course was completed in five weeks, most of it taking place over the holidays so be ready for pilot Jan. 6th, 2017.  Implementation The redesigned course was previewed and discussed with the team of training facilitators in the form of a Train the Trainer the first week of January.  Due to budget, we couldn’t fly everyone in so the TTT was facilitated virtually via Webcast. The first five-day Academy piloted the week of January 9th. We had three simultaneous sessions in multiple cities.  The trainers had a week between the T3 to the pilot to prepare their facilitator notes and practice with the new content/flow. They had been facilitating the two-week content since May, so this was a big shift for them.  In addition to the new curriculum, we were now holding trainings in corporate Sprint buildings in cities where available. This presented another level of challenges with security access, space available for role-paly and more. Since we are offered these spaces by Sprint for FREE, this is something the team is getting creative and staying positive about.  Evaluation Amy, the lead designer observed one of the first pilot sessions, taking notes on timing (most often best guess during development), activities and knowledge/skill transfer in the five days. After the pilot, we had a debrief session with the trainers to discuss their feedback, questions and concerns. We continue to evaluate survey results and feedback from our trainers.  We are still in an agile cycle, evolving our training to align with the goals of our retail business, focused on Handset Activations (new phones), Serving our Customers, Operating Efficiently & Consistently and Leading our People. | Result Cost Savings Our average cost of a new hire session has dramatically reduced from $15,000 per session to $7,500 per session for a 5-Day NSO Academy.  By partnering with Sprint University (Sprint Corp. Training), we’ve been able to source Sprint training venues in many of the cities where we are hosting training.  There is NO cost to us for these venue rentals.  We are spending around $4,000 on average for a 5-Day NSO Academy at a Sprint venue!  We have reduced our training operating costs by 50%! We are currently migrating to our own in-house trainers, instead of using contracted facilitators. This will be another significant savings!  System Training Proficiency By working with a local contractor (Bob Dinkins) to develop and interactive eLearning to provide a hands on navigational overview and practice of the core Sprint Connect Systems we saved thousands in travel costs.  Bob worked with several SMEs at our Support Center to get the screen shots and context he needed. The feedback on the initial piloting of this tool has included comments such as, “Wow! This would have been so helpful my first week in the store to learn our systems.” And, “This makes sense to me now since I can see how it will play out in the store—love it!” Best Practices & Lessons Learned Do the analysis!  The most important step of ADDIE is the analysis! Be willing to ask the tough questions and be persistent in working with SMEs and business leaders who are super busy! Vet everything and involve the end user (for us, our retail leaders), who all provided candid feedback on the design, development and provided additional clarify on processes and best practices.  Be confident in your learning expertise! What our SMEs want may not transfer knowledge or build skill. Take it all in, but also don’t be afraid to push back—are we leveraging all resources, instead of just adding more content to training. Be tough skinned and willing to take feedback! When you design something you tend to be protective.  The SMEs I worked with were demanding with their feedback and most of it was being received over the holidays! It’s not personal! Keep your eye on the project objective.  It what you’re doing and responding to aligning to, or going to help achieve that objective?  If so, great. If not, keep at it! |