

Leveraging Online Learning Tools for Workforce Re-Entry

BENCHMARK HOSPITALITY

Benchmark is a global hospitality company comprised of resorts, hotels, conference centers, and exclusive private clubs. Benchmark has more than 70 properties domestically and internationally including 8,000 guestrooms and 10,000 employees who are committed to the highest level of customer service.



COVID-19 caused major disruption for organizations across the globe, and Benchmark was no exception. As an organization in the hospitality industry, the global pandemic created extreme and immediate change. Calvin Banks, Director of Training and Development, shared with us how he utilized his online learning platform in conjunction with his overall strategy to navigate Benchmark through these uncertain times.

WHEN DID YOUR ORGANIZATION BEGIN WORKING FROM HOME?

Benchmark began implementing a work from home policy for all applicable employees during the first week of March. Remote work was a new endeavor for 95% of the team, and Calvin took on the responsibility to help team members transition.

Calvin used BizLibrary's platform to create a remote work playlist and distributed supporting resources to his employees and leadership. In early April, 41 out of 47 U.S. properties were officially closed, and many staff members received reduced hours or were placed on furlough. Calvin was also furloughed at the beginning of April, with plans to return to the office on August 1, 2020.

HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THE CHALLENGE OF BEING FURLOUGHED?

Throughout Calvin's furlough assignment, he did not have access to his work-station computer, but that didn't stop him from being proactive. Calvin used this time to prepare for re-entry by researching the virus and analyzing Benchmark's daily tasks that would now be impacted by COVID-19. When we asked how he managed to handle this challenge he said, "I just kept learning."

He received an unexpected phone call, escalating his date of return to May 1st, two months ahead of his original return date. Calvin's first assignment was to champion a plan to support the safe reopening of 90% of Benchmark U.S. properties by the end of May.

PANDEMIC PIVOT: Leveraging Online Learning Tools for Workforce Re-Entry

HOW DID YOU PREPARE YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR RE-ENTRY?

The COO of Benchmark told Calvin, “we need to become experts on re-opening.” While the closure of properties was a straightforward task, reopening required an increase in preparation and strategy. Calvin began by outlining the priorities needed to successfully create a re-entry plan.

Top Priorities for Benchmark Hospitality:

- › Safety and security
- › Overcoming unconscious bias
- › Customer service while social distancing

After outlining top concerns, Calvin began selecting topic areas to include in the re-entry training program.

Main Topic Areas:

- › Understanding COVID-19
- › Social distancing
- › Chemicals and proper disinfection
- › Using personal protective equipment

Aside from creating and curating content for the re-entry training program, Calvin needed to find an efficient way to distribute training material to staff. It was important for all employees to access training and for leadership to track and manage completion.



HOW DID YOU INTEGRATE BIZLIBRARY INTO YOUR RE-ENTRY PLAN?

Calvin evaluated all available resources to create, distribute, and manage re-entry training. He ultimately chose to utilize BizLibrary's platform because of the content offered in the BizLibrary Collection and the ability to customize content within the system. He began to curate and develop custom content focused on safe re-entry for staff.

He built a 46-minute, all-encompassing COVID-19 training course that ensured team members understood COVID-19 and how to safely operate and serve guests. This lesson could be completed online, one on one, or in a socially distant classroom. Originally, every staff member had 48 hours to complete the training and acknowledgment form. This plan was quickly modified to require training to be complete within a 24-hour window during your first shift. One piece of custom content Calvin created and uploaded into the BizLibrary system were documents he titled, Skilled Training Outlines (STO). Calvin defined STOs as how-to guides for specific tasks, particularly those impacted by COVID-19.

For example, bellmen were supplied with STOs for appropriate and safe ways to welcome guests. Because of the amount of physical contact in this task, including door opening and luggage carrying, an STO was created for bellmen to understand the proper way to serve guests safely.

Calvin created an acknowledgment quiz to certify all employees were properly trained and prepared to return to work. It was a simple yes or no quiz that confirmed they completed the COVID-19 training. If the employee answered no to any question, they were directed to immediately follow up with their manager to receive training on any missing topics.

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HOW DID YOU ASSESS THE HEALTH OF YOUR STAFF MEMBERS?

Daily COVID-19 health assessments were created in English and Spanish and uploaded into the BizLibrary system. Calvin created this assessment as a Learning Initiative in the BizLibrary platform because it restarts every shift and was easy to track completion for compliance purposes.

One creative way staff members could identify their peers had passed the health assessment for the day was by receiving a colored wrist band. The wristband colors changed daily to ensure everyone was up-to-date.

Every Monday, Calvin exports a report from the BizLibrary platform, and sends to each individual property manager which includes the health assessment results. This report is color-coded, and the only way to be in the green is to have 100% passing results. The other color options are yellow and red, helping property managers view the health status of staff members at a quick glance.

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF YOUR RE-ENTRY STRATEGY?

Calvin says employees and leadership are happy there was a formal re-entry process put in place. To measure the success of their strategy, Calvin asks the question, “how do our customers feel coming to our property from a safety standpoint?”.

This question is measured in customer feedback surveys. The rating results revealed guests feel safe, clean, and comfortable. Guests feel as though employees are taking the proper measures to ensure a safe and clean experience. These are exactly the results Calvin was hoping for as he created and implemented the re-entry plan.

At the end of August, 99.5% of staff members have completed the COVID-19 training.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS TO ADD OR MODIFY YOUR RE-ENTRY PLAN?

Because this re-entry process is likely to evolve, Calvin says it's important to stay innovative and find ways to create a more convenient daily health screening process. Calvin has plans to modify this area of the re-entry plan to create a more efficient process.

Calvin also mentions aside from the re-entry strategy, this is a perfect time to focus on upskilling. By creating the re-entry training program and integrating BizLibrary's platform, Calvin was able to get more users into the system than ever before. For some, this is a new experience. Calvin wants to encourage all employees to get familiar with the system and use this time to learn a new skill.

Calvin is an agile individual who was able to adapt to change in a moment's notice. By promoting a learning culture at Benchmark and leveraging the BizLibrary tools that were already in place, employees will become focused on development, and become agile individuals themselves ultimately creating a resilient workforce.

**For more information on how BizLibrary can help you
create a re-entry plan for your organization, contact us!**