



Global Specialty Retailer Drives Behavior Change with Customized Ninth House Leadership Solution for 10,000 First-Line Managers Worldwide

CUSTOMER:
Global Specialty Retailer

INDUSTRY:
Retail

ORGANIZATION SIZE:
Approximately 150,000 employees worldwide

THE CHALLENGE:
Equip managers in a large, distributed retail organization to motivate, develop, and retain employees

THE OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce employee turnover by enabling managers to engage and motivate their teams
- Deliver scalable leadership training to a large and dispersed workforce of 10,000 managers

THE RESULTS
Significant turnaround in key leadership behaviors, as illustrated by metrics collected by business unit showing:

- Over 150% increase in satisfaction with the amount of support and direction surveyed employees receive from their managers
- 65% of employees felt their managers had improved in key leadership areas such as delegating responsibility and shared decision-making

THE SOLUTION SUMMARY

The retail industry has one of the highest turnover rates. Because this high turnover occurs primarily at the individual store level, it impacts customers who often find themselves faced with inexperienced and unengaged employees. When a new leadership team took the helm of this global specialty retailer, it determined that addressing turnover and employee engagement was critical to achieving its business goals.

Redefining leadership became a corporate priority, and a robust new competency model was developed, with coaching and Ken Blanchard's *Situational Leadership® II* as its cornerstones. The retail organization partnered with Ninth House to design and build a custom integrated learning strategy and solution that uniquely captured the attention of the young managers and effectively drove the required behavior change

THE SOLUTION SPECIFICS

The global specialty retailer focused its efforts on the first-line managers whose employees were most at-risk for turnover and most critical to delivering a high-quality customer experience. However, this presented a unique challenge because those managers were located in individual stores dispersed throughout the world. In many cases, the stores were not adequately equipped with the space or technology to allow managers to participate in a learning experience on-site. Therefore, the organization needed a solution that would utilize multiple modes to deliver standard content to all first-line managers. The organization partnered with Ninth House for its flexible and scalable leadership solutions and its engaging online courseware that incorporates video-based storytelling and interactivity which appeal to the stores' young managers.

Ninth House created a custom blended solution focused on the *Situational Leadership® II* online course and a corresponding classroom application session that included custom interactive video vignettes set in a retail store as a real-life scenario to daily management challenges. The vignettes presented situations modeled on the day-to-day experiences of the first-line managers, and provided the opportunity to practice applying their learned leadership skills in a familiar environment. The combination of organizational context and opportunities for practice helped accelerate the implementation of new leadership skills and the desired behavior change. *(continued)*

Delivery of the solution had a flexible design to accommodate disparate learner needs. Managers with internet connections completed the online course component in advance of the classroom practice and reinforcement session. Other managers attended the classroom session first and then followed up with the online course in a centralized learning lab to reinforce and sustain skills. This implementation flexibility allowed the organization to reach and impact its widely dispersed audience and is one key to the program's success.



An engaging parable helped leaders improve their leadership skills

Both employees and managers reported significant performance improvements. "I am amazed at how easy it has been to apply *Situational Leadership® II* in my job and I'm seeing the results, quickly," said one manager.

Another manager responded, "I see a real difference in what I'm

empowered to run with." Ninth House engaged its partner KnowledgeAdvisors to implement a comprehensive strategy to measure program results. The data collected to-date indicates that 65% of employees reported that their managers had improved in key leadership behaviors such as delegating responsibility and shared decision making.



Learners applied their learned leadership skills in a familiar retail environment

As a result of the success of this first program for first-line managers, other business units are engaged with Ninth House to help solve their business challenges. For example, the IT organization incorporated Ninth House's *Retaining Talent* half day workshop, based on content from Lynn Ware, into their

succession planning process. The interactive session enabled all managers and directors to discuss strategies for engaging, developing and motivating employees. As a result, the IT organization recognized a decrease in turnover and increase in the number of internal promotions.