



Championing learning from the top down at Ascensia Diabetes Care



Founded in 2016 by the spin off from Bayer Diabetes Care

Committed to empowering people living with Diabetes through innovative solutions that simplify and improve their lives

Headquarters: Basel, Switzerland

1,600 employees worldwide

LinkedIn Learning

The Challenge:

- Embed an organisation-wide learning culture
- Enable more efficient delivery of manager training and onboarding
- Establish LinkedIn Learning as the first port of call for information
- Align learning to the core skill requirements of each function
- Globally engage employees in learning across regions and languages

The Solution:

- A LinkedIn Learning license for every employee
- Creating a network of early adopters to guide colleagues on how to use the platform
- Close collaboration with local HR Business Partners and workers' council
- A robust communication campaign to build awareness through a series of corporate meetings, newsletters, and the intranet
- Establishing a Learning Champions Community to recommend content for varied geographic & functional teams
- Promoting a "Learning a Day" intranet campaign featuring employee recommendations
- Introducing a "Rock Your Profile" drive to update employees' LinkedIn profiles and generate more relevant data for course recommendations

The Results:

83%

of licenses activated in first year

Over
160,000
videos viewed

More than
7,000
hours of content
consumed

- Significant rise in engagement as sales pivot to adapt to the pandemic
- Major expansion in reach of onboarding and manager training

At Ascensia, Leaders and learning advocates across every level and function are helping the medical device and diagnostics business reinvigorate its learning culture and power digital transformation.

“ My goal is for the LinkedIn Learning platform to become so embedded as a critical tool supporting continuous learning that people can’t imagine life without it. We want LinkedIn Learning to be the first destination our people turn to when they are seeking information and learning – our goal is for them to develop the habit of going to LinkedIn as a primary source for information, instead of relying on the internet to google topics.”



Linda Koch
Senior Director Global Talent Management
Ascensia Diabetes Care



It’s an ambitious vision for the medical device business that Linda and her Talent Management & Learning team see as crucial for a business strategy built around digital transformation and innovation. And it felt almost impossible to imagine just a year or so ago. Following a buy-out from Ascensia’s parent company in 2016, learning had slipped down the business agenda in the face of other pressing priorities. By the time that Victoria Bonnet stepped into a role as Senior Director for Enterprise Learning, in June 2018, “learning” was largely limited to required compliance training, with few development learning options available to employees.

Re-igniting a learning culture

“When Ascensia became a stand-alone business we lost a lot of excitement around learning and development. We soon discovered that although we were introducing new processes and tools, we hadn’t kept up with training people in how to use them. Our business is evolving and we want to be leaner and more agile, and we were aware we needed a more effective approach. Our employees are a diverse group in terms of culture, language and learning needs so we started looking for a global solution.”



Victoria Bonnet
Senior Director for Enterprise Learning,
Ascensia Diabetes Care

The decision to adopt LinkedIn Learning provided an opportunity to transform the conversation around learning. Victoria and Linda made the critical decision to keep the platform separate from Ascensia’s existing learning management system (LMS), which primarily offers compliance training for audit purposes. This created a clear distinction between mandatory training and access to a vast menu of learning topics that support professional and personal development. They positioned LinkedIn Learning platform as the centrepiece of a drive to promote learning agility via self-directed learning that could align to business objectives and, equally importantly, they successfully captured the endorsement of senior leaders across the organization.

“We are actively working to create a learning culture and it was very important for us to provide LinkedIn Learning access to all of our employees, reinforcing the value of learning for everyone regardless of seniority or job title,” said Linda. “Ascensia’s CEO is one of our most powerful advocates who has been instrumental in driving engagement, often referring to the LinkedIn Learning content that he himself finds valuable.”

That senior support has been part of a multi-dimensional campaign to champion learning through a wide array of channels, which includes intranet banner posts, updates for leaders and employees at key meetings, and the creation of a global network of learning advocates.



As of October 2020, one year after the launch of LinkedIn Learning, these efforts have resulted in an activation rate of 83% across the entire employee base with more than 160,000 videos watched and over 7,000 hours of content consumed. However, for Ascensia, that’s just the beginning.

Self-directed learning that links to strategy

Active endorsement from senior leadership has helped to build momentum for learning at Ascensia – but the learning culture that the business is cultivating is built on many different levels of the organisation.

It started with a network of early learning adopters that Victoria, Linda and Global Talent Manager Diane Zhang formed to support the early roll-out of the platform. “We had a roadmap for building awareness that tapped into natural learners as ambassadors to spread the word and feed excitement,” says Victoria. “We offered them the opportunity to become familiar with the online learning tool and encouraged them to speak up and share their experiences by talking to their teams about the quality of content and the user friendly platform.”

This grassroots approach has been backed up by a concerted campaign to recruit managers as Learning Champions, to provide a strategic perspective and link enthusiasm about the availability of online learning with business priorities and development needs. “The role of the learning champions is to work with business leaders to understand skill gaps and to help recommend learning content to address these gaps”, said Linda. “We have monthly meetings with the learning champion community to provide updates on new LinkedIn content and tools, discuss progress and brainstorm strategies to further activate learning for their functional teams.”

It’s helped that LinkedIn Learning has enabled manager group training and onboarding on a scale never possible before. “Beyond the numbers around LinkedIn Learning activation, there’s an even more impressive story,” says Linda. “With our global footprint we were struggling to find a way to provide training for new managers to provide a foundation for people management.

We’d explored options for onsite training through regional seminars but the price and the time involved was too much. Taking advantage of learning paths offered by LinkedIn Learning, we have been able to offer training to 150 managers across the world. We divided them into small cohorts and offered facilitated sessions following each self-learned course so managers could come together to discuss key learnings and share their experiences.”

This social element to online learning continues to inform much of Ascensia’s strategy. Its “Learning a Day” campaign features different employees across the organization recommending a course that’s made an impact in their learning journey which others may also benefit from. Enterprise Learning intern Marie Krueger developed a “Rock your Profile” campaign to encourage employees to upgrade their LinkedIn profile - which generated more accurate data to help the LinkedIn Learning algorithm recommend courses.

The learning revolution has already enabled Ascensia to respond with agility when its sales teams were forced to pivot to a digital selling approach. Going forward it will enable the business to go even further in supporting transformation.

“ We’re now mapping development needs with competencies and identifying new ways that we can address our talent needs. One opportunity is moving beyond the traditional vertical career ladder to support people who want to take their career in different directions. That’s going to help us unlock even more of the potential in the talent we have.”



Diane Zhang
Global Talent Manager
Ascensia Diabetes Care