



CA Technologies Enhances Effectiveness of Leadership Development Program by Adding Business and Financial Acumen Component Delivered Through “Real World” Business Simulation

Overview

Country or Region: Worldwide

Industry: IT Software

Customer Profile

CA Technologies (NASDAQ: CA) creates software that fuels transformation for companies and enables them to seize the opportunities of the application economy. Software is at the heart of every business in every industry. From planning to development to management and security, CA is working with companies worldwide to change the way people live, transact and communicate.

CA software and solutions help their customers drive enterprise-wide productivity, offer differentiated user experiences and open new growth opportunities. The company is able to deliver this value across multiple environments—mobile, private and public cloud, distributed and mainframe. The company’s goal is to be recognized by its customers as a critical partner in the new application economy.

Business Situation

In 2014, CA Technologies wanted to enhance its Leadership Development program to focus on three critical areas: increase the business and finance acumen of participants; help them articulate the corporate strategy of CA Technologies and how their role supports that strategy; and explain how their role can have a positive impact on CA’s financials.

Solution

A business simulation was incorporated to bring together all of the content and experience gained throughout the program via experiences that mirror real-world business and provide participants with learning opportunities to make sound decisions regarding strategy, key performance indicators, and company growth. It would also provide the environment where participants could practice leadership skills in the areas of decision-making, collaboration and risk-taking.

After considering building their own business simulation or working with another provider, CA Technologies selected TRI Corporation to create an Experiential Exercise that fit seamlessly into the program agenda and could be facilitated by a diverse group, including company executives who were alumni of the leadership development program.

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“Partnering with TRI Corporation to design a custom business simulation for our organization allowed us to do just that. TRI Corporation’s business simulation isn’t just about numbers and financial calculations. They understand the importance of leadership and building a simulation that allows participants to experience the “real world” challenges that come along with making business decisions. We’ve received amazing feedback about the introduction of this new simulation in our program, and it has helped our participants apply what they’ve learned about themselves as leaders, and how to work effectively within and across teams to influence positive change. And that combination is what will truly drive business results.”

Tracy Dodd
Vice President, Talent Development

Situation

As a company operating in one of the most dynamic and highly competitive industry segments in the world, CA Technologies places a priority on nurturing its talent through ongoing development of leaders at all levels. The Leadership Development Program is designed to ensure a pipeline of highly capable leaders at all levels across the organization. The 12-month program experience consists of two three-day, in-person sessions augmented by webcasts, readings, team and individual assignments, and a business simulation providing participants with learning opportunities to make business decisions regarding strategy and key performance indicators and to practice leadership skills in the areas of decision-making, collaboration and risk-taking.

One program, instituted in 2009, needed to be updated with the insertion of a financial acumen component. It was increasingly critical for non-finance participants across all business units to develop an understanding of how their roles, and their performance within them, could impact the overall success of the company. The finance module, if inserted seamlessly into the existing course, would enhance the program for the 11 sessions totaling 600 individuals scheduled to go through it in 2014. The sessions were held in three U.S. cities, two locations in Australia, and in China, the U.K., India, Brazil and Singapore.

Solution

In considering options, Vice President, Talent Development Tracy Dodd and her team determined that the best way to tackle the finance element was through a business simulation that would bring a real world experience that participants could transfer into their daily work back on the job. Briefly considering developing the business simulation themselves, they reviewed a number of options for partnering with another company and selected TRI Corporation for the task.

TRI and the CA Technologies team crafted a simulation customized to the subject matter and language of a software tech company and inserted it neatly into the legacy program. In going through the discovery process, they realized the extent to which three key areas of business were siloed and would benefit from cross-functional collaboration. TRI was able to develop a highly customized simulation that addressed leadership and financial acumen in equal measures and that was tied to a balanced scorecard that would measure participants’ strategic decision making performance along the way. Key to the value of this exercise was the extent to which the company’s real world issues would be tackled.

