

Today's HR Solutions

Businesses have trusted MEA since 1903 to be their single source to deliver essential Human Resource services that attract, retain and motivate their workforce.

Training and Development

Canon

Effective Talent Management Creates Business Success

“I thought, if anyone can do this, it's MEA.”

Leslie Belikoff had worked with MEA's Training experts before, so when faced with an initiative for Canon Financial Services to exceed customer and dealer expectations, she knew who to call. “Our business is service,” says Leslie. “We strive to be viewed as best in class, so we're constantly looking for ways to improve.”

Leslie says that management made a decision to roll out new training to help achieve that goal. After a week long discussion, Leslie's team turned to MEA with an expedited request to deliver a complete training program for 180 associates—in nine days.

“The timeline was very abbreviated,” says Leslie. “But it never crossed my mind that MEA couldn't deliver it. Plus, I knew it would be an excellent program.”

MEA created a one day training program that was delivered during seven sessions over the course of three weeks to all 180 employees. “We sat in on the sessions and as we provided feedback to MEA in the early sessions, they were able to

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Marian Vallotton, Director, Training and Organizational Development, has been with MEA for nine years, and has worked in training since 1992. Here she talks about some of the changes she's seen over the past two decades, and discusses some future trends in training and development.

How did you get into training?

I started as a manager, working in retail. I worked my way up to district manager and realized that my success came from training and developing people, so I moved into training as national training manager. I built the department from the ground up.

What's the biggest change you've seen in training and development since the 90's?

Training used to be about responding to a need, now it's about developing talent, investing in human capital. And that has come about because HR understands it needs to manage talent as other departments manage their most valuable assets—because effective talent management creates better employees and that, in turn, makes the business more successful.

How has training evolved to meet that new goal?

First, training has become more proactive. Rather than waiting to respond to a situation, training now seeks to educate employees in the skills they need before the need arises. It's the difference between sticking your finger in the dyke and learning how to build a more effective dyke to begin with.

Second, the philosophy has moved from teaching a new skill, to creating new behavior. For example, we have one Member that runs cafeteria services in schools across the state. A lot of the cafeteria managers were moms who had

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incorporate those changes in the following sessions. The implementation was fantastic.”

Now Canon Financial Services is focusing on coaching its customer service supervisors on how to maintain Canon’s best-in-class service. And Leslie knows who to call to get the job done.



Leslie Belikoff
Senior Specialist, Training and
Development
SPHR
Canon Financial Services, Inc.

“We’ve already re-engaged MEA to coach our customer service supervisors on how to maintain Canon’s best-in-class service.”

started part-time behind the counter, so they could work while their kids were in school. They were promoted because they were good at their jobs. The goal of the training program we developed was to take them from being employees who were good on the line, to employees who were good managers. That’s a fundamental behavioral change.

What’s MEA’s approach to training?

MEA partners with its Members. When their employees sit in our training center, they’re not just an anonymous face as they would be in, say, a college classroom. We work to understand who our Members are and what they do, from the moment they become Members. So before any training, we’ve already worked with the business to understand the core issue driving the training need. And we can customize the training solution to meet those needs.

Can you give an example of a program that you customized for a Member?

Yes. This year, we had a Member that was growing by leaps and bounds. We had been working with them for a while, even before the expansion, so we understood their culture. As a result, we were able to customize the leadership development training to fit their needs. As the training programs were rolled out, we were able to tweak them, based on what was happening with the managers in their real world. We would ask them to apply what they were learning in the workshops and come back to the classroom and talk about what had happened, so we were able to link their experience to the training.

Are all of MEA’s programs on-site or are there online options?

Yes, MEA offers two online programs: webinars and cyber workshops. The cyber workshops are highly interactive programs. They’re conducted in real-time with online discussions and chat rooms—attendees have to participate, they can’t sit passively or half listen while working on other tasks. The cyber workshops help adults learn skills through interaction. This format is very interactive. The webinars are more of a lecture situation—the employee listens as the information is presented, and follows along with a PowerPoint presentation. We use webinars to deliver information that people need to acquire quickly.

How do Members know which medium is best for their company?

Again, that’s the benefit of partnering with MEA. We work with Members to assess the best fit—and sometimes it’s a combination of on-site and online. We had one Member that sent their managers to our public supervisory certificate series here in King of Prussia and they decided they wanted to make the program available to all of their employees across the country. But they needed to ensure consistency in the messaging. So we developed a cyber workshop for them. Using the program we had given to their local supervisors and managers, we customized online workshops. It was delivered over ten sessions and I felt like I got to know all of the participants by the end, even though we never met face-to-face.

What are MEA’s most popular training programs

Right now our most popular programs are the core supervisor and management training series, levels one and two. We’re building level three right now—a leadership development series. Harassment training is also something we do a lot of. That’s generally delivered onsite as some of the subject matter is particular to the company.