

INNO-VERSITY

Retail Success Stories



SpartanNash™

When a national grocery retailer needed a learning program to improve the knowledge and skills of new leaders developed for its leaders, Inno-Versity created a custom eLearning Module that was designed to be delivered on both desktop computers and mobile technology. This learning program reenergized the current training program into an eLearning platform that could be administered throughout the store's national footprint with knowledge checks and performance data available to management.

CURRENT SITUATION

The grocery industry in the United States is undergoing some of the most dramatic changes since supermarkets emerged in the 1940s. Until recently, a single grocery store served all of a shopper's food and beverage needs. Now, consumers are splitting their time and money by purchasing groceries at multiple retail stores.

In the early 1990's, the greatest threat to supermarkets and grocery stores came from one-stop shopping venues like supercenters and warehouse clubs. Today the threat is spread out among all retail channels, including drugstores, dollar stores, limited assortment chains and e-commerce. On average, consumers shop at five different types of stores to fulfill their grocery needs. And it's not because they can't find what they are looking for. The trend is driven by the fact that few stores offer the precise mix of value, quality and private label brands that consumers value.





Private-label store brands are gaining popularity. Sales of private-label groceries are projected to grow 62% to \$133 billion in 2016, up from \$83 billion, according to a Packaged Facts survey. The growth can primarily be attributed to the recession, since house brands are typically cheaper. But private label isn't just about price, it's also about quality. More than 90% of consumers believe private-label solutions offer the same or better value versus their national brand counterpart, and more than 80% believe the quality is the same or better, according to an IRI report.

A Packaged Facts survey revealed a deciding factor for shoppers that is even more important than price: freshness. Seventy-five percent of consumers say the produce department is the most important, followed by fresh meat, poultry, and seafood (60%); store brand products (36%); local farm foods/produce (35%); and the in-store bakery (29%), according to the survey.

THE PROBLEM

SpartanNash needed to improve the learning for new leaders in the areas of leading at their company, culture, performance management, and policies and procedures.

SpartanNash was formed in November of 2013, when Spartan Stores, based in Grand Rapids, MI, merged with the Nash Finch Company based in Minneapolis, MN. It was a natural fit since both companies have long and rich histories of serving their communities.

Nash Finch started as a family-owned business back in 1885 when brothers Fred, Edgar and Willis Nash opened a small candy and tobacco store in Devils Lake, North Dakota. The first non-family employee, Harry B. Finch, joined the Nash Brothers as a 14-year old stock boy in 1889 and worked his way up in the organization. In subsequent years, the company became known as the Nash Finch Company with Harry as the company president.

Spartan Stores began in 1917 when 100 independent retailers banded together to purchase in bulk and pass the savings along to their customers. Here is a sweet Spartan-Nash fact: in 1918, 43 of the original retailers signed the Articles of Incorporation for the Grand Rapids Wholesale Grocery Company; their first purchase was a boxcar of sugar.

Both companies have grown throughout the years, expanding retail and wholesale operations. In 1995, Nash Finch acquired Military Distributors of Virginia (MDV), and their commitment to serving our military heroes whether at home or abroad began.



SpartanNash needed a unique way to showcase key leader and procedural messages and deliver on-line learning to its new managers and leadership team.

SOLUTION

The solution was to create a custom, mobile-friendly eLearning Module.

For SpartanNash, it was vitally important to have the Learning Module reflect its brand. Great care was taken to understand the look, feel and expectation of the brand and implement those qualities into the final product. The Learning Module was broken down into three parts, Leadership, Performance Management and Key Policies and Procedures.

The Leadership piece was designed for new leaders and explored the leadership role at SpartanNash. The content revolved around expectations of a new leader as well as an orientation of the Mission, Vision and Values. The content focused on SpartanNash's Mission to leverage its expertise in food distribution and retail to develop, activate and provide impactful solutions that exceed expectations for associates, customers and partners, all while striving to be a best-in-class business that feels local, where relationships matter.

The next section was Performance Management. Understanding how employees work and the resources available is an important piece for new leaders. In this section, the Learning Module focused on where new leaders could locate the materials they needed to complete their daily tasks. Additionally, the module shared valuable tips on improving communications with employees and direct reports.



