



A STUDY IN SUCCESS

# SERVE With Purpose Online Experience Helps Drive Culture Change

2017 BRANDON HALL BRONZE AWARD, EXCELLENCE — BEST UNIQUE OR INNOVATIVE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Lowe's Companies, Inc. is a FORTUNE® 50 home improvement company serving more than 17 million customers a week in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Lowe's and its related businesses operate or service more than 2,370 home improvement and hardware stores and employ more than 290,000 people. Lowe's was founded in 1946 and is based in Mooresville, North Carolina.

## SITUATION



How does a global home improvement retailer with a rich history and a diverse workforce change its culture? That was the challenge facing Lowe's as it embarked on a journey to become driven by purpose.

As Lowe's redefined its purpose, culture, and values, it became evident that cultural alignment would be possible only if behaviors changed throughout the organization to reflect Lowe's values, purpose, and servant leadership philosophy. As a result, Lowe's refined and clarified its SERVE Model to include value-driven behavioral expectations for both leaders and individual contributors.

Recognizing that culture shift begins with leadership, Lowe's first rolled out the updated model to more than 7,000 leaders across the enterprise through highly interactive and reflective instructor-led sessions that evoked leaders' commitment to adopt the updated behaviors.

After the initial rollout, Lowe's was challenged to find a way to help new leaders, as well as individual contributors, across the enterprise to commit to adopting the SERVE behaviors.



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Specifically, the challenge was to transform a highly successful, face-to-face, reflective workshop into a 20-minute e-learning course that could be widely distributed, yet still be effective at changing mindsets and behaviors.

### SOLUTION

Lowe's engaged Innovative Learning Group (ILG) to create the e-learning course that would replicate the instructor-led session to the greatest degree possible — to help learners understand and reflect on the SERVE behaviors, identify personal strengths and weaknesses, and create and share a commitment to change one or two specific behaviors to better support the culture.

#### *In order to effectively drive behavior change, the solution:*

- Accounts for differences in subcultures between locations and levels of leadership
- Appeals to the affective elements of the content
- Engages learners with content that is relevant, relatable, and useful

#### *The course included the following instructional elements:*

#### ADAPTIVE LEARNING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A DIVERSE AUDIENCE

To support the diverse needs of the audience, course branching enables learners to access specific content relevant to their role; e.g., a leader or an individual contributor (Figure 1).

#### FLEXIBLE DESIGN THAT ENCOURAGES LEARNERS' EXPLORATION OF CONTENT

Not only does the design enable learners to access content specific to their roles, but it also provides access to all content in a way that is completely learner-directed (Figure 2).

Learners can explore a topic as deeply as they would like through their menu choices (video, short description, or application activity). They also can choose whether to explore behaviors for their current role or learn about the expectations for other roles.

