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Client Story

Using Digital Learning to Develop Leaders

H&M Group is a multinational clothing and retail company operating in 74 countries. Having enjoyed previous success in developing leaders using SLII® from Blanchard®, the organization recently piloted an online targeted program to teach core leadership skills to leaders at different levels in their careers. Employees in production facilities around the world participated in a six-week digital learning journey to learn practical frameworks and essentials from Blanchard’s most impactful training programs.

Fifty participants from Europe, Indonesia, Myanmar, China, Bangladesh, India, and Hong Kong completed the Leader of Self learning journey, which combines content from Self Leadership, Blanchard Management Essentials®, and Building Trust programs. Concurrently, ten participants from China, India, Myanmar, and Hong Kong went through the Leader of Others learning journey, which blends SLII® with Building Trust.

“Offering the programs simultaneously allowed leaders and their team members to learn and practice new skills together,” explains Swati Shukla, H&M’s learning and development manager and talent manager for the Far East region. “The design of the program was very logical and engaging, and the skills provided a holistic learning experience that teaches leaders and their team members how to have meaningful and authentic conversations.”



Swati Shukla

The Leader of Self journey teaches people the mindset and skills for taking the initiative to proactively seek the direction and support they need from their leaders to be successful. Participants learn how to challenge assumed constraints, set effective goals, activate their points of power, use four essential communication skills, and both build trust and repair it when it's been compromised. The Leader of Others journey teaches leaders the skills they need to accelerate employee development, increase performance, and build trusting relationships. Participants learn how to apply SLII® skills to provide the appropriate amount of direction and support to team members on specific tasks. They also learn the four elements of trust necessary for creating a trusting work environment. Each module of both journeys includes a playlist of additional resources that includes worksheets, articles, videos, and other curated materials that support the learning.

The flexible, self-paced format allowed H&M's learners in different time zones to learn online at their own pace, then come together during live sessions for peer learning and networking. "Each week the participants learned new content and were given time and encouragement to try out the new skills in a real-work environment," says Swati. "It is such a logical way to learn. Then they came together for a weekly live session led by a Blanchard facilitator. The sessions really helped the learning come alive for the participants. They were able to share examples of how they put the learning into practice and get advice and coaching from the Blanchard facilitator. The sessions were so valuable that we increased them from sixty minutes to ninety minutes."

Results from the Pilot

The team collected feedback from participants and was pleased with the positive results. Using a five-point scale, participants in the Leader of Self journey rated the program as follows:

- How would you rate the overall value of the training? 4.62
- How engaging did you find the virtual session? 4.30
- How well do you understand the content? 4.49
- Will you be able to apply the learning with your manager? 4.49

Participants in the Leader of Others journey rated the program as follows:

- How would you rate the overall value of the training? 4.60
- How engaging did you find the virtual session? 4.70
- How well do you understand the content? 4.60
- Will you be able use this content with your team? 4.40

"Participants from both programs agreed that the content was very relevant and could be applied immediately to improve performance and build stronger relationships," says Swati. "They especially appreciated the live debrief sessions—the Blanchard moderators were highly skilled not only in the content, but also in coaching the learners how to put the learning into practice."

Although Swati looks forward to delivering SLII® training in a classroom setting again someday, she appreciates that Blanchard's digital learning journeys will allow her to continue developing the talent at her organization on a global scale—even during a pandemic.

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