



## Empowering People

### CLIENT SUCCESS STORY



#### ABOUT ADVANTAGE SALES & MARKETING LLC

Founded in 1987, Advantage Sales and Marketing (ASM) is a premier sales and marketing agency, committed to building brand value for its clients and customers. ASM's cradle-to-cart— post-manufacture to consumption— customized sales and marketing solutions include headquarter sales, retail merchandising and marketing services, specializing in client and customer events, publications and assisted-selling services for the grocery, drugstore, club, convenience, natural/ specialty, consumer electronic and home center industries.

**Vertical/Industry:** Business Services

**Region:** United States and Canada

**Live Since:** 2008

**Number of Employees:** 20,000 associates

#### Platforms/Solutions Used:

Cornerstone Learning (LMS)

Cornerstone Performance

Cornerstone Succession

Cornerstone Compensation

Cornerstone Connect

#### Business Impact:

Compliance

Leadership Development

Cost Savings

Enablement

[www.asmnet.com](http://www.asmnet.com)

## EMPOWERING A DECENTRALIZED WORKFORCE WITH TALENT MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL LEARNING

### BUSINESS CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIVES

In a modern global economy, more organizations are spreading their offices and employees over multiple locations. As a result, the entire employment process for a highly decentralized workforce – from onboarding and assessing performance to building skills – can be difficult, especially without the right systems in place to help employees learn from their co-workers.

Advantage Sales and Marketing (ASM), a sales and marketing agency that supports some of the largest brands in the consumer packaged goods industry, understands this challenge well. It has 66 offices in the United States and Canada and more than 20,000 employees (half of them part-time), many of whom are “remote associates” who work as mobile employees or at remote locations.

Despite being in its industry for nearly a quarter-century, ASM didn't become a national company until six years ago. Previously, it was a group of 26 regional brokers with the challenge of getting separate businesses to act like one company. ASM began looking for a comprehensive and efficient learning and talent management solution that fostered collaboration among its distributed workforce and unified several areas of HR, with these goals in mind:

- Help both current and new employees learn in an environment that is decentralized.
- Develop a talent pool of high-performing, young employees to move up in the company, as well as identify and develop future leaders for the organization.
- Facilitate collaboration and engage the dispersed workforce – especially new college graduates and Generation Y employees – to position ASM as a cutting-edge organization.

### THE JOURNEY / SELECTION PROCESS

The ASM team was tasked with a short implementation window, from gathering requirements to deployment of the talent management system. The process began in July 2008, with the goal of going live in December and launching performance reviews in January 2009. The contract with Cornerstone was signed in September, and ASM went live with a Learning Management System (LMS) 12 weeks later, right on schedule. Performance reviews followed in January of 2009.

ASM needed a high level of flexibility with its HR software solution. Because it lacked an existing talent management system, there was a feeling internally that ASM would need to make changes to the system after implementation, and the company wanted the ability to configure the technology on an ongoing basis.



Additionally, Wendie Whelan, ASM's HRMS manager for talent development, was looking for a system that would require little internal IT support. Because Cornerstone is a SaaS provider, Whelan and her staff were able to implement and maintain the system with minimal involvement from ASM's IT department.

### THE RESULT / BUSINESS IMPACT

ASM got the flexibility it was hoping for. "Because we didn't know exactly what we were going to do, we needed to be able to make changes on the fly, and if necessary, after reviewing the processes, change them again," said Whelan. "Cornerstone offered us the flexibility to do that, which is something that was one of the biggest challenges we found with other vendors."

Introducing employees to the LMS prepared them for the Performance Management system, which was introduced with great success. "We had nearly 100 percent compliance the first year. It was unbelievable for a brand new system with all of our associates," said Jennifer DePaola, ASM's director of talent management.

ASM also discovered the power of Cornerstone's enterprise social networking and collaboration platform, Cornerstone Connect, to facilitate social learning as part of its Accelerate Career Excellence in Sales (ACES) program. ACES is a seven- to 10-month training program designed to provide qualified candidates with the sales and leadership skills necessary to become successful business development managers or customer development managers – vital roles in ASM's sales organization structure.

Integrating Cornerstone's social networking tools into the program allowed ASM to create a workplace community for the training class. As the class works on each assignment class and goes through the various job rotations, participants are required to participate in their workplace community, sharing their experiences with one another and with their mentors. Not only does this facilitate informal learning, it also helps ASM capture valuable organizational data. And it gives the Talent Development team insight into the participants' program experiences.

For companies that wonder how to introduce social networking, using these technologies to facilitate collaboration and communication in an existing training program can be a shortcut to success. Other ASM successes:

- **Facilitating informal learning.** ASM is now able to capture valuable organizational data, and the Talent Development team has insight into participants' program experiences.
- **Centralizing compliance testing and results.** In the past, ASM used a half-dozen or more compliance vendors. Employees who needed several different kinds of compliance often had to go to more than one location.
- **Making performance management an ongoing process.** Previous systems did not allow employees autonomy in consulting their own performance reviews. Now, they can easily look at reviews and goals anytime, year-round.

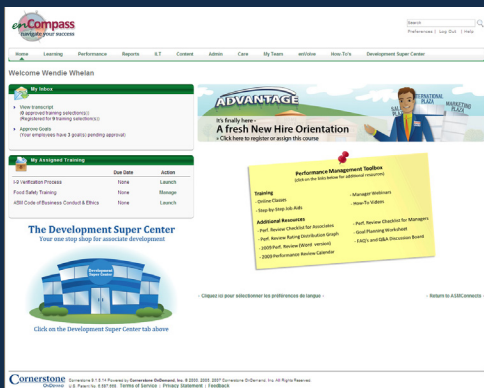
- **Flexibility to deliver training in different ways.** ASM can now configure training so that it is delivered in a variety of ways. This is perfectly in line with ASM's "EnCompass" program, which is designed to offer employees the type of training that best suits their needs.

### FUTURE PLANS

ASM eventually plans to begin using metrics to get a better feel for the success of its programs. The company is also looking at Cornerstone's Extended Enterprise solution. "We actually have clients who are coming to us and asking for access to our training," says Whelan. Succession planning at the executive and middle management levels is the next immediate need for ASM.

“Our partnership with Cornerstone has allowed us to arrive at solutions that we wouldn't have come up with otherwise. I work with lots of vendors, not all of whom engage with us the way Cornerstone does. The fact we have not only an account rep but also a client success manager accessible to us that we can call with ideas, I feel very supported in trying to find the best learning and talent solutions possible.”

- Jennifer DePaola  
Director of Talent Management



Cornerstone OnDemand is a global provider of comprehensive learning and talent management software and services. Our solution is designed to help organizations empower their people and maximize the productivity of their workforce. To learn more, visit [www.cornerstoneondemand.com](http://www.cornerstoneondemand.com).