



It's Not Just "Chiquita Banana" Anymore



Chiquita introduces a new performance management process as a basic component of the company's redefinition and strategic shift. The map-based business acumen training produced great results.

What's the first step when you need to align leaders across the organization around a new way of thinking? Follow the lead of Chiquita Brands International as they began the evolution from "banana company" to "fresh consumer products company."

Advantage Performance Partner Peg Ruppert and thought leaders from Root Learning®, Inc. recently partnered with Chiquita to develop an initiative that helped leaders and contributors around the world understand their roles in the company's core strategy shift.

The Business Need

Chiquita is one of the world's most recognized brands, with products sold in grocery stores in more than 60 countries.

Recently, Chiquita leadership determined that it was time to evolve from a "banana company" to a "fresh consumer products company." In redefining the company and shifting the strategy, there was a clear need to elevate the level of talent and leadership capabilities in Chiquita's 26,000 employees in 27 countries.

Concurrent with this need to communicate a new strategy, Chiquita was introducing a new performance management process, Perform to Grow. Director of Talent Management Jennifer Creed said, "We needed an efficient, clear way to create organizational alignment around the strategy and connect these strategic shifts with the shifts that individuals needed to make in their performance."

The Solution

In crafting a solution, Chiquita wanted to use a blended learning approach to reach its global audience because of the need for flexibility and scalability, and to encompass the variety of learning experiences the company wanted to provide. Chiquita partnered with Root Learning and Advantage to create two custom paper-based Learning Map® modules, with accompanying electronic learning modules to be used with geographically dispersed units.

The first map visually represented the company's strategy so employees could see the business opportunities that needed to be developed for Chiquita to reach its goals. The second map focused on the new performance management system and emphasized how employees can contribute to achieving the aims of the strategy.

In addition to allowing employees to practice the tools and steps within Perform to Grow, the online component of the solution featured an interactive toolkit. This was Chiquita's first foray into the world of electronic learning. Because of Chiquita's global employee base — with branches in Central America, Asia, and Eastern Europe — learning modules were offered on CD-ROM so the need for fast Internet connections was eliminated.

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To implement the new learning tools, Chiquita started with 120 salespeople at its national sales meeting and used a cascade method to communicate both the strategy of the business and Perform to Grow process worldwide. Used in conjunction with the paper-based modules, the e-learning modules reinforced key learning, supported practice, and gave managers and individuals the chance to practice in a safe environment before performing.

The Results

Creed reports that feedback on the project was "fantastic." Among the results:

- The Journey to a Fresh Future strategy session respondents reported that their understanding was "better or much better" after experiencing the modules:

On trends affecting Chiquita	87%
Of opportunities for Chiquita to grow as a result of these trends	89%
On how Chiquita will execute the new strategy	87%

In addition, 84% reported an improved understanding of "how my work contributes to Chiquita's success."

- A resounding 91% of Perform to Grow performance management survey respondents said that the sessions helped them understand the changes in the system. Respondents also reported that their understanding was "better or much better":

On the impact of performance conversations	81%
On the importance of defining clear expectations for performance with managers	82%

