



Overview

Country or Region: Worldwide

Industry: Food processing

Customer Profile

Headquartered in Deerfield, Illinois, Mondelēz International is a global snacking powerhouse, with 90,000 employees in 165 countries and 2016 net revenues of approximately \$26 billion. The company is a world leader in biscuits, chocolate, gum, candy and powdered beverages, featuring global Power Brands such as Oreo and belVita biscuits; Cadbury Dairy Milk and Milka chocolate; and Trident gum. The company adopted the name Mondelēz International in 2012 following the spinoff of its North American grocery business (Kraft Foods Group). The name is a combination of words meaning “delicious world.”

Business Situation

With its financial operations dispersed across the globe, Mondelēz International had a two-fold need: to unify its finance people across geographical barriers and to help them step out of their daily finance roles to better grasp the organization’s big picture.

Solution

In 2015, Mondelēz International partnered with TRI Corporation to create a Financial Acumen Skills Training program (FAST) with a business simulation at its core. After three successful iterations, and a fourth in the works, FAST is hitting all of its targets as it helps build the next generation of leaders and a unified finance organization.

Benefits

- Collaborative global network across Mondelēz International’s Finance organization
- Enhanced virtual teambuilding and teamwork across global cultures
- Greater understanding of how all aspects of running a business are integrated
- Application of simulation learning into real-world project success
- Expanded career opportunities for participants
- Enhanced capability building
- Grooming of next generation of finance leaders

Mondelēz International takes the FAST road to a unified global finance organization through virtual experiential learning



“By recruiting senior leaders for hands-on participation, we’re making sure our teams understand that we are invested in their development and careers for the long term. It’s that leadership commitment, combined with TRI’s experiential learning expertise, that has made FAST a resounding success.”

Brian Gladden
CFO, Mondelēz International

Situation

Mondelēz International is a global organization whose finance operations are dispersed across more than 160 countries. The company sought to break down geographical barriers and encourage collaboration across different cultures, nationalities and time zones. A changing business environment also made it crucial for Mondelēz International to draw its finance people out of their day-to-day roles in order to fully grasp the organization’s big picture. CFO Brian Gladden, who joined the company in 2014, recognized the need for a rallying point to unify its finance organization.

Mid 2015, Mondelēz International embarked on a significant learning and development initiative, called F1, targeted at shifting the company’s finance career path from a traditional, linear one to a path that afforded and valued a broader range of global career experiences for finance people. Company leadership also captured this new vision in a Strategy Globe that visually modeled “who we are, what we stand for and what we want to achieve.” Among its three pillars: “Grow our People.” (The others are “Grow our Business” and “Grow our Impact.”)

Solution

The company introduced Mondelēz International University – a storehouse for a wealth of online course modules ranging from leadership and mentoring programs to cultural awareness to functional training – and its finance organization followed suit with a range of function-specific programs. These include a highly selective audit development program, classroom training sessions for all levels, and a Financial Acumen Skills Training program, or FAST. The purpose of FAST is to accelerate the development

of business and financial skills for the next generation of Mondelēz International leaders. It is built around a business simulation at its core and creates opportunities for participants to connect with the organization’s senior leaders and build a global financial network.

“We wanted people to experience the idea of a fully integrated business plan, not only focusing on day-to-day work but having different career experiences, connecting with peers around the globe and making a virtual environment work,” said Barbara Stohlmann, HR business lead global finance for Mondelēz International. “The business simulation training fit perfectly into our finance vision in terms of that career path.”

Gladden tapped TRI Corporation to develop the business simulation, having worked closely with TRI’s experiential learning experts during his tenure at both GE and Dell Corporation. Because the simulation would have to accommodate participants across countries, cultures and time zones, the group agreed to a 12-week virtual program conducted via teleconferencing and virtual networks.

The Mondelēz International finance development team and FAST leadership worked with TRI to develop a virtual module for a pilot, leveraging existing TRI expertise and Mondelēz International learning objectives.

The first FAST program was launched in the fourth quarter of 2015 as a pilot. A second program took place in 2016, and a third in 2017, with a fourth slated for later in the year. Each brings together 36 colleagues in an average of 20 different countries.

Continued

Solution (continued)

Participants are assigned to one of two groups, or “worlds,” based on their level of experience. College 1 participants are at the analyst level while College 2 represents more experienced managers. Each world is then broken into three teams, or “companies,” that compete against each other. Team members cross geographic boundaries, spanning several cultures and time zones, and use online tools to meet and work virtually. A senior finance leader is assigned to each team as a coach to keep them on track through the program.

