PLURALSIGHT + **CENDYN**

Upskilling through the great disruption of 2020

How Cendyn doubled down on skill development to build a resilient team during a pandemic

THE CHALLENGE

Upskilling to deliver in the time of COVID

Cendyn is the leading cloud software and services provider for the hospitality industry—one of the industries most heavily impacted by the global pandemic. As a result of COVID–19, the company had to furlough a percentage of their staff until recovery was in sight. During this time, Brad Noe stepped into the role of Chief Technology Officer at Cendyn.

"Just as I started my new role as CTO, the hospitality industry was flipped upside down. Many of our customers had to put all activity on hold. Some customers couldn't pay Cendyn for products and services they had already ordered, while others had to freeze their marketing spend. Given this huge change, Cendyn was also facing the same issues from an infrastructure standpoint. Without that business coming in, we couldn't maintain our entire workforce," Brad said.

Responsible for aggressive goals in product development, product testing and IT infrastructure, Brad sought ways to keep his furloughed employees engaged and on track to deliver value to the company when the world righted itself again. Noe wanted to continue investing in his team and their development despite being furloughed.

Without putting them directly to work, he needed a way to keep their skills fresh and reinforce their importance to the company's growth. At the same time, team members who remained on the job needed to fill in the gaps left by those associates who were on furlough, meaning they needed a way to quickly skill up in specific and often highly technical areas to maintain productivity.

Director of Integrations, Sandeep Namilikonda, says, "The impact of COVID-19 and the limited team resources required that some team members pick up activities or responsibilities that they wouldn't typically manage. Prior to the pandemic, certain projects and items that were handled by other people in the team, now needed to be handled by myself or another teammate.

WHO THEY ARE:

With a focus on integrated hotel CRM, hotel sales and revenue strategy technology platforms, Cendyn drives sales, marketing and revenue performance for tens of thousands of hotels across the globe. The Cendyn Hospitality Cloud offers a complete set of software services for the industry, aligning teams to optimize their strategies and drive performance and loyalty across their business units.

CENDYN BY THE NUMBERS

Founded in
1996

Global offices
5

Headquarters
Boca Raton, FL

Serves customers across
143 countries

404356-21

Addressing the sudden skills shortage caused by COVID-19

"The pandemic forced us but also enabled us to accelerate skilling up our employees, because, with furloughs, we weren't going to have the sheer volume of folks to work on projects. So we needed to make sure that the ones we did have had an opportunity to learn about the latest technologies, the latest processes and apply that to be more efficient."

– Brad Noe, Cendyn CTO

Technology skill development resources for all

The pandemic widened the technology skill gap across many organizations. To enable a disrupted workforce to quickly pivot and maintain productivity, Pluralsight's technology skill development platform was made available free of charge for the month of April. Teams at Cendyn jumped on the opportunity, and even extended their trial, to explore the ways that continuous technology skill development could address both their immediate and long-term business needs.

"One of the first learning channels we built out was on agile development," Brad says. "Everybody took the skill assessment followed by the courses. Some of the feedback that I received was, 'Wow, I thought I was much stronger in this particular area, but once I took this skill assessment and then took the training that followed, I found that I wasn't.' Pluralsight helped them get there."

THE KEY BENEFITS OF PLURALSIGHT FOR CENDYN

TALENT RETENTION

COVID-19 led to furloughs, but continuous skill development encouraged those furloughed to return to Cendyn.

EFFICIENCIES

Rapid upskilling enables on-the-fly problem solving for team members who are taking on unfamiliar projects and technologies.

ALIGNMENT TO OBJECTIVES

Channels offer streamlined but deep knowledge in skills key to Cendyn making a comeback: agile, .Net, Azure and more.

FUTURE-MAKING SKILLS

The ability to explore technologies not currently in use allows technologists at Cendyn to innovate new solutions or quickly upskill when that technology is in play.

Skilling up in agile development allowed individuals to move faster while enabling better team collaboration and increasing the efficiency of internal processes. Brad says the agile experiment was repeated in other areas, and teams consumed channels geared toward front end developers, .Net developers and Microsoft Azure while individuals were encouraged to explore technologies not yet in play at Cendyn but that may improve future development.

WHAT THEY'RE LEARNING:

- ☑ **AGILE**
- ☑ **FRONT-END ENGINEERING**
- ☑ **.NET**
- ☑ **DEVOPS**
- ☑ **AZURE**

Senior software developer Kevin Lacey says after being furloughed, Pluralsight enabled him to quickly ramp up on new projects. "When I came back, a lot had changed," he says. "It affected me deeply because there are products that I consider as mine... but I had to take on responsibilities for projects that use very different technologies. So I watched an entire course on Pluralsight." Kevin says he was able to learn to apply skills in WebForms, Power BI and Vue. js thanks to Pluralsight courses, channels and paths.

Upskilling to resolve issues on the fly

"If there was a JavaScript issue that came up, while I have a general understanding of this, I couldn't just resolve it off the top of my head. So I would access Pluralsight, look at a course or two to figure out the concepts and resolve the issue."

– Sandeep Namilikonda, Cendyn Director of Integrations

Aligned, efficient teams returning to work

Through participation in Pluralsight's Free April program and Cendyn's subsequent partnership with the technology skills platform, furloughed employees were able to stay sharp and feel their employer's investment in their development, and then quickly ramp up to deliver on new projects upon returning.

Employees who were not furloughed were able to find efficiencies with their expanded agile development skills, as well as problem-solve on projects using technologies they may not have previously been familiar with. Brad calls them "better aligned and better marching together," no easy feat given the physical isolation the pandemic required.

Brad says being able to validate the skill progression through Pluralsight Skills is a key differentiator that showed the impact of upskilling. "The ability to do the skill assessment, and then the training, and then the skill assessment again really helps hammer home that you're not just taking a course and didn't really learn anything from it. No, I saw what I needed to learn from it, I took the course, and then I realized that I did learn something from it."

Having now integrated Pluralsight into their technology skill development program, Brad also says they're looking forward to seeing how Pluralsight Flow can benefit teams as they charge forward toward a post-pandemic future.

Applying new skills benefits the whole company

"I think you've got to provide your employees, particularly in technology, with growth potential. There may be a specific field, a technology, or a process that we're not implementing now, that with the right skill development course, we could then apply within our company. As a result, we are building the overall strength over our team but also broadening ourselves as a company."

– Brad Noe, Cendyn CTO

Want to increase the speed of innovation at your organization?
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