

CASE STUDY: Chick-fil-A



Chick-fil-A: Increasing Leadership Effectiveness with getAbstract

Mark Miller, chief learning officer at Chick-fil-A, and Mark Conklin, the company's senior manager of leadership development, share a vision with getAbstract: Their aim is to make relevant, up-to-date knowledge easily available at the point of need for learners to download to the device of their choice. Chick-fil-A has used getAbstract to make leadership development scalable.



Developing Leaders at Chick-fil-A

Chick-fil-A started in 1946 when Truett Cathy opened his first restaurant, The Dwarf Grill, in Hapeville, Georgia. In the early 1960s, Cathy founded Chick-fil-A Inc., and pioneered the establishment of restaurants in shopping malls. Since then, the company, which is still privately held and family owned, has become the second-largest quick-service chicken restaurant chain in the United States, with more than 1,600 outlets in 39 states and Washington, D.C. In 2011, annual sales totaled more than \$4 billion.

Continued growth requires a leadership education program that is scalable, that doesn't involve one-on-one training, and

that allows people to learn at the point of need, at their own pace and according to their own requirements. Chick-fil-A sought a learning offer with wide-ranging, applicable content that could engage as many of the firm's learners as possible. The restaurant chain wanted a service that employees could access quickly, one that would allow them to determine themselves what to learn, when to learn and how to apply the content. Chick-fil-A's executives felt that getAbstract's service aligned nicely with the corporate goals, and that the two firms shared a vision and a similar view of learning.

By focusing on its employees, Chick-fil-A seeks to accomplish its mission to become

"America's Best Quick-Service Restaurant." To improve leadership effectiveness, Chick-fil-A's learning and development team teaches the company's employees the SERVE model – that is, the "five practices of a great leader":

1. "See and shape the future" – Chick-fil-A has been growing steadily and is still growing, which is why the company needs visionary leaders. The learning and development team needs to prepare people to go "where they haven't gone before and where they wouldn't necessarily go by themselves."

2. "Engage and develop others" – Getting people involved requires offering employees

Achieved Results

- 19,000 training sessions for 30,000 visitors of their learning platform,
- simultaneously decreasing costs from \$3.2 million to \$500,000.
- Answered the need for "speed, reach, and choice."
- Helped "keep up with the pace the world is moving."

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the right content regardless of their stage of development, their function or their specific task at hand. getAbstract's content is relevant and presents a cost-efficient and easily accessible way to help people reach their potential. Users can customize their profile to get tailored book recommendations. They can organize their summaries and even discuss them in a virtual business forum.

3. "Reinvent continuously" – Committed to ongoing improvement, Chick-fil-A encourages its employees and franchise owners to take charge of their learning so they are able to "reinvent the system" constantly. Employees' ability to access getAbstract's content at their convenience and to download it to any device they choose supports that process. As getAbstract keeps its library up-to-date by adding new content, new formats, new ways of accessing the content and new languages, Chick-fil-A's employees at all levels use the "easy-to-download and easy-to-digest" summaries as a basis for discussion with their team members and for their own leadership development.

4. "Value results and relationships" – Using getAbstract summaries as a basis for offline and online discussions has supported Chick-fil-A leaders in coaching their employees to drive their performance while demonstrating that they value the relationships.

5. "Embody the values" – Chick-fil-A expects its leaders to be aware of their own values, to share them with others and to live them.

For Chick-fil-A, getAbstract has been a suitable partner in promoting the concept of the "serving leader," and in coaching and developing its leaders

for individual and corporate growth. getAbstract lies at the heart of Chick-fil-A's leadership development and has helped the firm increase its number of learning touch points from 19,000 training sessions for 30,000 visitors of the learning platform while simultaneously decreasing costs from \$3.2 million to \$500,000.



"When we put together a vision of what would be scalable with the growth of Chick-fil-A, we began wrestling with the business issues of three things: speed, reach and choice. We looked at our offerings and began to think: How can we provide as many people as possible with this content as quickly as possible and give them a choice of how they access and communicate and repurpose that. That's when we saw the alignment of getAbstract and Chick-fil-A."