CASE STUDY

Associated Materials Incorporated (AMI) and Kent State University’s Center for Corporate and Professional Development Deliver Multiple Training Programs for AMI’s Associates Nationally

BACKGROUND

In 2016, Associated Materials Incorporated (AMI) was looking to diversify organization-wide training by seeking an external, credible partner to holistically train its associates. Initially, the Management Training Program was launched to deliver, for the company’s college graduate new hires, in-depth knowledge and understanding of the core functions of AMI’s business. It was important for this group to understand how the many organizational functions interrelate to create the complex, vertically integrated international enterprise that AMI is today. A few years later, in 2018, a training program was launched for AMI’s field-based Installation Managers. It was imperative for Associated Materials to invest in their associates’ learning and development by bringing in subject matter experts for these groups.

THE CHALLENGE

The main requirements when searching for a training solution were accessibility and flexibility. AMI found it essential for an external partner’s leaders and facilitators to effectively interact and exhibit responsiveness with the AMI professionals so that the provider can understand AMI’s strategic objectives. Flexibility ensures that the right content addressing the company’s development priorities is established and the logistics of dates, times and all the delivery details meet the company’s needs. Customizing the content so it directly relates to the associates and the industry was crucial criteria.

THE SOLUTION

Associated Materials professionals first looked internally to learn what training solutions have proven successful in the past. After engaging with the AMI team and learning more about their training needs, Kent State University’s Center for Corporate and Professional Development professionals recommended programs focused on the competencies of accountability and emotional intelligence for AMI’s Management Training Program that catered to the requirements that AMI leaders communicated.

ABOUT ASSOCIATED MATERIALS

Headquartered in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, Associated Materials is a $1.3 billion vertically integrated manufacturer and distributor of exterior residential building products in the United States and Canada. Associated Materials was founded in 1947 in Ohio and grew organically and through a series of acquisitions. Today, Associated Materials is a privately held company with the equity owned by the private equity firm Hellman & Friedman LLC.

The company enjoys some of the best recognized set of brands among customers in North America including Alside, Gentek, Revere, Ultraguard, Preservation and Alpine. The breadth, balance, and innovation of the company’s product portfolio, along with the company’s unique integrated model inclusive of both manufacturing and distribution, differentiate Associated Materials from its competitors.

Learn more:
www.associatedmaterials.com
The objective for the Management Training Program is to recruit and retain future leaders for the organization. A cohort is brought together twice a year with an 18-month rotational program that is very visible and highly regarded in the organization.

For the Kent State programs in which AMI invested for the Field Installation Managers – a Project Management and Customer Service program – Kyle Carpenter, Senior Project and Process Manager, states, “Initially, the intention for the first phase of the Project Management and Customer Service program was to create project management expertise on the install side of the business. The second phase of this initiative was to create a best in class customer-focused environment. The goal is to put our customers first, we proactively communicate and handle difficult situations in a professional way to make their lives that much easier.”

The Kent State programs offered for both the Management Training participants and the Field Installers exposed the associates to professional facilitators who provided the depth of expertise with real-world, practical learning. This expertise provided relatability to situations and challenges faced, which the participants found to be greatly beneficial when applying the content in their work.

THE RESULTS

“One of the top benefits since launching both training programs has been the consistent, positive feedback from program participants,” says Frank Zupan, Director of Talent Acquisition. “It’s not only from the tactical level of ‘I really enjoyed this particular class,’ but more from a higher level and strategic standpoint of ‘I really appreciate the fact that the company is investing’.”

The customer service training that Kent State has provided has noticeably increased engagement and awareness among AMI associates. They are able to apply the learning to their job and to the various challenges that arise on a daily basis.