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## CASE STUDY

### First Steps: Instituting P&G's R&D Corporate University

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There are at least 1600 Corporate Universities in North America (Meister, 1998). Each one has a unique history. The following is a description of the development of one such Corporate University.

In 2001, the Research & Development (R&D) Leadership at Procter & Gamble (P&G) called on R&D's Human Resources (HR) director to create a formal training program specifically for R&D people. Although R&D training programs had been in place in the 1980's and 90's, the programs were abandoned in the late 90's due to resource issues and competing priorities throughout the company. The current leadership requested that HR develop a corporate university. By definition, a corporate university ties corporate learning efforts directly to overarching business goals. (Todd and Dresner, 2004) And, that's what happened.

A total of five Colleges make up the R&D University, one college for each level (band) in the company, starting with incoming scientists and managers at Band 1 up to directors and top technologists at Band 5. A goal for these colleges was to increase levels of marketable innovation, in large part, by increasing networking across business silos to encourage cross-fertilization of thinking.

The leadership support was awesome, but how does one get started on such a task? How does a single HR professional think about the task of creating formal training to meet the needs of over 8000 R&D people across technologies which range from nanotechnology to consumer research and which includes such disparate businesses as Tide detergent, Charmin' toilet paper, Actonel (osteoporosis drug), Hugo Boss fine fragrance, Olay skin care products, and Folgers coffee?

P&G's R&D organization did just that. Here we describe how this was accomplished, some of the major issues faced, the solutions developed and the successes achieved.

### How to Start

The HR director for R&D contacted the corporate expert on training, Lisa Owens. Her standard answer to the question, "How to I get started?" was, "Use the ADDIE process. First do an **A**nalysis of the situation and needs, then **D**esign a solution, **D**evelop, **I**mplement and **E**valuate it; then begin the process of continuous improvement." (Figure 1) That answer wasn't sufficient. The project was too large to comprehend. It felt as if we were trying to eat the proverbial elephant. To tackle the problem we combined three industry models to provide a structure for designing week-long programs across all five bands of diverse participants.



