



A STUDY IN SUCCESS

Learning Strategy Gives National Heritage Academies a Blueprint for Future Learning

National Heritages Academies (NHA) is a charter school management organization that currently operates more than 70 charter schools in nine states. The NHA system serves more than 44,000 students and families and will serve many more students and families, in more locations, in the years to come.

SITUATION



NHA has two primary strategic priorities: the academic achievement of its students and its financial viability as an organization (which allows it to continue to foster academic achievement). NHA's successful focus on these priorities has resulted in its significant growth. In order to continue to grow effectively, NHA needed to ensure its employees had the skills and knowledge they needed to perform effectively. To help accomplish this, NHA identified the need for a systematic plan to define what its learning would look like and how it would be delivered. In addition, NHA's Coaching and Learning group needed a consistent set of decision-making criteria to guide effective, efficient development and delivery of learning.



SOLUTION

NHA's Coaching and Learning group contracted with Innovative Learning Group (ILG) in December 2010 to help them develop a learning strategy. ILG began the strategy development process by interviewing key NHA leaders; the purpose of these interviews was to understand the vision for NHA, its strategic direction, and the role these leaders needed learning to play in supporting organizational success. The data from these interviews helped guide design of the learning strategy process and also informed the various learning strategy work sessions.

To actually create the learning strategy, ILG consultants structured and facilitated a series of work sessions with a cross-functional team of NHA stakeholders involved in learning. The strategy work began with establishing a vision for learning at NHA and defining the various NHA learning audiences.

With this context in place, ILG worked with the strategy team to define:

- The learning delivery methods from which NHA would select, and the criteria that would be used to select a method for a specific learning solution
- The process and criteria NHA would use to make procurement decisions for any given learning solution
- The types of evaluation NHA would use to measure effectiveness of learning, and when each evaluation type would be used
- The technology architecture, infrastructure, and organizational structure NHA would have in place to effectively support the learning strategy

ILG and the NHA team generally tackled one strategy topic each session, and they used part of the session's time to review the previous week's strategy outputs. When all strategy sections had been drafted, ILG compiled them into a single document, and the team did a final review of the full strategy. The final step was to establish an implementation plan for achieving the strategy. NHA chose to do this on its own, with ILG providing a structure for the plan.

RESULTS

While it's still too soon to identify concrete results from the learning strategy, NHA has begun following the blueprint and applying its criteria for making learning-related decisions. It's common for Coaching and Learning team members to reference the strategy document and to base decisions on the criteria it contains. As a result, the organization is on the way to realizing its vision and maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of its learning function.

To learn more about how Innovative Learning Group can create custom learning solutions to help improve business results, contact us at info@innovativeLG.com.



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