**2019 ATDKC Excellence in Practice Awards**

**Category: Learning Technology**

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| **Garney Construction’s GarneyU Implemention** |
| **Challenge:** |
| With our employees spanning the country, we needed a cost-effective method of training that could be accessed anytime from anywhere and didn’t take away “too much time” from the job. Being 100% employee owned, price is a huge factor in our training endeavors – all money that we can save goes back to the employees via their retirement accounts. And, as with many companies, convincing our employees to step away from the daily responsibilities to complete training can be difficult. We often have employees miss training sessions because they cannot get away (or stay away) from their job due to deadlines and project restrictions.  In addition to the challenges described above, we have had employees express to us that the training we provide at classroom training sessions is not relevant to their role or is not timely (meaning that we are too late or by the time they need these skills, they will have forgotten what they were taught at the training session). We needed a solution that was multifaceted, allowing employees to access training that is relevant to their role on the project when they need it. |
| **Action:** |
| To overcome these challenges, we implemented an LMS that came with a robust library of short training video content in the summer of 2015. We initially rolled out the system, which we refer to as GarneyU, to our Project Management and Admin staff, totaling 200 people. Over time, we have provided access to all our salaried personnel, totaling 580 learners as of January 2019.  To acclimate our employees and encourage use of GarneyU upon launch in 2015, we decided to assign a monthly course – the same course for all employees. The monthly course assignment topics were generic in nature (communication, safety, etc.) so most employees could find benefit in the program.  Not having an LMS prior to our GarneyU rollout, we did not have any Garney-specific training videos that we could immediately push out to our learners. However, over time, we have created a robust offering of Garney-specific training videos. (We now have a two-person content development team who work on creating training video content full-time.)  Since the initial rollout, we have continued the monthly assignments, but we’ve refined the process and content that is assigned to our employees. To ensure usefulness and practicality, we have transitioned to classification/title-specific course assignments. The content our employees are assigned in GarneyU, is meant to support and reinforce the on-the-job training they receive on their project sites.  During the first two years of the program, we did a lot of internal marketing – emails, competitions, etc. About six months ago, we stopped all formal marketing as an effort to cut down on the number of emails that our employees receive daily. Now, we have found that our employees do the marketing for us. Current employees share content with each other, as well as tell new employees about the usefulness of GarneyU. We try to get all new employees set up with a GarneyU account prior to their first day, but if we miss someone, they’re quick to reach out for their login credentials.  With GarneyU, the monthly assignments were the tip of the iceberg. Over the past two years, we have created “playlists” and “certifications” in GarneyU. Playlists allow us to group content together and push it out to our employees without assigning any courses. Certifications is another way to group content, however, all the content included in the certification is assigned and each individual course must be completed to complete the certification.  We use the certification tool in a variety of ways, including onboarding courses for new hires. As with many companies, culture is huge at Garney. All our new hires are assigned a “Welcome to Garney” certification, which is to be completed in their first 30-days as an employee. The courses are used to support the onboarding activities provided by the supervisor on the job site.  In 2017, we released a pre-training curriculum (certification) in GarneyU for one of our software programs. Employees must complete this curriculum, which contains the basics of using and navigating the program, prior to attending a classroom training. By completing the pre-training before the classroom training, the length of time needed for the classroom training was shortened, therefore, reducing cost associated with travel-related expenses (hotel, meal) and time away from the project.  In 2018, we re-evaluated the organization of our content in GarneyU. We had received feedback that it was difficult for our employees to find the content they were looking for, so we reorganized the content in a few different ways: by classification/title so that it will be easier for our learners to find content relevant for their role within the company, and by content topic. Each of these organization methods can be accessed for the home page of GarneyU  To support our classroom training, we use GarneyU’s survey tool. Employees receive pre- and post-event surveys through GarneyU, which our trainers use to gather feedback and effectiveness of the training event.  GarneyU has also evolved into a communication tool. On example of this can be seen through our monthly Safety E-Alerts. Our Employee Development Team has partnered with our Safety Team to create and push out monthly Safety E-Alert videos through GarneyU. Previously, the Safety E-Alerts were sent out via email in PDF format. Due to the success of GarneyU training videos, and the capabilities to track completion of course assignments within GarneyU, our Safety Team thought GarneyU was the perfect avenue to disseminate their message. |
| **Result:** |
| Over the past several years, GarneyU has become the go-to location for Garney-specific training content – it’s the first place our employees look when trying to find training.  Leadership support has been a huge factor in GarneyU’s success. Our monthly course assignment completion has gone from 66% in December 2015, to 92% in January 2019. Garney’s leadership team has set a goal of 95% completion for 2019. Our leadership team is vocal about the effectiveness of GarneyU and continue to encourage their employees to utilize the system regularly.  In addition to tracking completion rate for our course assignments, we also look at the course rating. In GarneyU, our learners can rate a course on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the best) and provide comments/feedback. We started actively asking our employees to rate the courses and provide feedback in 2018 – this feedback helps us to tailor the content we create, as well as assign, to our employees. Since utilizing the rating feature, we’ve averaged 4+ on all Garney-created course assignments. |