**2020 ATDKC Excellence in Practice Awards**

**Category: Integrated Talent Management**

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| **Sprint’s Day of Learning** |
| **Challenge:**  |
| At Sprint, we know the fourth Industrial Revolution is impacting our work, employees, and the skills and jobs needed to be successful in the future. It seems like every day we face pressures from competitors or there is another new technology to master. In today’s world, we all must be in a constant state of learning to stay on top of our game and to attract and retain talent. In early 2019, several HR teams (Sprint University, Leadership Development, Employee Relations and Educational Reimbursement) joined forces. And we engaged teams outside of HR too… including Corporate Communications and Information Technology. We began discussing ways to increase learning agility at Sprint, which we know is a key priority to build a future-ready workforce. Additionally, Sprint employees have been telling us in surveys for years that it’s hard for them to make time for their development and furthermore, in a cost-conscious environment, employees indicate they don’t want to ask for money for external development. We needed to figure out a way to further infuse learning into Sprint’s culture and continue to prioritize employee development. We wanted to add something to our learning portfolio and try something new that would get employees’ attention. Our overarching strategy and high-level goals were three-fold: 1. Increase learning agility, which is a key priority to build a future-ready workforce. 2. Offer a new, creative solution in Sprint’s evolving learning portfolio. 3. Provide partners a way to invest in their own development with actions for immediate implementation.  |
| **Action:**  |
| The idea for Day of Learning was sparked in early 2019. We engaged several HR teams: Sprint University, Leadership Development, Employee Relations and Educational Reimbursement. And we engaged teams outside of HR too… including Corporate Communications and Information Technology. We built momentum and gained executive sponsorship both within and outside of the HR team quickly. We engaged many employees from other parts of the business to participate, brainstorm and help. We knew the event would take place in June, and as any agile process would go, we had a few months of rapid, iterative development. The scope and learning content for the conference changed several times through the fast-paced collaboration. While we had senior leadership support, we were met with some resistance, too. Could a high caliber conference be pulled together in less than three months? Would Sprint leaders and employees make the time to learn? ANALYSIS: Early on there were a handful of team members involved in external research, brainstorming and pitching ideas. The conference idea evolved from the concept of a 3-day conference with four to five speakers per day to a one-day conference. The speaker session length evolved from 30 minutes to 45 minutes. Originally, we thought we would have a mix of internal and external speakers, but it became clear employees wanted to hear external perspectives. Once the analysis of the core idea had formed, a much broader team was engaged to fully design and develop “Day of Learning.” DESIGN: One of the first steps in design was engaging a broad group of learning specialists from Sprint University (our learning and development team) in solution discovery. Our goal of the solution discovery sessions was to leverage learning experts to further brainstorm the idea and ensure we thought of creative ways learning could be infused into our internal conference. In the design phase, we also asked employees what topics they wanted to learn about. And during the design phase we contacted several external organizations that host conferences to understand best practices. DEVELOPMENT: Once we had the initial design and concept for Day of Learning, the 20-person core team divided up the work in the extensive project plan. Over the next several months the core team met weekly to ensure we were on track. Here were the key focus areas in the development phase:  • Interviewing and selecting our five guest speakers for the day and preparing them to deliver and provide action-oriented learning. • Creating trendy, in-your-face advertising to spark employees’ interest and encourage them to start “making every day a day of learning.” One creative way the team advertised the event was in bathroom stalls with an unconventional pooping unicorn character. • Developing a comprehensive communications plan ranging from direct leader invitations and broad employee communications to social media excitement. • Gaining buy-in from managers so they would encourage their team members to block their calendars and attend at least one session. • Focusing on the event logistics in Overland Park, including breakfast, book signing, social hour and more. • Coordinating the 30 watch parties held across the country. • Building the extra learning tools and resources so employees would have access to learn more post-event. (handouts, cliff notes, podcasts, book clubs, etc.) • Creating a well-organized conference website where employees could read about speakers and topics, register to attend and access all the conference tools and resources. • Providing technical support to deliver and broadcast the event across the country. IMPLEMENTATION: As we got closer to implementation the core team met more frequently to ensure all the details were covered, such as: • Prepping the speakers on our expectations and providing a detailed overview of the day. • Creating a sideshow and video highlighting all of Sprint’s learning offerings to show before each session. • Securing executives to read the speaker introductions and show support for Day of Learning. • Writing the emcee script for each session which also provided direction for the technical team responsible for recording. • Shipping t-shirts, books, and other giveaways to watch party locations. • Taking photos and recording video. • Ushering the speakers to and from events. • Setting up and taking down supplies, tables, signage, giveaways etc. • Providing technical support for remote locations. • Overseeing Overland Park events such as breakfast and social hour. • Promoting internal social media channels for employee excitement. • Greeting participants at the auditorium doors with action-oriented handouts. • Working the selfie station to capture excitement for the day. • Supporting the author and book winners at the book signing table. • Tracking attendance in a new and creative way. We secured over 60 volunteers in Overland Park and 30 watch party hosts across the country and provided detailed job descriptions and support for all that helped. The event was implemented very well with both speakers and employees noting how professionally and well done the event was. |
| **Result:**  |
| Day of Learning has become an excellent way to show our employees that we value and support their growth and development. Below are the outcomes achieved for Day of Learning in June 2019! By the numbers: * Over 6,000 partners participated live (in-person and remote), replay and watch party for the June 2019 Day of Learning. We know that even more will be participating in the February 2020 Day of Learning, which replay participation is just now underway.
* Over 3,500 partners watched live and watched an average of 3 sessions each for over 10,000 live views
* Over 2,700 replays were watched.
* Day of Learning web-page was accessed more than 40,000 times by 5,900 partners from May to July in 2019.
* 30 watch parties held across the country on June 19, 2019 plus more replay parties. Employee survey for those that participated in Day of Learning. Here are the key results:
* 74% of survey respondents rated Day of Learning a 9 or 10 (highly/extremely likely) to recommend Day of Learning future events or replays to a peer.

