

Delta Air Lines

Project Management Takes Flight at Delta



BUSINESS SITUATION

With 7,664 daily flights to more than 497 cities in 84 countries, Delta Air Lines and its subsidiaries, is the second largest airline in passenger traffic. Changing every year, Delta finds itself increasingly using project teams as an effective way to do business. Proud of its already-extensive corporate training program, Delta was seeking a fast and flexible way to expand its project management training.

“We realized we were becoming, more and more, a project-oriented company, and people didn’t always know how to put projects together,” said Jeannie Clinkenbeard, project manager of Delta’s Learning Services training division.

ACTION

Company officials discovered *Countdown®: A Strategy Game for Project Teams* would serve two purposes nicely. First, it provides a necessary overview for employees and managers working on project teams. Second, it provides a perfect kickoff to the project management curriculum for employees working toward certification.

“*Countdown* works because it’s a high-energy, get-’em-excited kind of learning,” Clinkenbeard said. “It introduces PMBOK [project management body of knowledge, the generally accepted industry standards] concepts to a large group of people. Not everyone will know how to do a work breakdown, but you sure know what one is when you’re done with the game.”

It’s such a comprehensive tool that Delta recommends anyone on a project team, managing a project, or managing a project manager should play *Countdown*. Overall, Clinkenbeard said more than 1,000 employees would use *Countdown*

in 2000, with about 400 of them working toward PM certification. It’s required for anyone in Delta’s certified PM program.

RESULTS

Because it’s quick – a one-day session – Delta employees can put their new knowledge base to work immediately. As she reviews employee feedback, Clinkenbeard said the comments have been overwhelmingly rewarding.

“This makes me look forward to other classes,” says one. “Great class. Can you imagine doing a class like this five years ago? We’ve come a long way,” says another. “The best course ever taken at Delta,” says a third.

The list continues, and Clinkenbeard has the feedback – and personal experience – to prove it.

“It’s so different than standing up there and lecturing,” said Clinkenbeard, who occasionally facilitates the program herself. “It’s like the participants work as hard as you do, finding out and keeping what they need to learn.

“It’s very, very positive – for us and the participants.”