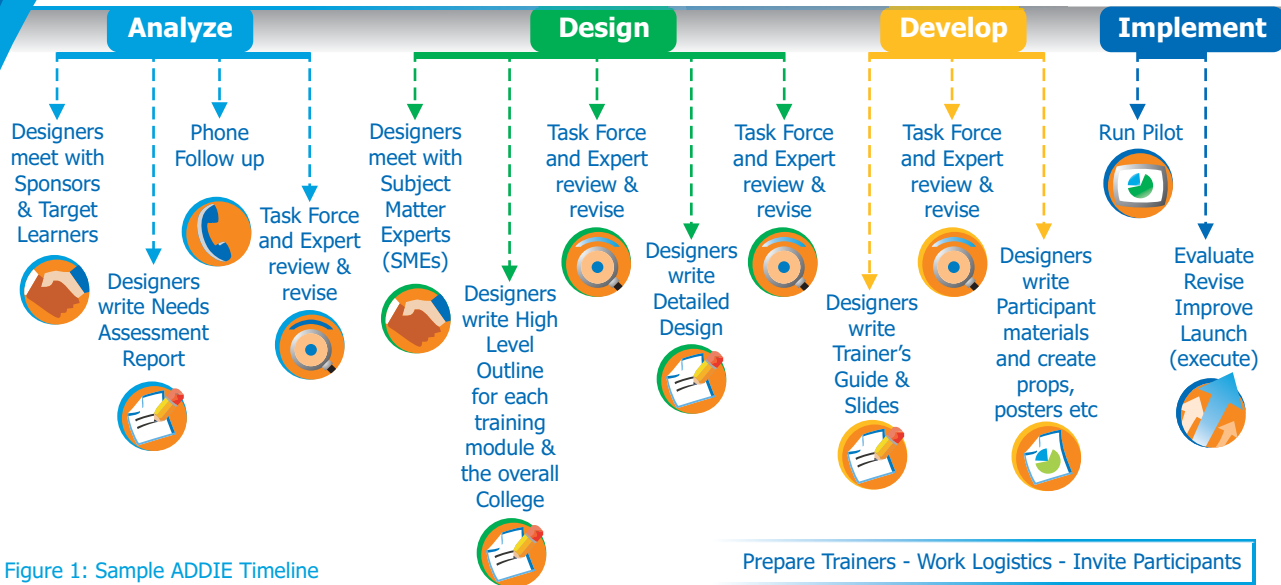


Figure 1: Sample ADDIE Timeline

The answer lay in combining 1) a 'corporate strategy' model (Martin, 2001) and 2) a training industry model (ISPI, Van Tiem (2001)), which we refer to as the "gap model". By working through both models iteratively, using ADDIE to manage the project timeline, a process was established to deliver a Corporate University – that is, a training program linked to and supportive of the business strategy (Figure 2 see page 3).

### The Models Used

The Corporate Strategy model (Figure 2) consists of a set of questions which must be answered. The response to one set of questions results in a choice that narrows the set of possible answers for the next set of questions.

The questions in the model are, by design, very broad. In order to design a holistic answer or choice, it is necessary to break down these global questions into smaller questions pertinent to the situation or project, as shown in Figure 3 (see page 3).

Likewise, the training industry's performance improvement model must be broken down into bite-size pieces. Defining the "Desired Workforce Performance" was broken down into the following steps: (1) identify the R&D Function's core competencies; (2) define Basic, Intermediate and Advanced levels of these competencies, necessary for calibration among team members; and (3) agree upon the desired level of competence for the various groups of target learners (Figure 4 see page 4).

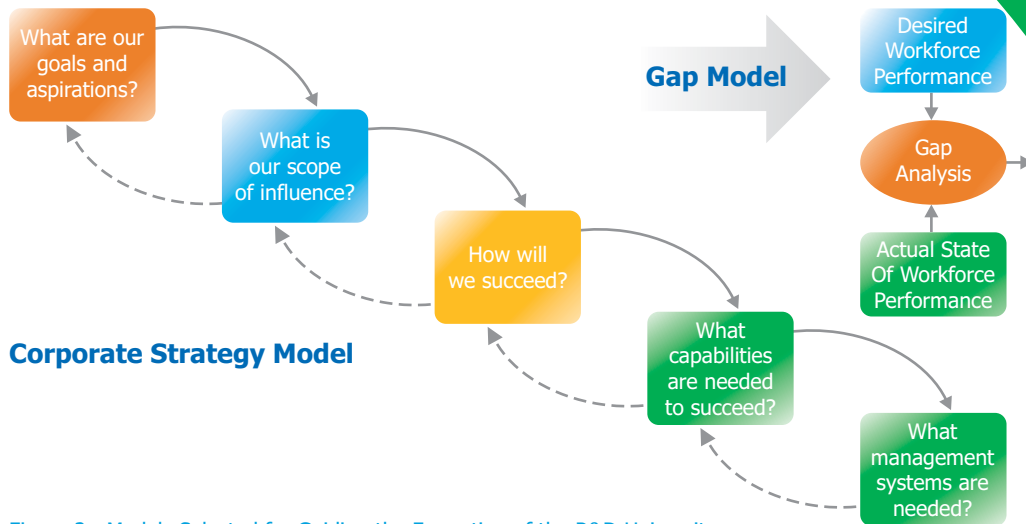


Figure 2: Models Selected for Guiding the Formation of the R&D University

The “Actual State of Workforce Performance” was analyzed for each competency. This task itself is large, so we agreed to create and deliver one “College” at a time, with each College focused on a single career level. There are five levels in all. Training blocks were created to “teach to the gap” – a term that became a mantra to keep the content tight, concise and focused. The training blocks were woven into a whole, that is, into one College, which is no more than a week long.