Survey respondents gave the overall value of Day of Learning 4.5 stars out of 5. o Emotional Intelligence for Your Busy Life with Sara Ross was rated 4.7 stars out of 5. o Find Your Power in Times of Uncertainty with Stacey Flowers was rated 4.4 stars out of 5. o Relentlessly Positive Communication with Pamela Jett was rated 4.0 stars out of 5. o Accelerate Your Success with Influence with Marquita Miller was rated 4.0 stars out of 5. o "C-level" Attributes from the Kansas City Chiefs with Mitch Holthus was rated 4.3 stars out of 5. 90% of survey respondents said they are likely to implement what they learned from Day of Learning in their personal or professional life. 91% of survey respondents indicated that 45 minutes was just the right amount of time to balance the workday and learn something new. **Based on all positive results and feedback Sprint committed to 4 additional events**: 1. Hour of Learning in September 2019 (Live attendance was up from June; total attendance was similar (6,000) and survey results were similar and very strong) 2. Day of Learning in February 2020 (Live attendance was up 71% from June 2019 and survey results were similar and very strong) 3. Day of Learning in June 2020 – announced for June 17. 4. Hour of Learning September 2020– announced with a date to be determined. Based on the results and comments above and based on the desired outcomes developed in early 2019 – we successfully achieved our goals. For the company and our leadership we: * Provided employees with ways to prepare for the future.
* Reignited a culture of development & learning.
* Reinforced the development tools available to Sprint employees.
* Positively impacted partner development perceptions to drive employee satisfaction.
* Tried a new modality and reached more Sprint employees than we thought we would.
* Delivered learning content in a compact timeline for maximum momentum.
* Encouraged leaders to participate and support their teams to participate too.

After the fact our employees told us they felt:* Time was set aside to learn something.
* 45-minutes was just enough to learn something new.
* They were able to apply what I learned personally and professionally.
* It was a special event with meaningful topics & engaging speakers.
* Sprint and my manager want me to prioritize my development.
* The sessions were valuable and worth the time.

A few best practices to highlight: * Engage a small group to vet the speakers/topics and be sure to vet more than you might think.
* Engage a big/diverse team to execute on the project plan and touch base frequently.
* Drive employees to one website for everything.
* Pick topics that are meaningful and a bit edgy and futuristic.
* Creatively market and communicate your program.
* Carefully select topics that resonate with the broad, diverse employee base and know that it’s ok that not every topic will resonate with every employee.
* Have action plans for employees that can be implemented personally or professionally. Find an emotional connection with the topics you select.

Here a few lessons learned: * There is a first time for everything and sometimes ideas come in last minute. Things may feel rushed, but it’s still manageable and WORTH IT!
* If you have a remote audience, figure out how to involve them in a way that works for them.
* Figure out how to proactively put learning on employee and leader calendars.
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