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Client Story

Creating Self-Reliant Leaders at Supernus Pharmaceuticals

In 2023, the leadership team at Supernus Pharmaceuticals set out to invest in the development of the company's regional directors by creating a comprehensive training curriculum that would span their first four years in the role. The resulting Learning Path includes three distinct phases that blend in-person training events and virtual follow-up training calls. The program was orchestrated with content that builds off itself to aid in the regional directors' success as they evolve into more seasoned leaders.

The Supernus leadership team believes salespeople are in the business of building relationships and leading people to make decisions. Equipping regional directors with the leadership skills to help their sales representatives become self-reliant is a direct path to sales success. This is of the upmost importance to the organization. Due to their familiarity with SLII® from Blanchard®, Supernus sought out Blanchard as a partner to aid in the content buildout of their new regional director training curriculum.



Jeremy Hamelink



Rebecca Abel

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The Importance of Content Development, Facilitation, and Design

Jeremy Hamelink, executive director, sales leadership development and inside sales, and Rebecca Abel, director, sales training, involved their team in the process of developing the new program. “After attending the SLII® training-for-trainer program, our Blanchard partner introduced us to additional content she thought would be helpful for the Learning Path we wanted to develop,” says Abel.

The team accessed demos of all Blanchard content to determine which solutions would offer training for the skill sets they wanted to include in the curriculum. They selected Building Trust, Blanchard Management Essentials®, Coaching Essentials®, and SLII®. Blanchard content was blended with Supernus’s extensive in-house developed trainings and packaged into three phases delivered over four years. This process provides the company’s regional directors ample time to learn and use the skills on the job before returning to learn new content. After completing each of the sessions, participants have access to the Blanchard Exchange platform, where other course-specific tools such as articles, videos, and worksheets help sustain the learning.

“All core leadership training takes place in person,” says Abel. “We hold follow-up virtual meetings to provide an opportunity for the regional directors to review key concepts and discuss what they have put into practice. Our team has found that delivering the core phases of training is most impactful when done in person, while the virtual sessions help us keep the learning alive.”

“We integrated the Blanchard models into the training content that we developed in-house,” says Hamelink. “This helps our regional directors understand how the skills they are learning apply to specific aspects of their jobs. Having this clarity makes it much easier to transfer those skills to everyday life.”

While the team at Supernus creates much of the training themselves, they have integrated the Blanchard programs into nearly every aspect of their training. They have also found significant value in the corresponding Blanchard leader guides. “Not only do the leader guides help us prepare to deliver the training, they also provide dynamic ways to engage the learners,” says Abel. “The leader guides are consistent across the Blanchard products so the learner experience is familiar, regardless of who on our team presents the content.”

“Importantly, the content flows between programs. Concepts build upon each other from one course to the next, so there is a richness to the learning experience that has given us a uniform leadership language,” adds Hamelink.

Investing in their people has always been a priority at Supernus, and aligning training with the company’s strategic goals is what drives business success.



“When it comes to developing Learning Paths, our team uses the competencies defined for the role being trained. We then build the content to train the skills necessary to achieve that role’s responsibilities,” says Abel. This approach is how Supernus builds training programs that drive sustainable growth for their organization.

“Our organization is and has always been committed to our people,” says Hamelink. “We know they are the foundation of our success. Creating these types of training programs is an example of how we support their development in an effort to help them become self-reliant leaders.”

At this time of this interview, the sales leadership development team is designing a comprehensive training curriculum for the zone director role.

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Blanchard content is presented within the three phases of the Supernus Learning Path for regional directors.

Phase One:

Building Trust is a simple model that teaches leaders how to both build trust with employees and colleagues and restore trust when it has been broken.

Blanchard Management Essentials® teaches the Four Core Conversations model—a highly effective framework for understanding the communication essentials needed to manage people and performance.

Phase Two:

Coaching Essentials® teaches a coaching process model along with four coaching skills, which help leaders coach employees for increased productivity and improved relationships.

Phase Three:

SLII® is a time-tested model that trains leaders how to provide the right amount of support and direction to each team member as they navigate certain tasks. SLII® also focuses on teaching leaders how to have productive conversations that empower their direct reports to achieve goals.



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