

User Testimonial:

Roberta Guinzoni

Manager of the Assessment and Development Centre (ADC), Walgreens Boots Alliance



Business

Pharmaceutical giant Walgreens Boots Alliance goes multilingual with Rosetta Stone

The merger of Walgreens and Alliance Boots created not only the first global pharmacy-led, health and wellbeing enterprise in the world but also a company with a rich cultural and lingual diversity. Proficiency in English for business is a must, but capabilities across a good spread of other European and non-European languages are also important, and employees need supportive language-learning resources to achieve this goal. It's a challenging programme to implement across country and organizational boundaries but doing so not only prepares teams to deal with customers and suppliers, it also broadens horizons and helps employees be more understanding of each other's cultural backgrounds.

The ADC teamed up with Rosetta Stone on the phased rollout of a language-learning programme with two clear objectives: to develop English fluency for non-English native speakers among our population working across countries and divisions, and to build language skills in at least one other main language spoken widely within the business. Our company's 370,000 strong workforce is spread across the globe in more than 25 countries, incorporating many different cultures and facing language barriers.

"Training can be delivered on a global scale to achieve a multilingual organization; it's worth the effort so stick with it."

I believe mastering foreign languages is essential for successful business collaboration across countries and cultures, particularly for managers and directors. For this reason we set out our vision to bring our people up to a standard that gives us a high level of international communication proficiency. Not only for practical purposes but also to foster good teamwork, motivation, and morale. In providing language training for these serious learners, we're not only helping our employees understand each other better and relate to each other's background and culture, we're also growing our business.

Social intelligence

When our people move around in our business, taking on new responsibilities in countries where they don't necessarily speak the language, they face a whole host of challenges as they become assimilated into their new surroundings. Good language training doesn't just teach vocabulary, it immerses the learner in a new culture and exposes them to practice conversations and guidance on accurate pronunciation. It's about more than just knowing words and grammar; I like to think of it as building social intelligence.

An intercultural, versatile workforce gives global businesses an advantage on the international stage. Business is about people and people respond better to each other when they're communicating on the same wavelength. Yet, getting to that stage can be a difficult challenge for many. Learning a new language is a unique experience and it can take time, so any programme has to be embarked upon with commitment and passion. You're going to have to stick with it, learners may not necessarily be enthused at first and they'll need space and time to work through it at their own pace.



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Done correctly though, language learning can be great fun. We have a lot of people to reach with our programme but those who have taken up the Rosetta Stone® e-learning course have given very positive feedback. They enjoy the virtual live tutorials, conversation practice, and the games the courses include as part of the learning process.

We are also planning to supplement the structured digital-based learning with practice sessions in a work setting. These are planned to be so informal that people don't feel like they're learning or being taught. They will be social, networking occasions, e.g. lunch in French or other scheduled get togethers where people practice the language they're learning.

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Bridging the digital divide

An e-learning option was the natural choice for an organization like ours. It's easy to access across geographies and doesn't require people to schedule face-to-face time in their calendars – which we know always ends up with some non-attendance. With a digital learning programme we can reach more people much more quickly. Learners can access their course where and when it suits them – including on mobile devices and from their home PC or laptop.

This brings challenges, too. When launching such a massive e-learning programme you have to consider the digital learning gap existing between generations, with particular attention to Gen Xers who are not as familiar with digital learning as young talent who are approaching the work market. Those people who don't feel necessarily comfortable with digital learning need to be supported when getting up to speed and given the time they need to get used to the whole experience.

Tips

My advice to anyone wanting to gain the far-reaching benefits of language learning in their organisation by rolling out an e-learning programme is:

- 1. Be realistic about time** – you need to commit to the programme; it may take your employees longer than you expect to engage with the learning but 30 minutes a day is a good goal to aim for.
- 2. Support employees facing a digital challenge** – help them get used to using technology for learning.
- 3. Get sponsors on-site** – you'll need HR and business line leads promoting, supporting, and endorsing the programme to implement it within their teams.
- 4. Integrate the continuous learning concept into the organisation** – back-up the programme with marketing and supplement it with informal networking opportunities where there is the opportunity to practice speaking another language.
- 5. Use ambassadors** – some learners will find the challenge of learning alongside their day-to-day commitments is hard. Take advantage of the best advocates there are – the course completers – to share their tips and motivate their co-learners.

Above all, stick with it. Languages bring people together and multinational companies need to work the hardest of all to help make that happen.

Walgreens Boots Alliance is the first global pharmacy-led, health and wellbeing enterprise in the world. Its purpose is to help people across the world lead healthier and happier lives. It was created through the combination of Walgreens and Alliance Boots in December 2014.



For information on Rosetta Stone visit:
<http://www.RosettaStone.co.uk/Business>

About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone is a global leader in technology-driven language and learning solutions for individuals, classrooms, and entire organizations.

Our scalable, interactive solutions have been used by over 12,000 businesses, 9,000 public sector organizations, and 22,000 education institutions worldwide, and by millions of learners in over 150 countries.

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