

MAXIMIZING EMPLOYEE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

MaxKnowledge has set the standard for employee training in the career college sector

► Joe Mulvihill | Staff Writer

In 2002, Dr. Amir Moghadam, a career education entrepreneur, envisioned a large-scale initiative to increase the bottom line performance of the career college sector. Seeing the ultimate goal as student success, Moghadam determined that maximizing employee and organizational performance was the key to institutional and student success.

This vision would turn out to be an important one for career colleges. Moghadam was determined to develop a working solution to achieve his ambition and concluded that a comprehensive, results-based, online training enterprise had to be formed to provide an effective employee development solution for the sector. This conclusion led to the birth of MaxKnowledge.

Many career college campuses are typically characterized by a small student body, a lean operational team and a fast-paced schedule. Even large education companies in the sector consist of small campuses. In these small campus settings, providing employee training in the traditional format can be challenging for administrators. Training session dates and locations, part-time staff and adjunct faculty schedules, travel costs, and time away from work make it difficult for most career college operators to provide adequate face-to-face training for campus personnel.

Seeking a results-based solution with the goal of improving performance, Moghadam was determined to offer “real training” via the Web, which requires access to facilitators that tailor training to the needs of the participants. Simply providing access to online materials was not good enough, Moghadam said.

“Online training must be supported by expert facilitators to maximize the learning experience of the participants,” Moghadam said. “Training facilitators must be available to answer questions and guide the learning process. Participants must also be able to



interact and learn from each other. In fact, a learning environment is not complete without meaningful interactions among the participants – the learning that occurs through knowledge sharing.”

Carrying these strong beliefs, Moghadam assembled a team of career college experts to develop an effective on-line training solution for the sector.

Creating a large-scale training network

Soon after MaxKnowledge was founded, the company entered into a strategic alliance with the Career College Association (CCA), joining forces to promote online continuing education and professional development in the sector. Major state associations representing the sector and the Imagine America Foundation (IAF), the nonprofit research and scholarship arm of the sector, joined this movement and became strategic partners of MaxKnowledge. This has resulted in a large-scale network of online training delivery channels for the nationwide career college community.

MaxKnowledge and its partners have significantly increased access to training and continuing education in the career college sector. Employees from career colleges and schools of all sizes come together through various training portals to collaborate and learn.

“We have created an active online learning community of thousands of career college professionals across the nation who have dedicated their careers to student success,” said Dr. Gary Meers, MaxKnowledge Vice President of Education.

MaxKnowledge’s online training programs cover all areas of career college operations, including management, marketing, admissions, financial aid, compliance, education (faculty development), student retention and placement. Moghadam’s staff believes increasing student success is the foundation of all MaxKnowledge courses.

“As career colleges strive to increase their operational efficiency and competitive edge, they are focusing more and more on maximizing the performance of their management, staff and faculty. Seasoned career college executives realize that effective employee training and development is one of the most important factors impacting organizational success and the bottom line,” said Jay Hollowell, MaxKnowledge’s Training Manager.

Making a difference

MaxKnowledge activities are not limited to the United States. MaxKnowledge works with worldwide organizations, such as the International Youth Foundation and the Education for Employment Foundation, to enhance student success and employability in developing countries. MaxKnowledge has conducted training programs for career educators in South-east Asia, North Africa and the Middle East.

The company is attempting to bring about a paradigm shift on how our sector looks at employee training and development. As a highly regulated sector, many career college operators conduct employee training for the sole purpose of fulfilling the continuing education and professional development requirements set forth by their state licensing or accrediting agencies. Although the intent of these agencies is to increase organizational performance and quality, most schools focus on meeting the compliance requirements without considering the return on their investment in training.

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“We have been trying to change this mindset with the simple fact that results are what matter,” Moghadam said. “The objectives of training should be increased performance with the ultimate goal of enhancing student success. Training must be seen as a performance management tool.”

In support of this initiative, MaxKnowledge and the Imagine America Foundation have formed the Center for Excellence in Education (CEE) to create awareness for the importance of training and development. CEE is currently working with the ROI Institute on a research program to show the impact of employee development on organizational performance.

“CEE also offers comprehensive employee development solutions in which we partner with the client institutions to enhance the transfer of learning processes and to measure the results of the training in terms of actual performance improvement,” said Moghadam.

“CEE goes beyond stand-alone training courses,” said Ron Obstfeld, Vice President of Learning and Development at Universal Technical Institute and a MaxKnowledge client. “They offer solutions that turn training into performance. We look at MaxKnowledge/CEE as our strategic partner in maximizing our instructional staff’s performance and student outcomes.”

The story of MaxKnowledge illustrates how passion for student success and a collaborative philosophy can lead to remarkable results. Through effective employee development, MaxKnowledge is increasing the bottom line performance of the career college sector. ■