All participants complete pre-course work online. College 1 pre-course work includes finance basics, from understanding Mondelēz International financial statements to its supply chain. For the more experienced college, pre-course work addresses fundamentals of pricing decisions, earnings variance analysis, and cash flow statements. At the outset of the program, all individuals complete a self-assessment called the TRI Leskin 360, with criteria customized to the Mondelēz International vision of a successful finance leader. Participants identify opportunities they see for self-growth, and share their assessments with others. Twice during the program and again at the conclusion, their fellow participants provide feedback, particularly on their progress developing the areas they targeted for improvement.

Each team takes on the role of an incoming management team for one of three competing companies. The scenario: they have been brought in to replace a previous management team that failed, resulting in the business operating at a loss. Their task is to turn the company around and maximize its financial performance and reliability.

All teams begin in the same financial position and compete in a single market using a financial model. The simulation spans six financial quarters. Teams start in the second half of the first fiscal year, during which time they analyze results, plan the next year, and deliver an operating review to senior finance leaders. They then put their plans into action over the next four quarters and conclude with a final op review.

Through role play, teams learn to deal with uncertainty, reacting to market, operational, external and other real-life opportunities and issues that are introduced by a TRI facilitator each quarter. The facilitator also takes on the role of a variety of stakeholders with whom teams can interact – customers, suppliers and others. Teams must plan carefully, as they are allowed only a limited number of conversations with stakeholders each quarter.

“The focus is on team dynamics and in-depth problem solving,” said Stohlmann. “Through role play,

the facilitator introduces a flexible element that helps participants learn to negotiate, making decisions and deals that can influence the outcome.”

Two teams, one from each college, are proclaimed the winners, based on criteria customized to Mondelēz International’s corporate priorities. After the final review, the winning teams review their results directly with Gladden – a big deal for participants.

“What truly sets FAST apart is the hands-on involvement of all our senior finance leaders, including Brian, our CFO. This is both network and organization building,” Stohlmann explained.

Singapore-based director Tejas Mehta, the integrated supply chain finance lead for the company’s Asia Middle East and Africa region, is among the senior Mondelēz International executives who have deeply committed themselves to FAST. Mehta serves as both a program leader and hands-on team coach, helping participants achieve their goals and encouraging them to remain engaged and committed.

Another is senior vice president Imran Nawaz, who heads the company’s pan-European finance operations. Nawaz is one of several executive sponsors leading the op reviews. Nawaz and his team foster valuable connections with participants, and they also provide direct input to TRI to build and fine-tune the program to Mondelēz International’s priorities.

Feedback from the first few FAST programs has led to refinements, in particular the introduction of a one-day boot camp to help participants better grasp the elements they need going into the simulation. The boot camp introduces participants to the case, the team formation, and the simulation model, enabling them to gel as a team and hit the ground running.

Benefits

Response from participants who complete the FAST program has been uniformly positive. Among the key learnings they report are the ability to:

- Better understand how operational decisions connect with financial results
- Recognize how they can personally contribute to the organization’s growth
- Communicate efficiently and drive influence in a matrix organization as a true business partner
- Develop a strategy and use it to guide decision-making
- Think critically and take prudent risks
- Negotiate rationally, with an understanding

of all sides

- Balance long- and short-term decisions
- Learn to team effectively in a cross-cultural and virtual environment

In addition, they learn the importance of being agile in decision-making, and they experience firsthand the advantages of diversity in teams – how different perspectives, insights and opinions lead to more well-rounded decisions.

Mondelēz International has experienced a 92-percent retention rate in FAST graduates since the program’s launch in late 2015. The finance organization collaborates more effectively across cultures and time zones, and has unified under the function’s vision of One Finance. Among the most recent participants, 100 percent would recommend the program to associates. An overwhelming majority feel that the program is applicable to their roles at Mondelēz International and a worthwhile investment in their careers.

Participant Feedback

“During the FAST program, we all learned a lot about ourselves and our capabilities specifically as we were pushed outside our comfort zone on the roles we undertook. It also highlighted the importance of working together as a team and bringing our experiences and knowledge together.”

“FAST was a highly comprehensive experience for our team, challenging us to think strategically in a changing environment, and beyond the scope of our daily Mondelēz roles. We would recommend the program to anyone in the organization seeking to refine their business acumen.”

“The most valuable learning for me was the possibility of being in a position where I had to take risks and make decisions (along with my group) that would define the future of the company. In addition, the exposure we had with the Finance Leadership team and their reception was incredible!”

“Best training program I’ve ever seen and very helpful in building one’s career.”

For More Information

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

For more information about Mondelez, visit www.mondelezinternational.com.