



WesleyLife

Silverchair Learning Systems

case study

WESLEYLIFE BY THE NUMBERS

Employees: 1,315

Courses Completed
in 2010: 15,490

CLIENT

WesleyLife is a nonprofit organization that operates seven continuing care retirement communities throughout Iowa. In addition, WesleyLife serves older Iowans at home and throughout the community with Wesley Community Services, including adult day centers, home care and health services, Meals on Wheels, and hospice.

CHALLENGES

Trying to deliver training to employees across seven different communities presented challenges in training consistency and tracking. Judy Palko was hired as WesleyLife's Director of Organizational Learning in July 2010; Silverchair had been in place for about six months before her arrival. "With so many regulations to keep track of and different communities with different training methods, there was little consistency and a lot of duplicated efforts," she says. "Silverchair was brought in to bring consistency, easy-to-understand training, and 24/7 access so different shifts could train any time."

WesleyLife also had big goals for employee training: "We were attracted to the opportunities Silverchair offered for leadership development, culture change

education, and employee development," Judy says. However, as a nonprofit organization, WesleyLife had to offer complete training with a lean budget. "We knew we needed solid administration and reporting on our training," she says.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Using an online learning system for employee training brought immediate results in consistency of training and tracking. "Our leaders like the fact that the Silverchair training is uniform and that we can run comprehensive reports quickly," says Judy.

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However, buy-in from the communities was more of a challenge; since every community was individually responsible for training, Judy heard a lot of feedback from different

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departments and communities regarding technology skills, course scheduling, etc.

"Change can sometimes be bumpy and I was getting legitimate concerns about how we managed the system," Judy says. "Better buy-in and communication between the communities was a priority for me."

Judy formed the WesleyLife Silverchair Advisory Team with the help of the

Executive Directors at each community. The Advisory team began with 25 representatives from different departments, including nursing, dietary, therapy, human resources, and office managers. “I wanted to be as inclusive as possible so I could find out what the different issues were,” Judy says. The group meets once a month to address different questions and issues that may arise from using the system. They have also developed several best practices for using Silverchair, including using the shared completion feature to avoid duplicate monthly assignments; a buddy system for those not as familiar with technology or those who need more help with language barriers; and a nightly data feed that saved communities the trouble of manually entering students upon arrival or departure. “They were thrilled about the data feed! It was a simple fix that showed the value of Silverchair,” Judy says.

The members of the Advisory Team feel that working together has made the system better for them. “The biggest advantage of the Advisory Team is that we’ve enhanced our use of the system and the courses,” says Missy Atwood from Halcyon House. Betty Stone, Human Resources director of WesleyLife’s Home and Community Based Services, agrees: “I love that we’re more standardized, which is a big benefit.”

“Allowing more people more flexibility and ownership of the system has absolutely helped with acceptance,” says Judy. Now

that the system is fully launched and running in all communities, the advisory team is focusing on using even more features of the system, like the Authoring Tool. Judy recently

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completed her first custom course and is developing more: “I sent my first course out to everyone; it was so easy, I’m ready to do the ‘next great thing!’” she laughs.

WesleyLife has also seen an improvement in compliance. “We’re at a different level of sophistication in our compliance tracking and progress than we were before,” Judy says.

WESLEYLIFE: COURSES TAKEN	
January-July 2010	January-July 2011
6,355	13,193

CONCLUSION

WesleyLife set out to solve their training consistency and tracking issues and was able to do so using online learning. However, any change to a system can bring about challenges and WesleyLife handled them effectively by using their best resource—their employees—to influence the use of their training system. Seeking employee involvement is a best practice for increasing acceptance and encouraging ownership and personal responsibility for employee development.

“Silverchair is great and always open to questions and feedback,” says Judy. “We’re taking twice the number of courses we were taking last year; Silverchair is wonderful!” 🐾

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