SUCCESS STORY

McDonald’s

Investing in a Culture of Continuous Learning

SNAPSHOT
McDonald’s is the world’s leading global food service retailer with more than 35,000 locations serving approximately 70 million customers in more than 100 countries each day. More than 80 percent of McDonald’s restaurants worldwide are owned and operated by independent local business men and women. Within the United States, McDonald’s and its independent owner operators separately employ approximately three-quarters of a million people.

CHALLENGES
Since McDonald’s is a large service employer, hiring, training, and retention are crucial company functions. McDonald’s invests a tremendous amount of resources in training its staff to ensure they are confident in their abilities, whether it is making fries or running a restaurant. And once employees are well trained, the company likes to retain its employees and help them advance in their careers.

SOLUTION
“McDonald’s has a long history of providing world-class training,” explained Lisa Schumacher, Director of Education Strategies for the US. Starting in 1961, McDonald’s founded Hamburger University in the basement of a McDonald’s restaurant to train employees of its corporate-owned and independently franchised restaurants. It offers training paths based on the various positions. These days the majority of training occurs virtually, and more than 7,500 students attend Hamburger University annually.
Starting with the first level of management, shift manager, McDonald’s entire management curriculum has credit recommendations from the American Council on Education (ACE) to help employees of McDonald’s corporate-owned and independently franchised restaurants gain Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) at accepting colleges. That’s important to the organization, which prides itself on not just providing job training, “but also offering the education needed to support it and driving employees’ career paths,” said Schumacher.

Because of its long partnership with ACE, McDonald’s understands the credit review process and takes it into account when developing new courses. The organization starts by clearly identifying the learning objectives and ends with assessing students on the learning objectives and outcomes. Assessment can take several forms, explained Schumacher. “Sometimes it’s assimilation, sometimes it’s on-the-job demonstration, and sometimes it’s a traditional test.”

When making credit recommendations, ACE has a team of reviewers analyze each course in depth. In the case of McDonald’s, the team includes hospitality and business faculty who have experience with adult and online learning. Students at Hamburger University can now take 20 courses that are eligible for 49 credits in restaurant management and mid-management programs. Approximately 600 participating individuals request their ACE transcript each year.

To further help accelerate the path to degree completion, McDonald’s has sixteen (16) college alliances—all of which have agreed to accept ACE credit recommendations. These partner schools have also agreed to map McDonald’s curriculum to their programs so employees of McDonald’s corporate-owned or independently franchised restaurants can clearly see what courses they need to obtain an associate’s or bachelor’s degree.

The company is also developing a virtual advisor app. The app will allow individuals to walk through the list of courses they have taken, calculate their ACE credit recommendations, see what courses they still need to take at a McDonald’s college alliance school to obtain the degree of their choice, and compare school options to determine the most affordable and efficient path to a degree, all on their mobile device.

**TAKEAWAY**

By investing in training and education, McDonald’s is not only helping its bottom line but is helping employees of McDonald’s corporate-owned and independently franchised restaurants to flourish. Schumacher concluded, “McDonald’s has always had a culture of continuous learning. And that is how we keep the business moving and keep our restaurants to the levels that they are. And the fact that we can help people through our training to get closer to completing either a two-year degree or a four-year degree helps us from a recruitment and retention standpoint. It helps us drive capability and helps individuals accelerate their career path.”

To learn more about Credit for Prior Learning, visit [www.pearsonhighered.com/credit-for-prior-learning](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/credit-for-prior-learning) and [www.acenet.edu/CEAI](http://www.acenet.edu/CEAI).