

WinAt-Work® Case Study

Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas is leveraging technology to give its customers the core workplace skills training they need

Overview

THE CLIENT

Workforce Solutions (WFS) Greater Dallas governs and manages the workforce development system in Dallas.



THE CHALLENGE

Faced with an influx of customers, WFS Dallas sought technology-based solutions to extend staff capacity and meet critical needs.

THE SOLUTION

WFS Dallas partnered with The Quality Group (TQG) to implement WinAt-Work, an online employability skills training program.

THE RESULTS

WinAt-Work's 100% web-based training allowed WFS Dallas to deliver efficient and effective employability training to welfare customers, without increasing staff.

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WFS Dallas gives its customers the core skills they need before they go to the job site. "At the height of the recession," says Laurie Bouillion Larrea, President of WFS Dallas "our centers were facing very high demands from all populations." In particular, the system recognized a need to shore up the competitive advantage of welfare customers with limited skills and little work history. To see what types of innovative solutions were available, the board issued an Invitation for Bids. It had determined that online access would be the key to meeting such increased demand.

One of the submissions received was from TQG for its WinAt-Work online employability skills training program. Randal Wier, WFS Dallas Vice President of Quality Systems, says WinAt-Work seemed like a good fit. "We were initially intrigued that the program offered our welfare population an opportunity to do job readiness training," he says. "Previously, we didn't have a vehicle to offer that type of training quickly."

WinAt-Work: A Winning Model

WFS Dallas accepted TQG's WinAt-Work bid. WinAt-Work is a modernized solution. It delivers training through engaging modules and simulation games that allow participants to watch, interact, and problem solve. Participants relate to its realistic and engaging workplace scenarios, which are presented by actors who look and talk like them.

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WinAt-Work: A Winning Model (Continued)

The program includes four modules (Interviewing, Good Work Habits, Getting Along, and Getting Ahead) and three interactive simulation games. Customer feedback suggests the training is appropriate for the audience, holds participants' attention, and effectively transfers knowledge of job skills training topics.

A Lesson In Confidence: A fervent advocate of job-readiness training, Ms. Larrea was eager to implement the program. "The term 'soft skills' comes with its own form of dismissal," she says. "The truth is that employability skills, like those taught in the WinAt-Work program, are core workplace skills and are crucial for success in the workplace."

One of the top benefits of job-readiness training is that it can build confidence and self-esteem. By immersing participants in simulation after simulation, WinAt-Work gives participants the sense of confidence that comes from knowing how to handle a variety of workplace situations. "WinAt-Work is just right for our welfare customers," says Ms. Larrea. "It provides them with the confidence and skills they desperately need."

The Decision to Mandate: In late 2010, WFS Dallas made WinAt-Work available for all its customers. Because the training is delivered online, WFS Dallas knew it could accommodate anyone who was interested, without increasing staff. In the first year, however, only a hundred people elected to use the training. So in 2012, they made it a requirement for all welfare customers. "We were going to be sending a lot of customers to subsidized employment, and we wanted to make sure the people we were sending had job readiness skills," says Mr. Wier. Within months of making it a requirement, several thousand customers were enrolled in the WinAt-Work training.

Tracking the Results: The sheer number of people taking the training is meaningless, however, unless the results are good. WinAt-Work delivers training through a branded online portal, which ensures all participants go through the same training funnel, with 100% consistency. The portal is also a valuable assessment tool. Equipped with advanced student tracking and reporting functions, it allows staff to find any type of data they need, simply by pressing a button. The administrative capabilities allow staff to check on general data, such as how many people are signed up, average test scores, and survey results; or they can drill down to detailed data, like individual test scores or even particular questions missed. The WFS Dallas's WinAt-Work portal reveals impressive outcomes. Here are a couple of examples:

- **Excellent results:** Average pre-test and post-test data shows substantial skills and knowledge increase in all areas.
- **Satisfied customers:** According to a post-training survey, nearly 94% of participants said they would recommend the training to others. Notably, survey satisfaction results were not compromised as a result of switching the training from optional to mandatory.

A Lesson in Leadership

Ms. Larrea acknowledges that online training can be a difficult conversation with staff and customers. Change is always difficult, but it is necessary to remain relevant in the rapidly changing workplace. She has the following advice for other Workforce Investment Boards considering online training:

- Choose your online training partner wisely
- Create a "Wow!" student learning experience
- Make sure the program has a good assessment tool to monitor statistics, and make changes as needed

The Quality Group

Carol Dierdorff, Director of Workforce Development

Phone: 678-244-5393

Email: CDierdorff@thequalitygroup.net