



switch

Hyland

## Case Study: Creating a Learning Culture

### Overview

Hyland Global Services was looking to create a global initiative to unite its 800+ team members around a common goal. The leadership team knew that this initiative needed to be employee centered. However, the nature of the services business is that day-to-day operations typically take precedence over professional development. Consequently, it is difficult to carve out time to promote learning amongst employees. Hyland hoped that Switch Innovation Lab would be able to facilitate outcomes that revolved around embracing and developing a learning culture.

### Approach

Switch had preliminary conversations with the leadership team to identify the specific needs of each group. A full-day workshop was scheduled to teach design thinking and then immediately utilize the methodology to address Hyland's specific challenges. "We found design thinking to be a very collaborative approach that had everyone engaged," says Pat Stolarski, Associate Vice President, Global Services. "It helped us generate ideas, with many options and choices coming out of that process. Design thinking really helped us narrow the focus and come to a consensus on the best path forward."



During the workshop the team created a number of viable ideas, ultimately culminating in the creation of *Learning Sprints* – two weeks of intentional, focused time away from day-to-day operations where employees could immerse themselves in dedicated learning. The leadership team then worked

to create the tactical framework for implementing the program, including identifying initial participants, creating timelines and benchmarks, and determining how to manage the absence of key employees while they were "off the grid".

"One of the things I liked most about the design thinking workshop was that the outcomes were very tangible," says Pat. "Without something very specific, sometimes you go through these types of workshops and you walk away with way too many things to take action on. But a lot of times the actions are generic, like 'research this' or 'figure out how to do that'. With Switch, we got to a specific, actionable initiative. We framed out high level outcomes and talked about the specific people that were going to participate. It wasn't fluff. We got into hard hitting, specific discussion about what we wanted to do. When we left, we had an action plan."



### Putting the Plan into Action

Of course, returning to the office and getting back into the daily grind offers its own set of challenges. The commitment to success requires discipline and perseverance, and the Hyland team worked diligently to achieve their stated goals. This meant committing dates and time on the calendar, crafting ongoing messaging to the larger team, and holding each other accountable – even if that meant that valuable team



members were going to be away from billable projects for an extended period of time.

The initial Learning Sprint was offered to three high performers in Global Services, each from a different department. When the time came for program launch, the people that were selected had many questions, and the leadership team worked hard to give them the best possible guidance and get them aligned. The initial thought was that Learning Sprint participants would work together on common learning goals, but in true design thinking fashion, a pivot was necessary. Asking three astute and aggressive learners to align on a common goal wasn't realistic. Allowing each to pursue similar but different learning topics allowed for greater breadth of knowledge development and ultimately increased the overall benefit to the organization.



## Short Term Outcomes

The three participants spent two weeks of intense, self-directed learning focused on cloud technology and how best to position Hyland in that space moving forward. In an epiphany of sorts, the Learning Sprint participants had their minds opened to various improvements in day to day operations. They immediately applied this new learning to project work and also began doing lunch and learns with the entire services group to share their knowledge.

"This really moved the needle for the participants, and we've seen that multiplied exponentially across the rest of the team," says Pat. "Now there are weekly, grass roots tech sessions where team members get together to discuss and learn. It started with React JS sessions immediately after the Learning Sprint concluded, and those initial sessions have spawned additional meetings on other technology topics. The program's success has led us to examine how we can operationalize it across all verticals within the organization."

## Long Term Outlook

"Switch's design thinking workshop was the springboard and catalyst for what we were trying to do when we got together as a management team. To be honest, it really surpassed my expectations from where I thought we would get. It's taken on a life of its own. We've made strides, we've built momentum as we move into next year and beyond with the continued modernization of our platform and organization. This is something we absolutely need to be doing, preparing ourselves for that future. That was the biggest value out of the design thinking workshop – it allowed us to take the seed of an idea and run it through a process that turned into real action steps we could take and execute on. I'm beyond excited about we've accomplished so far, and I can't wait to see how we build on it moving forward."

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