



## Building an Online Corporate University: Armstrong International

This is the true story of a global manufacturer with a role model commitment to be a learning organization. Armstrong International provides “intelligent solutions in steam, air and hot water.” The company was planning to build learning centers in each of their facilities worldwide. Instead, we recommended a pilot initiative to build an Online Corporate University. The first 10 courses were related to annual compliance training. This yielded low-hanging fruit because it was necessary, expensive and time-consuming to administer “live,” and required proof of competency.

Because the pilot courses were voluntary, we helped the company initiate contests between departments and recognition of individuals and teams for course completion. The pilot was so successful that we launched a 4-year initiative to develop 150 courses in “Armstrong University.” We did that by guiding leadership to identify and prioritize the learning they needed to memorialize among the next generation of company associates. The topics were divided into 8 colleges with “Deans” to oversee the course development and “Professors” (Subject Matter Experts) to provide the content. Employing our proprietary StorySaver® process, we were able to develop multiple courses simultaneously on 60-business-day completion schedules. We facilitated global virtual meetings with SMEs to make certain the courses reflected all of the company’s knowledge. Courses were delivered online in both English and Chinese.

The adoption and integration of online courses was so successful that, by the third year, it became a mandatory strategy to develop a new course every time Armstrong International launched a new product. By the fourth year, it became the foundation of a talent management strategy to connect course completion to employee performance and to develop individual paths to onboard every new employee.

Next, Armstrong International turned its sights on educating its independent sales reps. Like the beginning of Armstrong University for employees, course completion was voluntary. So we supported a global launch and incentive program. The owner of Armstrong’s largest independent rep organization was so pleased that he reported “We have made a company-wide commitment to ensure ALL employees take advantage of these learning tools.”

Armstrong International then took advantage of the opportunity to establish closer connections with their largest clients by training their employees how to use their products and services.

Finally, Armstrong University launched as a public site to provide a suite of courses for free and others for sale, with options to earn college credit. Armstrong International is also using the courses to train the next generation of engineers and technicians at community colleges nationwide, providing a perfect recruiting opportunity.