

AMGEN

CASE STUDY

Creating the Amgen Virtual Curriculum and Learning Hub:

A bespoke, blended Learning
experience designed for
Amgen's global workforce

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SUMMARY

Amgen, one of the world's largest biotechnology companies with approximately 23,000 Staff working in more than 20 countries, has trusted Hemsley Fraser since 2016 to partner with them to bring world-class and scalable career development, business effectiveness, and leadership skills learning to their enterprise.

Throughout our five-year partnership, we've continually enhanced the learning portfolio while broadening the delivery options, and today, all Amgen Staff globally have access to a comprehensive – and continually growing – blended learning curriculum that effectively supports them throughout their entire professional development lifecycle.

THE ORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT

Hemsley Fraser first partnered with Amgen's enterprise Learning & Performance team to provide engaging and interactive classroom experiences focusing on personal effectiveness skills to Staff in core locations across the United States (including Puerto Rico) and Switzerland.

The original locations all had sizable populations and the infrastructure to support frequent classroom-based learning sessions, and the initial rollout was successful. However, because of the smaller populations in Amgen's other regions and locations, and the goal of offering all training in local language, we experienced only limited success in expanding our high-touch learning provision to the full enterprise.





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THE CHALLENGE

In mid-2019, Amgen came to Hemsley Fraser with an ambitious challenge: could we help their L&P team provide interactive and engaging learning solutions to a much larger and truly global audience, keeping both the learning content and the learning experience consistent everywhere, all while operating within the parameters of Amgen's existing budget?

In September of that same year, Amgen stakeholders met with a group of Hemsley Fraser solution architects, program managers, and instructional designers to form a joint project team and tackle Amgen's challenge by coming up with an effective new approach to enterprise learning – one that could meet the entire organization's needs for 2020 and beyond.



The team's collective idea: to replace each one-day, in-person classroom learning experience with a 210-minute eXtended Virtual Instructor-Led Training session, or xVILT. This wholesale changeover, which would ensure that Amgen learners everywhere could experience the same fundamental learning experience for any given learning topic (no matter their location or budget), was a game-changer.

It required a lot of deep thinking to get right. We needed to figure out how to adjust the instructional designs to foster effective learning within shortened timeframes; we needed to determine how to deploy virtual sessions for an audience used to classroom-based workshops; and we had to make sure that all content would be globally applicable while able to be nuanced during regional delivery. In other words, we didn't simply adapt our existing classroom content and offer it via a virtual platform; we completely reimagined the learning experience so that the finished xVILTs would provide the same value as the former classroom sessions.

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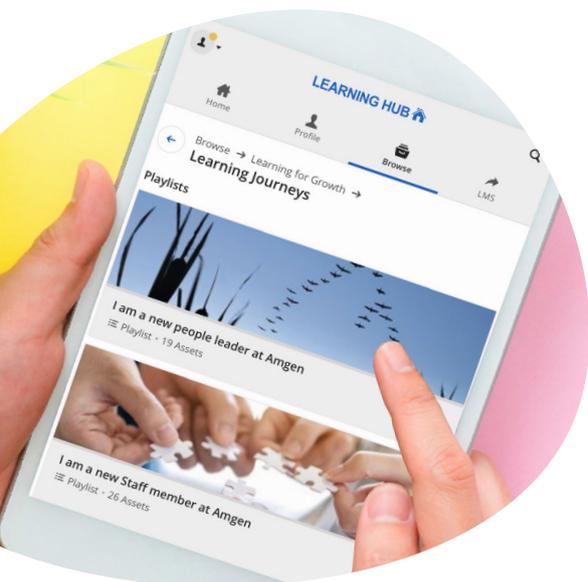
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THE CHALLENGE

Along the way, we realized that if we really wanted to offer a true “hire-to-retire” learning curriculum for Amgen’s global Staff and people leaders, we’d need to expand the program’s scope from its existing 11 topics to more than 25, organized into three categories: “leading myself,” “leading others,” and “leading the business.” Hemsley Fraser assigned additional instructional designers and Amgen made available a number of their internal subject matter experts, so that we could get the new instructional design work completed in record time.



In addition, since Amgen’s Staff is comprised of a group of neurodiverse professionals working 24/7 around the world who have a variety of preferred learning styles, we knew from the outset we needed to embrace a fully blended learning approach. Yes, the building block of the new program would be the xVILT, but if we were to be truly successful, we would also need to provide learning resources in many other ways, including continuing to offer classroom-based workshops, as well as building a variety of brand new asynchronous online micro-learning assets like interactive eBooks, infographics, videos, quizzes, and podcasts.



To package this new and expanded program into an easy-to-use and always accessible learning experience, Hemsley Fraser (with our digital partner 5App) developed a highly-customized instance of our Digital Hub Learning Experience Platform, called the Amgen Learning Hub. Through the Learning Hub, all 23,000 Staff now have instant access to a curated mix of the Hemsley Fraser curriculum, internally-produced resources, and even integrated third-party content.