In crafting the component, the planning team made the decision to enlist program alumni

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Benefits

- ▶ Increased business acumen
- ▶ Improved communications across functions
- ▶ More collaborative working environment
- ▶ Early identification of potential general managers
- ▶ Competitive edge

For More Information

To learn about how TRI Corporation experiential learning services can benefit your organization, visit www.tri-simulation.com, or email TRIContact@tri-simulation.com.

For more information about CA Technologies, visit www.ca.com.

Solution (continued)

to facilitate the simulation, creating a two-fold benefit: alumni would serve as mentors to the “class of 2014” while having the opportunity to further develop their own leadership skills in the process. Before rolling out the program, the team scheduled a pilot with the CA Leadership Development Program facilitators and other HR employees. After that, they organized a “train the trainer” session for additional alumni who were tasked with carrying out the simulations in the 10 global locations in which participants would gather. Inserted into the legacy program, the simulation comprised the afternoon of the first day and the entire second day. It took the teams through three operating “years” – each 1-1/2-2 hours in duration – of a fictitious company called “Compass Software” whose issues mimicked those of CA Technologies. Teams set strategy at the outset of the initial session, and had in-depth debriefing sessions with facilitators from the company and from TRI at the end of each “year”. Among the issues addressed, which were uncovered during the discovery process in planning, included:

- The need to “un-silo” three primary business areas of the company and promote collaboration among them;
- The value of promoting cross-functional understanding and cooperation among associates;
- An appetite for sparking rapid growth in leadership and financial acumen among participants;

- Creating an environment where participants, in face-to-face role play, candidly and willingly address topics such as inclusiveness, trust, security, customer service and employee relations;
- Fostering “aha” moments among team members who discover when it is most appropriate to collaborate rather than take a “divide-and-conquer” approach

Observers noticed that participants, minimally conversant in finance essentials at the start of the simulation, showed a marked increase in understanding and knowledge based on the questions asked during the debriefing afterwards. Said Lynne M. Iati, Director, HR Talent Development: “They wouldn’t have known what questions to ask in the beginning. By the end, they wanted more.” In a follow-up meeting, conducted virtually, participants were “pulling for more information” rather than waiting for it to be “pushed at them,” she noted.

“Feedback, from participants, alumni facilitators and the talent development team was universally positive,” Iati added.

Benefits

The decision of CA Technologies to partner with TRI on the finance component was a resounding success and the method of delivery – the business simulation – made the experience real and memorable for participants. It raised awareness of each participant’s role in moving the needle on company success and it gave them the basic finance acumen to put into context, for example, the content of an earnings call.

The combination of peer-to-peer work, team collaboration and the opportunity to work with colleagues in diverse business units provided multiple learning moments throughout the simulation. Particularly noteworthy was that as newly formed teams jelled, competition among teams increased upping the ante for participants who understood that collaboration within the team gave it strength and a greater likelihood of coming out on top.

The 2014 experience inspired CA Technologies to launch an alumni program – 1480 active employees have been through the program since 2009 – to allow them to continue their leadership journey and to create a larger pipeline of leaders and deepen bench strength for a company that is in it for the long haul.

Participant Feedback

“The business case was a great approach for applying what we have learned about team dynamics, ourselves, and how to come to good decisions in a systematic way, even with a variety of personalities, biases, and areas of expertise in each team.”

“Most relevant was the Business Simulation - the ‘aha’ moment and realizing that everything I do has an impact and cost; everything should be aligned with corporate goals, my organization’s goals, and KPI’s. I have talked about this multiple times with various folks on my team since Leadership Development Program. Very good idea to include this!”

“Business Simulation allowed me to further realize the impact of decisions on a company’s financial results and what can be accomplished through collaboration and teamwork.”

“The business simulation provided tremendous insight into what it means to be an executive leader in a large, global organization. This also reinforced my belief that detail and rigor are key to success. What is interesting is our world missed an important detail in year 1 which I think lead us to losing by year 3. The interesting part of this is that I am still so incensed we lost over a missed detail that it has revitalized my passion for rigor and detail that I let slide a little lately. I think losing this way may have had a bigger impact than if we would have won.”