	What are our goals & aspirations?	What is scope of influence?	How will we succeed?	What capabilities are needed to succeed?	What management systems are needed?
<b>Larger question</b>					
<b>Narrowing questions</b>	What are the Business Goals? What are the Learning Goals? What is success?	Who is our audience? (Level, years on job, Locations) What knowledge and skills areas are our focus?	What must we do to consistently drive success? What are our measures of success? How can we access and leverage organizational resources?	How will we leverage our capabilities? Our organization? How do we allocate financial & human resources?	What organizational structure? What reward systems? What processes? How to shift from start-up to sustaining?

Figure 3: Expanding on the Corporate Strategy Model

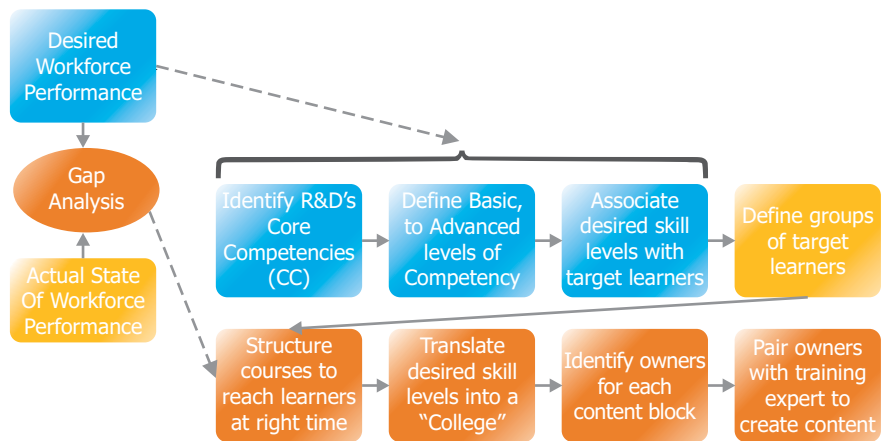


Figure 4: Expanding on the Gap Model

### The Leadership Team Sets Direction

HR led this effort under the sponsorship of one of the R&D VPs. As partners, the sponsor and HR worked with the R&D Leadership to initiate the first stages for these models:

#### Corporate Strategy Model

- Define the “goals and aspirations”,
- Establish the “scope of influence for the training program”,
- Provide an initial description of how “we succeed”

#### Gap Model

- Describe the desired workforce performance by defining R&D Core Competencies (Table 1). These competencies would be needed to strengthen the R&D people and organization to prepare them to meet the challenges of the future.

As part of the R&D Leadership role, the team defined the “goals and aspirations” as follows:

- Cause an increase in innovation (business goal) by increasing networking across the myriad of businesses and silos (success measure). This networking goal is consistent with the long-held belief in R&D that innovation happens when people from different technical areas share their thoughts and issues.
- Provide training, which is both formal and mandatory. (Attendance is a success measure.)
- Help R&D people retool for the future (learning objective). For P&G, a promote-from-within corporation, retooling employees is critical for ongoing success.

Leadership defined the scope of the program as being limited to R&D people and to content areas not covered by P&G Corporate or Business Unit training.



Leadership defined success as re-establishing the tradition of having R&D people teach R&D people. That is, the leaders and corporate experts would pass on their knowledge and experience to those coming up the ranks. This tradition had suffered during the last decade of global growth. Formal training was seen as a way to reestablish this tradition. Revitalizing this tradition could also facilitate more mentoring, particularly with mid-career professionals, thus improving overall performance and job satisfaction.

Defining the R&D Core Competencies led the R&D Leadership to focus on those aspects of R&D that define its equity within the company (Table 1). They ultimately identified six key competencies that touched most R&D people, regardless of their technical area of expertise (e.g. microbiology, calcium technology, consumer research, packaging, process design) or their business unit (e.g. laundry, cosmetics, health). They defined each of these in sufficient depth to assure global understanding and to guide the team which would put together the training on these topics.



