



ACTIVE Network

Bento box learning for a global organization

Handling a growing problem

Headquartered in San Diego, California, ACTIVE Network has over 3,300 employees in 25 offices worldwide helping organizers transform and grow their businesses using cloud technology.

Since going public in 2011, the company has opened new offices around the world and almost tripled the size of its workforce.

In 2010, ACTIVE Network started down the road to become a publicly traded company. To ensure it had the internal

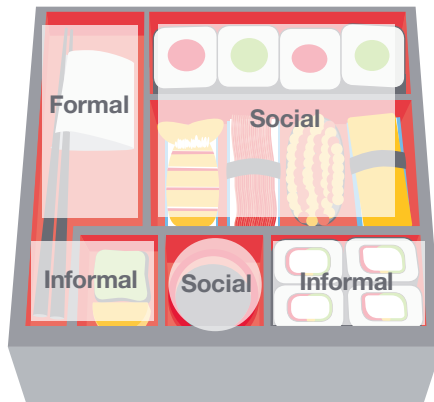
bench strength needed for the “next big step,” the company wanted strong systems in place for developing its people. Due to global expansion and growth, traditional live classroom training was no longer a scalable economic option.

Trial and error

In March 2010, ACTIVE Network hired Conrad Cone as the company’s inaugural Manager of Talent Development.

Cone knew that a blended talent development program with a strong elearning component would be the most effective way to reach a diverse set of learners across geographic locations. He searched for a Learning Management System (LMS) vendor and hired TELUS,

a leading national telecommunications company in Canada. Using their ASTD award-winning LMS as the wireframe, the team customized the LMS to fit ACTIVE Network’s needs.



The Bento Box approach to learning.

Once the LMS was launched, Conrad then partnered with Skillssoft to purchase elearning content to populate it.

“We gave our employees a lot of options,” said Cone. “All of Skillssoft’s management and leadership libraries, business skills and Microsoft® Office

courses were available for individual contributors.” The program also added Skillssoft’s 50 Lessons™ video collection, Books24x7®, Safari Books, Get Abstract, Executive Summaries, IT Skills and Skillssoft® Leadership Advantage™ to its list of resources at employees’ disposal.

But as Cone and his team soon realized, just offering up resources wasn’t working. “We gave our employees too many choices and they became overwhelmed,” he explained. “It was stimuli overload—they did not know where to start.”

A critical analysis and solution

Cone’s team audited all of the Skillssoft assets to determine what was being used



Challenge

- Build a financially viable learning program for a growing workforce.
- Develop talent to fill succession pipeline.
- Implement learning that is consistent and accessible globally.

Solution

- Provide employees with a variety of Skillssoft learning resources.
- Bundle content into targeted learning packages.

Results

- Higher adoption among employees across the globe.
- Flexible learning program that adapts to needs of employees.
- Easily track effectiveness of learning application.

and what was not. They also wanted to determine why some of the content was easily adopted and others were not.

"We found that any Skillssoft content that was pre-packaged in a very specific format that aligned to a specific skill or competency was what was being consumed," Cone said. "On the flip side, we also saw that our users did not find searching for individual courses or videos via a giant search engine meaningful."

But Cone had an idea.

ACTIVE brokered a meeting with the Skillssoft Leadership Advantage product team. The product group explained that ACTIVE Network could use the Skillssoft KnowledgeCenter™ Editor to customize the assets' content, look and feel. Armed with the flexibility he needed, Cone and his team started developing short, focused portals they referred to as *bento boxes*.

The bento box approach

ACTIVE's Talent Development team learned Skillssoft's editing tools and started creating custom portals packed with what Cone described as "bite-sized learning assets." They call these custom portals *learning bento boxes*, a hybrid of Skillssoft and ACTIVE Network proprietary content, with a balanced mix of formal, informal and social learning.

Cone and his team update the bento box content monthly, based on the types of assets getting the most use. "We weren't going to build something and then just walk away. We want to see what users are consuming, then give them more content like that to keep it fresh and appetizing," Cone says.

The ACTIVE Network Talent Development team piloted the new bento boxes in the creation of the company's high-potential leader program portal. Cone says the program is structured like an

By limiting the flow of content, we can build social and informal learning activities that show us in real time how the user is applying or absorbing the learning content.

Conrad Cone
Manager of Talent Development,
ACTIVE Network

M.B.A. Each executive hand-picks someone from their succession plan to participate in the year-long program. To prepare, nine core competencies were defined for the program. Each competency aligns to an existing module within Leadership Advantage.

"Every month, learners see a new module," Cone says. "They see goal-setting in September, strategic planning in October and so on. We limited the amount of content so it's not overwhelming, and it's presented in a way that reinforces the skill or competency we want to build." The program also includes formal mentoring and coaching, virtual case studies and special projects, and social learning-based leadership blogs, where

program participants reflect on what they're learning and how they are applying the concepts in their role.

What's next for ACTIVE Network?

ACTIVE Network learners, including Millennials, Boomers and Traditionalists, all gave the bento boxes positive feedback. Cone and his team knew they were on the right track.

"Our talent development strategy going forward centers around the bento box," Cone says. The team has begun developing bento boxes for Six Sigma certification, project management, Ruby on Rails, HR onboarding, compliance, time management, call center support and performance management.

"Any specific skill or competency we need to develop gets pulled out and made into a bento box," says Cone.

Cone calls the evolution of learning at ACTIVE Network the result of a collaborative effort. "We were able to come up with a cool idea, but we couldn't have made this happen without Skillssoft and TELUS listening," he says.



For more information or to learn more,
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