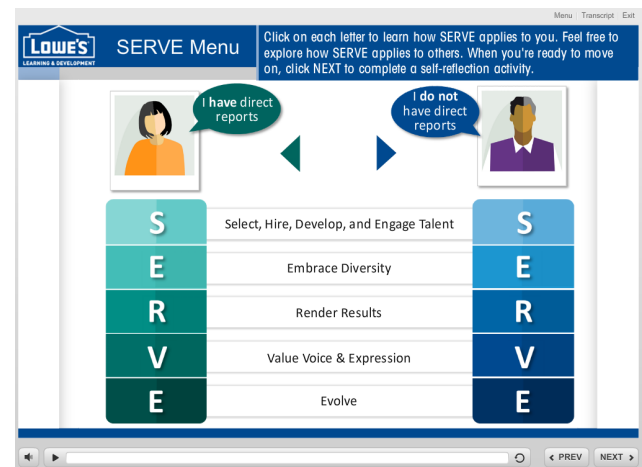


FIGURE 1

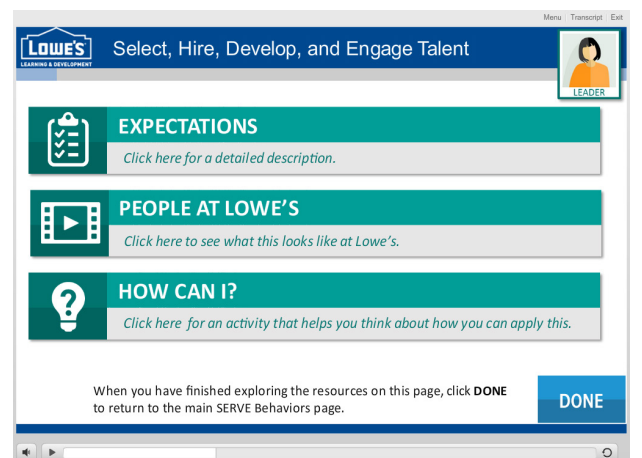


FIGURE 2



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This comprehensive access to content fosters a culture of trust and a feeling that everyone is on the same team, working toward the same purpose — an especially important message as Lowe's continues to break down the traditional command-and-control hierarchy.

### OPENING “HOOK” VIDEO

The video portrays a Lowe's employee who tells a compelling story of how she “lived out” the Lowe's purpose while helping a customer and how her behavior affected her, the customer, and others in the organization. Immediately upon opening the course, the video evokes an emotional connection to Lowe's, its purpose, and the course content.

### STORYTELLING THROUGH RICH, PERSONAL VIDEO EXAMPLES

Effective facilitation and rich, personal examples had made the “live” facilitated sessions highly engaging. The e-learning reproduces this effect by connecting learners, on a personal level, with other Lowe's employees who share via video what SERVE behaviors mean to them.

### SELF-REFLECTION

To mirror the deep self-reflection that occurred during the workshop, learners select the self-assessment appropriate to their role (either Team Leader or Team Member). Learners complete the self-assessment (Figure 3), using buttons on a five-point scale for each item. Upon completion of the self-assessment, learners receive a printable summary of their top strengths and opportunities that they can use for action planning.

### COMMITMENT TO ACTION

To create an action plan, learners begin by selecting items from the completed assessment. Free response space allows for customization. The action plan is printable and can be used as input into a final commitment statement that learners can draft and share with their teams (Figure 4).

Review each behavior in the left column and the corresponding behavior in the right column. Reflect on the past few months; using the scale in the middle column, move the slider to indicate where your behaviors tend to fall.	
Recognize good work when I can or celebrate the pride of getting something done rather than real results	Recognize and celebrate good work, good service, and people helping people
Am uncomfortable with or negatively judge people, ideas, and decisions that are different from my own	Am mindful of how I react to people, ideas, and decisions that are different from my own
Approach situations based on my own experience and viewpoint – sharing my own point of view first	Approach situations with an open mind by temporarily putting my own view aside
Focus on work or solutions that impact my success or the success of my team	Focus on work that supports Lowe's purpose and define success in terms of the customer, the team, and the company
Focus on my team, sharing my knowledge, abilities, and time with them	Work collaboratively across boundaries by sharing my knowledge, abilities, and time

FIGURE 3

Help others grow and succeed by assigning work, relying on employees to own their development, and providing feedback during formal performance management conversations
Help others grow and succeed by sharing feedback, encouraging them to apply what they learn, and helping them learn from their mistakes and experiences
Help others grow and succeed by assigning work, relying on employees to own their development, and providing feedback during formal performance management conversations
Help others grow and succeed by sharing feedback, encouraging them to apply what they learn, and helping them learn from their mistakes and experiences

### WHAT WILL YOU COMMIT TO?

My current behavior and its impact	type your text here
My planned actions and the desired impact	type your text here

FIGURE 4



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### RESULTS

During the first four months of deployment, the course reached 5,547 learners across the company, many of whom shared their commitment statements within their teams and across the organization.

Following the launch, a SERVE Commitment survey assessed how well learners have internalized the behaviors that support the SERVE Model to enable a culture supportive of purpose. The survey was sent to more than 1,500 employees, including both leaders and individual contributors. Among other findings, the survey indicated that employees feel strongly that SERVE plays an important role in Lowe's evolving culture. Other data suggest an improvement in overall SERVE scores related to employee engagement and an increase in desired SERVE behaviors.

The SERVE training program plays a vital role in onboarding, as a prerequisite to core programs, and as a support in each employee's transition from individual contributor to leader.

To learn more about how Innovative Learning Group can create custom learning solutions to help improve your business results, contact us at [info@innovativeLG.com](mailto:info@innovativeLG.com).

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