ILR CAHRS

Cornell's Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies

Targeted Benchmarking on Digital Learning Strategy

CAHRS Partners have the opportunity to benchmark with other partner companies on HR topics of interest. The benchmarking is typically conducted with 5-7 other CAHRS Partners selected by the company that initiated the request. The CAHRS office identifies the appropriate connections at selected companies and the benchmarking company then schedules 1:1 phone calls to explore their questions.

Examples of recent requests include: Sponsorship Initiatives, Organization Designs and Structures, Diversity Metrics, Talent Management Practices, Competency Models and a variety of HR Policy Questions (i.e. Relocation, Cost of Living, Airline Mile Usage, etc.).

CAHRS partners find this more qualitative approach to benchmarking very valuable for revealing novel insights and practices, as well as for building their network. At the conclusion of the process, the benchmarking company shares an anonymized summary of their findings with the participating companies and CAHRS, who then makes them available so all partners can benefit from the learning.

Question:

Do competitor companies' have a digital learning strategy in place for members of their learning team? What are the major focus areas within the digital space?

*In the context of learning, "digital" is defined as collaboration tools, technologies, and platforms that can be leveraged to support the adult learning process.

Objective:

- Determine if companies have developed a digital learning strategy or if it is underway
- Gather information on major focus areas within:
  - Technology & Tools
  - Engagement
- Use themes to develop a digital learning strategy

Benchmarked Companies

Data was collected during 1:1 virtual interviews with members of the Global Learning Teams from October 2022 to January 2023.

Company	Industry	Company Population (Global)
Company A	Information Technology Services	738,000
Company B	Drugs & Biotechnology	152,700
Company C	Cosmetics	63,000
Company D	Food & Beverage	309,000

Executive Summary

1 out of the 4 companies confirmed having a digital learning strategy for business functional courses and general corporate courses. The company acknowledged the post-pandemic environment of learning and the importance of establishing a balance between different types of instruction (in-person and virtual), scaling digital learning, and re-creating the virtual environment to foster learning.

3 out of the 4 companies acknowledged having a digital strategy as part of the Digital / Commerce segment of their company.

Common themes

Several themes that emerged during discussion of digital in the context of learning were:

Technology & Tools

1. Virtual Reality
   a. 2 out of the 4 companies mentioned using Virtual Reality Headsets
   b. Metaverse was used for orientation and networking purposes
   c. Other VR use cases were for the Supply Chain function

2. Virtual Instructor Led Courses
   a. All of the companies interviewed are going to increase the virtual or online instruction through Google Meets, Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing, Zoom, and in the form of e-learning
   b. All companies interviewed are going to decrease the amount of in-person course offerings throughout the year

3. Learning Platforms
   a. 3 out of 5 companies use Degreed as their main learning experience platform
   b. Percipio, Thrive Global, Coursera, PluralSight, and Novoed were mentioned as part of their vendor relationships portfolio
   c. All companies mentioned having affiliations with universities for massive open online courses (e.g.- MIT, Northwestern, Harvard Business School)

Engagement

1. Badges
    a. 4 out of 5 companies have Credly or similar digital badges to award learners
    b. Certifications and peer recognition were the most used

2. Learning Journeys
    a. All companies recognized the value of implementing Social Cohort Learning with peers who are learning the same skill
    b. Designing journeys that involve the learner's ecosystem (e.g.- Families, Friends) for certain courses that are determined for a broader audience (e.g.- Innovation, Adult Learning)

3. University Affiliative Incentives
    a. 1 in 4 companies have an incentive program that rewards learners with monetary credit for university courses
        i. Remaining companies opted for vendor relationships with MOOC course provider

Skills Monitoring

1. 5 out of 5 companies say skills building is priority

2. 50% of companies say they have a system in place to monitor skills in the market
    a. The remaining 50% who don't have a system are listing it as a priority

3. Only 50% of companies have:
    a. A Leadership position who owns skills monitoring and/or skills strategies