**Table 1: R&D Core Competencies**

Applying Innovative Technologies in the Business	
Comprehensive Consumer Understanding	
Driving Change	
Holistic Innovation	
Proficient Project Management	
Understanding our Business	

With the first three steps of the corporate strategy model agreed upon and the first step of the Gap model covered, HR was ready to gather resources for the next stage – designing the college.

**The R&D University Task Force**

HR assembled a broad-based task force to complete the process of creating the R&D Colleges (Table 2). An HR leader was assigned to lead the task force and R&D Leadership volunteered experienced people to be members. The R&D professionals represented various business units and scientific disciplines. The 15-member team came together for a two-day off-site kick-off meeting in August 2002. Meetings continued on a regular basis, usually every other week, for a year until the first pilot was completed.

The HR Director and R&D VP/Sponsor were still involved, though they took more of an advisory role as the HR task force leader took the reins and moved the project forward.

**Table 2: Composition of the R&D University Task Force**

HR	Director, Band 3 Manger (Task Force Leader), Administrator	3
R&D Middle Managers	Each represented a different business unit and technology area	4
External Consultants	External trainer/consultant Bring academic view on leadership development (Dr. Klein)	2
Corporate Training Expertise	Web-based training design Classroom training delivery General global training (Lisa Owens)	3
Graphics Designers	Creative experts who could deliver graphics and slide shows, posters, etc.	2
R&D VP Sponsor	Link to R&D Leadership Team, budget & resource strategy	1
Number of Professionals on the Task Force =		15

The task force faced a myriad of decisions, some of which are shown in Table 3. Their choices led to the successful formation of the R&D University. In a future article, the authors will describe the factors impacting each decision and the choices made.

Like all decisions, each choice led to additional questions and decisions. The following is an example of the first decision faced by the task force. The question was: "Should the managerial (M-track) and technical (T-track) career track people have separate colleges to meet their very different needs or should

**Table 3: Decisions faced by R&D University Task Force**

- 1 Should the managerial and technical career track people have separate colleges to meet their very different needs or should they be exposed to the same materials?
- 2 Will the program be held in a standard classroom or at a residential facility?
- 3 If R&D managers are going to be trainers, how are they supported in delivering professional-grade programs? Are they paired with professional trainers, have professional training writers or sent through train-the-trainer programs? (Owens, 2005)
- 4 How will the success of each program be evaluated?
- 5 Can each College be balanced for diversity of participants, and can the deans effectively manage the cultural differences?
- 6 How can we assure that the content is accepted by all R&D leaders, and not seen as just the personal perspective of the one or two teaching the materials? What is the process for approving content or assigning time allotments for each topic within the course, while minimizing competitive tendencies?
- 7 How will the entire week of programming be integrated for the participants so that it doesn't feel like a set of back-to-back small courses?
- 8 Can trainers function as a training team?
- 9 Is the training environment structured to focus on the positive or is a tone set which encourages discussion of touchier issues?
- 10 Is the college truly mandatory? If mandatory, how are disruptive participants and cancellations handled?

they be exposed to the same content?" The following factors were raised and discussed at length.

### **Put M and T Tracks together,**

- + This would reduce silos between T- and M-track people.
- + This would provide T-track people with leadership training which their peers on the M-track receive regularly. T-track people requested this in focus groups.
- + Putting them together could resolve some common issues that arise between the two groups. In focus groups, T-track people often felt misunderstood by their technical M-track managers, while the M-track people felt that the T-track professionals often ignored hierarchy and subverted their managerial authority, yet both needed to work together.

### **BUT . . .**

- The M-track people had a bigger need for development because these technical managers were not taught managerial skills as part of their technical degrees. Further, the M-track appeared to be overloaded, with too many demands, and not enough time to provide quality coaching for all their people.
- The interests of the two are so different that it's too hard to find common content.
- The environment that both are comfortable in is so different that it is difficult to meet the needs of both in one setting.
- Mixing them is too complex for the designers due to content and psychological differences.

After much discussion, the task force agreed to put the M- and T-tracks together in a single College for their level/band. The Leadership Team supported the task force in their decision, though this step, too, required significant discussion.