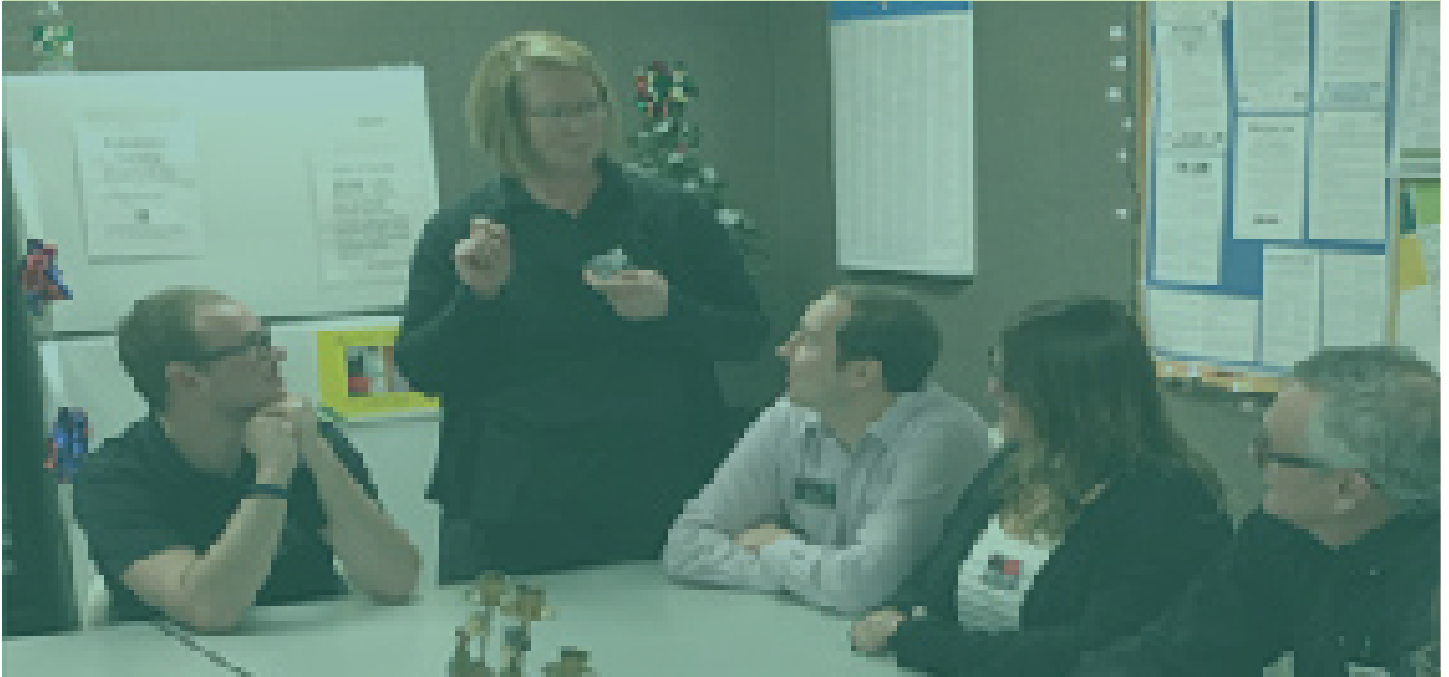


The final section was centered on Key Policies and Procedures. This section taught the new leaders about the various policies and procedures needed to complete daily tasks including where to locate key documents and materials.

The Learning Module focused on procedural and soft skills and asked leaders to read, listen, watch and do. One of the advantages of an online module is that creativity can be added to the course to fully engage the learner. In the course, the learner watched an animation or video and then read accompanying text. Next a Knowledge Check was given to make sure the new leader fully understood the concepts being taught. Once all Knowledge Checks were complete, the manager was notified through the Learning Management System (LMS) and the learner passed the course.

As part of the resources within the Learning Module, a written transcript of the course, as well as documents including the Mission, Vision and Values, new leader training, support and customer service were included to assist if the new leaders needed help.

BUSINESS BENEFIT



For SpartanNash, the benefit was simple—new leaders who were more informed and inspired leaders.

In the past, employees would often have to travel to an offsite training center, for new leader training. With this solution, SpartanNash leaders could start and stop the Learning Module when time allowed at the comfort of their home or at their desk. It was not required to complete the training all at once, so timing was not issue.

While in-person, one-on-one training is sometimes necessary, focused training is often more impactful. This eLearning Module allows the new leader's manager to see who completed the Learning Module and where they did well and where they could use additional help. If a new leader struggled in one area, the manager could then focus on those skills in person with that associate later, increasing the effectiveness of the coaching meeting.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The grocery landscape is changing. With SpartanNash, Inno-Versity applied leading technology to time-tested soft skills to create a custom Learning Module that was trackable, user-friendly, efficient and non-disruptive to the daily work flow.

If you are interested in learning more, contact inno-versity.com