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THE RESULTS

While the joint project team always knew that the xVILT solution would enable us to greatly scale Amgen's learning provision and lower the amount of "away from desk" time needed... none of us could ever have anticipated just how critical (or ultimately, valuable) this shift would be until the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020. Overnight, all in-person training programs were cancelled, for every organization on the planet.

Coincidentally, both the new virtual curriculum and the Amgen Learning Hub were set to launch in the first quarter... literally at the same time as the "work from home" quarantine and travel restrictions hit every part of the globe. So we kicked our launch plans into high gear!



Just a week or two after lockdown began, Amgen flipped the switch on the Learning Hub, and in an instant, everyone had an easy to use, "always-on" learning platform they could access from their offices, their homes, and on the go.

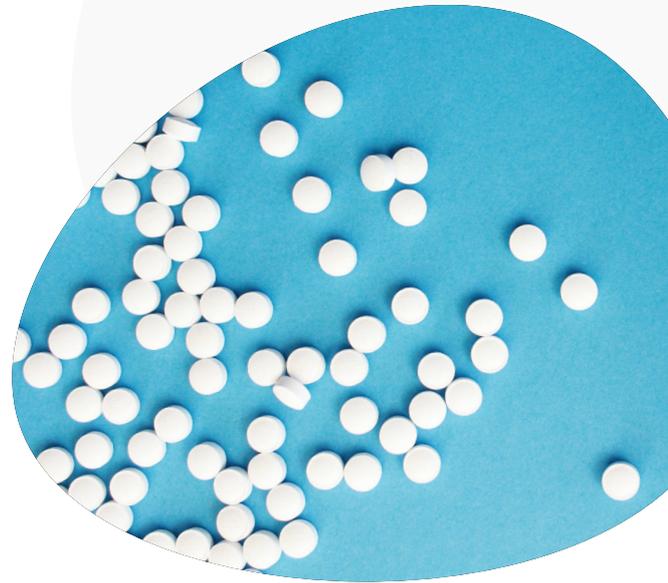
Our calendar of xVILTs launched at the same time. For the first few weeks (while everyone was still dealing with the work and life changes brought on by the pandemic) enrollment was low. However, by the end of the next month, people began to see the value of the new learning offerings, and momentum grew quickly. Just as promised, all Amgen Staff now had access to highly-interactive instructor-led learning opportunities, irrespective of location or departmental funding.

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THE RESULTS

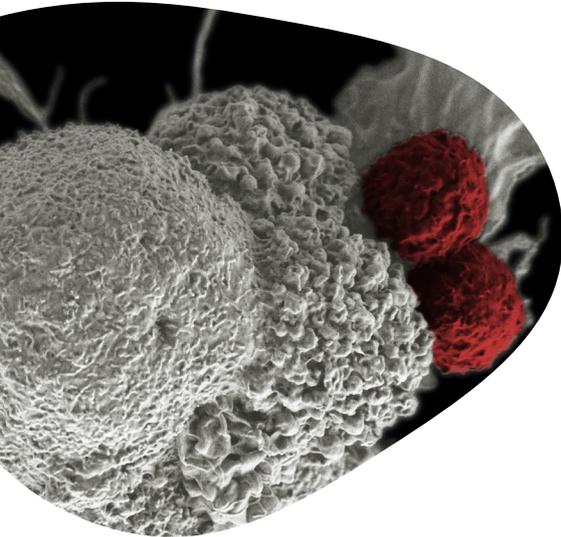
In the end, Amgen's ambitious 2020 learning program launched and ran nearly exactly as planned, with the result being that we delivered double the previous year's number of instructor-led learning events and reached an expanded, global audience in-language... without similarly doubling the overall learning budget. Plus, Amgen staff viewed an additional 50,000 digital learning resources via the Learning Hub from launch through end of year, stunning proof of the need for – and the value of – digitally-accessible microlearning.



Amgen reports that they have also seen positive impacts to the organization's overall learning culture and engagement as a result of the expanded partnership with Hemsley Fraser. With every passing quarter, more and more Staff are taking charge of their professional career development; they are increasingly leveraging the Learning Hub's curated content, sharing helpful learning assets with colleagues, and starting conversations that are the basis for new learning communities.

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THE FUTURE

The joint Amgen/Hemsley Fraser team is not resting on our laurels in 2021. In addition to revising our primary training curriculum to meet Amgen's evolving needs, we are also leveraging the successful xVILT/ digital learning approach to help us inform a number of additional learning programs, including a new enterprise-wide Diversity, Inclusion, & Belonging initiative, two new Field-facing Leadership Academies, and an expanded Resilience offering.

We are confident that by continuing to excite Amgen's Staff about the available learning, by engaging learners with highly creative and interactive experiences, and by providing ongoing just-in-time learning support via our digital platform to help embed the behavior changes, the future for Amgen's learning program is strong indeed.

HIGHLIGHTS

Recently, a learning manager in a European office said,

“ I just want to let you all know how well the new platform and content is being received by the field. I rolled out some of the content to my new team and they feel an increased commitment to their development. One representative told me today that seeing the Resilience information gave her a sense of “hope” during this challenging time. They also mentioned that the digital learning resources were attractive, lively and bold! A++++ team! Well done and thank you! ”



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