### **Success Measures**

It was almost a year from the first task force meeting in August of 2002 and the first pilot of the week-long residential program in September 2003 (Owens and Klein, 2007). By March 2006, less than three years after that pilot, the R&D University was fully established across five levels of the organization.

The success of the college is well accepted throughout R&D. The program was intended to increase networking with the expectation that networking would lead to greater innovation. In end-of-course feedback evaluations (Table 4), the number one comment from participants is that they highly value the



opportunity to meet so many people and network across such a broad range of the company. R&D University staff and deans have dozens of stories of people saying they made breakthroughs in their work due to relationships that formed during the R&D University College experience. Even the trainers value their time at an R&D University College because of the networks established with participants and other trainers.

<b>Table 4: Success Measures</b>	<b>05/06</b>	<b>06/07</b>
Number of Colleges held	16	19
Number of employees trained	996	1370
% of available seats filled	93%	83%*
Participant written feedback at end of College		
▶ <b>Overall, how would you rate this college?</b> (scale 5=excellent, 1= poor; goal > 4.0)	4.4	4.4
▶ <b>The College will help me on the job</b> (scale: 5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree; goal >4.0)	4.6	4.5
▶ <b>Time spent at College was very worthwhile</b> (scale: 5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree; goal >4.0)	4.4	4.4
* (drop caused by organizational restructuring)		

Table 4 shows excerpts from R&D University's 2006/2007 Score Card published annually.

As for re-tooling the workforce to meet the challenges of the future, when asked if they did anything different when they returned to work as a result of their Colleges, participants said "YES"! Some apply the latest corporate model, others explain that they now understand the expectations from management at a deeper level than before, and feel that they have the tools to meet those expectations. Others say they were re-energized for weeks and even months after the program, and felt re-connected to the larger organization and its goals (see Owens & Klein, 2007).

R&D University has succeeded in renewing the tradition of P&G managers and experts passing on their knowledge and experience to those coming up the ranks. Nearly 75 percent of all trainers are either two levels above the level of the participants or recognized corporate experts in the subjects they teach. One vice president said, of his week as College dean, that his greatest pleasure was establishing a formal long-term mentoring relationship with three participants. Other trainers and deans tell stories of the communication channels that have been opened due to interaction with the participants.

Each College has gradually led to a greater acceptance of the R&D University as an integral part of the R&D organization's culture. The R&D University program today reaches 1000 R&D people annually, with 300 R&D leader-trainers. There are roughly 17 weeks of programming per year, and the programs garner rave reviews by trainers and participants alike. As an indication of the program's organizational acceptance and success in meeting business needs, funding and plans are already in place to continue the program through fiscal 2011/2012.

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## About the Authors

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Lisa Owens is a Georgia Tech Chemical Engineer (1977) with a Masters in Education (University of Cincinnati, 1996). She was an R&D products researcher in the late 1980s, giving her first-hand knowledge of the R&D organization, its culture and its people. Later, she moved to Human Resources as Instructional Designer for P&G's Global Learning organization. As the HR ID, Lisa was called upon to be a consultant on the RDU task force and later asked to be R&D University's Dean of Operations & Learning Sciences. She has presented at several training conferences, including Corporate University 2005 (Orlando). Her article "Executive Guide for Becoming a Leader-Trainer" was published in the November 2005 edition of Leadership Excellence.

### Edward Klein

Edward Klein is a Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Cincinnati and a faculty member of the Cincinnati Psychoanalytic Institute. He was a Visiting Professor at the Yale School of Management for two years and an Associate Professor in the Yale Psychiatry Department. He co-authored The Seasons of a Man's Life and co-edited The Psychodynamics of Leadership (1998), Organizational Consultation in a Changing Workplace (2000) and Relatedness in a Global Economy (2006). He has been an organizational consultant and an executive coach for over two decades. [edward.klein@uc.edu](mailto:edward.klein@uc.edu)

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