



Customer Success Story

Tackling disruption with **continuous learning**



Quick facts

80+

people actively participating

30

tailored learning programs

50

graduates!

Company background



St. Louis, MO Founded in 1894

Nestlé's rich history in pet care, with brands such as Friskies®, Fancy Feast®, Mighty Dog® and Alpo®, combined with Purina's strong heritage and pet care expertise, has created a globally competitive leader.

However, even the strongest of brands face testing times. It is the reaction - or lack of - that can either make or break brands.



10,000+ employees



150+ countries



Key Customers: Pet Owners



Consumer Goods, Manufacturing, Pet Category

Overall challenge

Nestle Purina PetCare Company recognized in 2014 that the competitive landscape had changed significantly. This change put them at a disadvantage, as other manufacturers had become more capable partnering with retailers.

These relationships are critical as they help Nestle assess the business situations and develop meaningful recommendations to drive sales and market share growth. Specifically, brands like Rachel Ray, Nutro and Blue Buffalo had become disruptors.

In response, the Nestle Purina PetCare Company revised their go-to-market strategy to include foundational skills training.

The training would level set the organization and raise the bar for the broader team to increase their effectiveness and influence with retailers.

Learning Evolution took considerable due diligence when tasked with this training. We worked to align with the overall company's strategic directives and then connect with all of the participant's managers to ensure that they understood the program, commitment, benefits and process.

This was somewhat new for the Nestle Purina PetCare Company, since it provided more visibility and transparency which helped to create a more open work environment.

In addition, we consistently ask for feedback and ideas to improve the program throughout the training semester as well as after participants graduate. Many of those ideas have been incorporated. It is another reason why we believe our program to be effective and embraced by the organization.

The solution

1

Level set the organization

Level set the organization at the analyst and manager level. To ensure that the broader team has the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to assess business trends, provide category expertise and consult with retail partners on growth strategies. The Skill UP! Academy from Learning Evolution leverages a blended learning approach over an extended period of time (for example, six months) to ensure that new knowledge and skills are retained and become new job behaviors. Included are webinars, self-paced e-learning courses, one-on-one instructor/student mentoring and instructor-led role play scenarios.

2

Assess

Assess the core foundational skill sets in which these roles needed to be fluent and which are coupled with Learning Evolution's flexible training format. This process allowed Nestle Purina PetCare Company to tailor to their needs and expectations. For example, in many skills areas, Nestle Purina PetCare Company chose to expect more from their team members in specific skill areas compared to industry standards. Learning Evolution was able to support this request with higher level content.

3

Design custom content

Design custom content for relevancy. We worked with groups to address critical thinking scenarios that they were facing day to day. With the support from Nestle Purina leadership, the team now has a competitive advantage over peers who level-set their organizations at lower level.

The results



Over the course of the past two and half years, we have successfully graduated virtually every team member through the program. This has allowed us to elevate the entire team in ways that help us be smarter, more effective and more influential with our customers.



Nestle Purina Director.

Together, Learning Evolution has purposefully designed this program to have the best chance of knowledge and skill retention, while expanding perspectives and capability. We also challenge participants to apply new skills multiple times throughout the program in real-world scenarios. This iteration is an integral part of our approach, which helps to convert learning into new behaviors and routines.

The use of several different types of assignments help participants develop their thought process and application from fundamental to the more complex.

This includes foundational e-learning courses, critical thinking questions, interactive webinars, business-specific case studies, retail audits and capstone role-play scenarios.

While six months, for some, may seem like a long time, we have found that this timing works well.

One reason is the participants ability to apply the program’s training to their jobs and day-to-day situations and leverage their learning. Foundational skills help ensure that Nestle Purina PetCare Company is making smarter business decisions every day. It also helps to appropriately assess business situations with their customers, identify the drivers and determine what needs to be done to drive sales. Some of these results are confidential. Some are less tangible.



Being mindful of these recommendations as I entered negotiations with our customer to reactivate discontinued items helped me see the opportunity through multiple lenses and be better prepared for objections. My team ultimately achieved success in getting a key item reinstated and because our customer operates in a limited SKU format, this was a huge win, as every point of distribution is significant.



Fancy Feast Gravy Lovers VP.

The following examples provide a little more perspective on the benefits and return on the training investment:

Early in the class, there were two assignments - Comprehensive category review and how others are winning with category management.

Each of these assignments contain suggestions and recommendations on how to maximize category review opportunities to achieve objectives that were beneficial to both trading partners.

A few that stand out are:

- 1 Five Tips to Increase Effectiveness**
- 2 Understanding Three Moments of Truth**
- 3 Top 10 Tactics that Lead to being a Trusted Advisor**



"I learned how to clearly present information to customer. Often you forget your audience and I was going into a new item presentation. I was able to present the information clearly and effectively after utilizing the skills I learned from class."

"I was able to use the section on pre-post modular reporting to create a few reports for our category. Overall, many of the topics that this course provided were directly related to my job."

"The ability to create a simplified and useful scorecard was helpful. My team is already loving the one I made."

"Had to prepare a Category Review in the middle of the training. I was able to use other data sources that I didn't use before to make my insights that much better."

"For my role, I was able to create a Pareto chart to show the "long tail" of products that aren't as productive in our litter mix. I was trying to show the items that should be considered as possible options to remove from our offerings ."



What's next

In terms of lessons learned, Nestle Purina PetCare Company knows that they need to continue to have the ability to adapt over time.

Their industry is ever changing and the competition will not be sitting idle.

Because their foundational training is built in a flexible framework, they believe that they will be able to adapt and evolve where necessary.

Skill UP! FasTRAK, which goes beyond foundational training, has helped Nestle Purina PetCare Company identify the level of training that will help experienced team members in-role. The skills included expanded the teams' strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.

These skills are unpacked in a hands-on, week-long workshop that challenges team members to work cross-functionally. It also helps them to leverage different skills and expertise to identify meaningful business solutions that demonstrate thought leadership and category growth.