For nearly 30 years, EchoStar has been pioneering the digital TV solutions that serve as the foundation of today's home entertainment systems. The premier global provider of world-class satellite communications, EchoStar launched the enormously successful DISH Network in 1996, building the foundation for satellite TV technologies in the U.S. before spinning off as an independent, publicly traded company in 2008.

In 2009, EchoStar had a basic training system in place to cover compliance courses for the company’s 2,400 employees, but there really wasn’t anything to get employees excited about their own development. It was the employees themselves who drew EchoStar’s attention to the need for a new approach to learning and development, specifically asking for it in the yearly Employee Opinion Survey. Thus, EchoStar recognized the need to have a robust talent management solution if it hoped to retain its workforce.

Why Cornerstone

Impressed by Cornerstone’s intuitive end user experience, ease of customization, and dedication to customer service, EchoStar realized that Cornerstone offered a dynamic platform with room to grow. In June 2010, EchoStar invested in Cornerstone’s Learning and Performance Clouds. The EchoStar L&D Team decided to first deploy the Learning Cloud and embarked on an ambitious grassroots initiative involving people from virtually every segment of the company, including frontline employees who were recruited to serve as LMS Champions.
With great fanfare, EchoStar’s new learning platform, eLEARN, went live on October 1, 2010, bearing the tagline “Education – Anytime, Anywhere.”

💡 The Results

Practically overnight, EchoStar found itself with the learning culture it had long been lacking, as employees’ enthusiastic response to eLEARN exceeded its wildest expectations. By March 2011, eLEARN had reached a 60 percent employee usage rate. By year’s end, usage hit 75 percent, with 1,785 employees taking a total of 10,145 courses.

Cost Savings: Just one Certified Project Management Professional (PMP) certification course taken at a university averages $1,200, so the ability to access such courses via eLEARN resulted in significant savings of $38,000 on that one course alone. In addition, bundled IT courses keep EchoStar’s software developers up to speed with the latest code-writing, saving the company $15,000 in supplemental training fees. Finally, EchoStar was surprised to learn that some states grant tax credits to companies for up to half of their L&D expenses. In one state alone, the company was able to generate a tax credit of over $65,000. In all, eLEARN has helped EchoStar rack up over $100,000 in savings, which can be redirected to other training initiatives.

Increased Retention: Prior to the launch of eLEARN, EchoStar’s culture was not as supportive of employee development. These days, the company’s commitment to L&D is so pervasive that job seekers actually seek out EchoStar as an employer of choice because an existing employee told them about developmental tools such as eLEARN.

Leadership Development: High-potential employees are able to take advantage of a blended learning alternative that will help place them on the fast track to a leadership position. As EchoStar grows its high-potential employees into future executives, it is utilizing eLEARN as a prerequisite to its new strategic leadership class.

.Future Plans

EchoStar plans to build on the phenomenal success of eLEARN by utilizing Cornerstone’s talent management suite as a guided user interface for its HRIS system. The company is also expanding its use of the Cornerstone Performance Cloud, particularly Succession Planning, which has been rolled out on a limited basis for high-potentials and will be launched more broadly this year to also be used as a workforce management tool, matching employee skills with open positions. Looking ahead, EchoStar is considering Extended Enterprise as a tool to further educate its customers on the technical and serviceable functions of its products.

Cornerstone OnDemand is a global leader of cloud-based talent management software solutions. Our solution is designed to help organizations empower their people and maximize the productivity of their workforce. To learn more, visit csod.com.