

Working Smarter Case Study – CIGNA

a deep dive engagement

“What the Internet Time Alliance brought to the table in our engagement was not only their extensive experience but also the expertise of their networks as well. While we in our organization have networks of our own, the quality and extensiveness of the Alliance network added a value that we would not have been able to tap alone, and led us to a superior solution that will better serve our customers.”—CIGNA Engagement Manager

The Internet Time Alliance (Harold Jarche & Jay Cross as onsite consultants) worked with CIGNA University through 2010/2011 a period that included a series of major change processes. CIGNA University's objective was to cultivate a fully engaged, high performing workforce through rapid, collaborative, informal, self-directed learning so employees could learn fast enough to keep up with the demands of their jobs and grow into experts in their field.

CIGNA University transitioned from designing processes for **formal learning** to dramatically increasing support for **informal learning** by:

1. Establishing a learning & performance innovation team.
2. Developing low-cost methodologies (Do It Yourself).
3. Integrating informal learning support into work.
4. Phasing out approaches, tools & methods that were no longer providing value.

The Internet Time Alliance helped with:

1. Development of a learning & performance strategy.
2. Articulating Working Smarter practices.
3. Establishing and modelling the Innovation Team work practices.
4. Supporting the Innovation Team.
5. Monitoring activities.
6. Developing an internal marketing plan.
7. Evaluating progress.

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Some of the major shifts in approaches to learning and performance at CIGNA are shown in this table:

CIGNA Training Pre-2010	CIGNA Vision of Learning
apart from work	embedded in work
training, push	learning, pull
programs	platform
piecemeal	holistic
events	processes
static	fluid
know things	work smarter

The Internet Time Alliance worked with CIGNA University to:

- Provide tools, technology and frameworks to help each employee become a better self-directed learner.
- Enable people in work teams and communities of practice to narrate their work, using existing tools such as Sharepoint, blogs, wikis, and discussion forums. CIGNA University set the standard by narrating the continuing development work being done on each program.
- Improve transparency by posting all communication and resource materials on the intranet.
- Encourage engagement in external learning networks.

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The Internet Time Alliance worked with the Learning and Performance Innovation Team to develop a guiding **Credo & Beliefs Statement**:

- We are open and transparent
- We narrate our work.
- We value the need to share.
- We are focused on continuous learning, not events.
- We value conversation as a learning vehicle.
- We make our work accessible.
- We are a vanguard of change within CIGNA.
- Business success is our bottom line.
- Learning is work; work is learning.
- Our target is performance.
- We are not a training organization.
- We value time for self-development and reflection.
- We recognize that reflection is a key to learning.
- We will establish business metrics for every engagement and report back publicly on outcomes.

Here are some examples of deliverables during the year-long involvement.

- Developed and documented an Engagement Model to explain how the Innovation Team works and defined the tools they needed on every step.
- Established an Online Resource Repository (Decision Support Tools, Case Studies, Tools, Job Aids, & additional information sources).
- Defined the role of Performance Specialist.
- Conducted professional development activities to prepare the Innovation Team to support customers as innovation consultants (Performance Specialists) within thirty days.
- Created a framework for an ongoing community of practice on working smarter.
- Advised on emerging practices for new hires.

Lessons Learned

- Changing work practices takes time, appropriate feedback, and coaching.
- Regular informal meetings, known as “virtual coffee” (daily then weekly) are critical in the early stages of transition to working smarter.
- Co-creating an explicit Credo & Beliefs statement pays off in the long term with more cohesive group norms and a yardstick to measure progress.
- Not all trainers are prepared to become performance specialists.
- Technology selection should be undertaken as late as possible.
- Good new hire practices can be summed up with three key lessons:
 - Connect People.
 - Connect with Social Media (less hierarchical than other forms of communication).
 - Start the process as early as possible.