

SUCCESS STORY

Using eLearning to Develop SOCIAL STYLE Skills



Positive Tomorrows

INDUSTRY:

Education

CHALLENGE:

"The training helped us to understand our peers, especially those of a different SOCIAL STYLE than our own."

SUSAN AGEL

President, Positive Tomorrows

SOLUTION:

SOCIAL STYLE

OVERVIEW

Positive Tomorrows is Oklahoma's only elementary school dedicated to helping homeless children and their families break the cycle of poverty. For more than 25 years, this school and organization have given children stability and a quality education, while assisting their parents in learning how to create a better life. Positive Tomorrows accomplishes their mission of eliminating poverty through three major steps:

1. They remove barriers that get in the way of a child's learning, including hunger, lack of transportation and basic necessities.
2. They provide robust, intensive and individualized education to homeless kids who are often behind.
3. They empower homeless families to become self-sufficient and gain stability.

Positive Tomorrows chose SOCIAL STYLE training to enhance employee relationships among various departments and to establish a peaceful and collaborative working environment despite each of the department's distinct goals and unique challenges working as a non-profit with limited resources.

THE CHALLENGE

Positive Tomorrows fulfills their mission through a diverse staff made up of teachers, case workers, social workers and volunteers. The organization is fueled by each of these individual's passions as well as their distinct expertise and ability to work collaboratively together. Because of the highly cooperative landscape of the organization, interpersonal skills and behavioral style understanding is a must.

THE SOLUTION

When the President of Positive Tomorrows learned about SOCIAL STYLE training, she knew it was something that she needed to incorporate in her organization. One of the primary goals of Positive Tomorrows is to foster

a peaceful and calm place for families and children to feel safe. Inter-office tension is not an option. Instead, Positive Tomorrows President, Susan Agel, knew she needed to equip her team with a skillset that would optimize relationships and communication at work. And SOCIAL STYLE was just the training she felt they needed.

SOCIAL STYLE equips learners with the tools to understand their own behavioral style, and how their behaviors and preferred methods of communication might be perceived by others. SOCIAL STYLE also teaches us about our hot buttons and how to manage our “backup behaviors”, or behaviors we resort to when we feel stressed or threatened. In return, participants also learn about the other SOCIAL STYLEs and how to assess other people’s behaviors to determine their Style and, thus, how they prefer to be treated. Overall, this training creates a heightened awareness and understanding among co-workers, allowing them to develop more cohesive and collaborative relationships and work more productively and effectively.

But there was just one problem – time was a limited factor for Positive Tomorrows. Taking the time to set aside a full day for a facilitated training session meant children would be unserved. Although Susan Agel realized the benefit of SOCIAL STYLE Training and the need there was for her organization, her staff was already stretched thin.

Budget was also an important factor. As a non-profit, the need to be extremely efficient with financial resources is crucial. Agel understood and valued the importance of interpersonal skills training and wanted to better equip her staff with the tools to be successful in their jobs. Still – she needed to make a wise and thorough decision with which training she selected.

TRACOM’s eLearning SOCIAL STYLE Courses provided a perfect solution for Positive Tomorrows’ business needs. These eLearning courses allow participants to complete the program on their own time, instead of doing it all in one day, and are available in fully online versions and a combination of eLearning and instructor-led training.

“SOCIAL STYLE Training has already helped our organization’s culture immensely. The training helped us to understand our peers, especially those of a different SOCIAL STYLE than our own. We now have a clearer understanding of people’s intentions behind their actions and the program has already helped cross departmental interactions”, says Agel.

“As Positive Tomorrows grows and expands, SOCIAL STYLE will continue to be an important tool. Incorporating the training as a refresher or introducing it to new staff will remain a priority as it has added much value to our organization.”

WHY SOCIAL STYLE?

TRACOM’s SOCIAL STYLE Model was originally created through a partnership between education and business. University of Denver industrial psychologist, David Merrill was approached by industry to identify what attributes distinguished top-performing executives from the others. That research turned into the SOCIAL STYLE Model which shows there are four basic patterns of behavior, known as the four SOCIAL STYLEs. Once a person understands these behavioral patterns, they can modify their actions to build more effective relationships with others and be more successful in any profession. This is known as Versatility. Research shows that managers with higher Versatility are:



27% better at leading teams



19% more likely to be promoted



25% better at coaching others



23% better at effectively managing conflict