

Yum Brands: Delivering Fast Food and Content

BY PAMELA CAMPAGNA

A learning content management system helped Yum Brands standardize training in a decentralized environment, reuse content, improve retention and ensure a consistent customer experience.

With 37,000 restaurants in more than 110 countries and territories, more than 1 million associates, and global brands including KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell, Yum Brands is the world's largest restaurant company.

With so many stakeholders, learning is no small feat. To ensure consistent, personalized content, including standard operating procedures for the restaurants and e-learning for employees, Yum instituted a learning content management system (LCMS) in 2007.

From how food is prepared to the proper way to greet customers, Yum Brands strives to offer its customers a consistent restaurant experience from store to store. However, with employees frequently joining the team, updates to menu items, changes in food preparation tools and procedures, and regional considerations, maintaining that experience can be a challenge.

To manage brand integrity, each Yum brand maintains operating standards that define how to prepare food, serve meals and operate restaurants. The brands use these standards to support training materials developed and maintained in the LCMS. The standards are also reused to create other training tools, such as training cards, observation checklists and build cards. Housing materials in the LCMS enables the organization to perform two functions key to the success of its training programs: content development and management, and personalized delivery.

To Each Brand Its Own

Each brand has a core set of products, but depending upon geography, that brand also can have regional menu options to cater to local customers, as well as equipment variations. So, instead of all learning being

centralized in one location, learning is decentralized within business units.

To maintain the accuracy of the learning content developed and accessible in the LCMS, each business unit creates standard operating procedures (SOPs) to define each restaurant's procedures and serve as the basis from which all other learning tools are created. SOPs, ranging from how employees should wash their hands to prepping food, are developed through a collaborative process by developers in each business unit.

"Using the SOP as the source content maintains the integrity of all our learning tools and ensures all workers are trained on approved material leading to operations that are consistent across the board for that business unit," said Mary Beth Schuckman, manager of learning technologies for Yum Brands.

Use It Once, Use It Twice

Even though Yum operates in a decentralized environment, content reuse is important. By reusing content that originates from one source, the SOP, all learning for a particular procedure is consistent, regardless of its format or where it is deployed. "In the past, we would find a restaurant worker trained in a certain process, like making a chicken sandwich, in which one training guide said to build the sandwich one way, and another guide they were looking at said to build it slightly differently. This put the burden on the restaurant worker to seek clarification or decide for themselves which way to proceed," Schuckman said.

Further, to ensure consistency and avoid duplication of development efforts, each piece of content the brands create is frequently reused in additional



formats, depending on the audience, situation and usage for which it is intended. For example, the content for making a chicken sandwich could appear in an e-learning course on preparing food; as a training card available in the restaurants for shoulder-to-shoulder training; as a build card for reference; or even as a trainer checklist so a manager can verify that an employee performed the proper steps in the right order. Rather than creating four separate files, the content is published from the LCMS in the chosen format.

“At the end of the day, we want our restaurant employees to have the training and tools they need to do their job,” Schuckman explained. “With an LCMS, content maintenance is much more efficient, especially if you reuse content as much as we do.”

Hand washing is a good example of this. “Hand washing is a critical procedure for our employees to understand, and it appears throughout the standards hundreds of times. If we had to manually change the content each time there is a change to a procedure, it would be nearly impossible,” she said. “With the LCMS,

we can make the change once in the SOPs, and everywhere that content is reused is automatically updated, including e-learning and tools available for print.”

Make It Personal

Another LCMS benefit that Yum relies on is the ability to deliver personalized content based upon brand, region, if a store is franchise or customer owned, and employee role. This approach ensures that Yum associates receive the exact content that’s relevant to them. Yum leverages personalization in two ways: delivering the standards and delivering Web-based training.

Before the implementation of the LCMS, standards were delivered to U.S. stores in multiple large binders containing all the standards a store in that brand might need, but they weren’t tailored for that particular store. For the international restaurants, the standards were available on a website but were many years old and were available only in English. The sheer volume of restaurants and the rate of change in materi-

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als made it impossible for each restaurant to have standards that were specifically relevant to the products it sold and the equipment at that particular location.

The LCMS changed all that by allowing Yum to attach metadata to content, enabling the company to customize the SOPs to an individual restaurant. “We are able to give restaurants exactly the information they need, nothing more and nothing less,” Schuckman said. “They don’t have to sift and sort through multiple binders to find desired information. Now, they can access all the standards online that pertain specifically to their restaurant.”

Like many organizations, Yum utilizes Web-based training to educate its workforce, and with the multitude of job roles, from restaurant managers to delivery drivers and customer service reps, the company has significant and different training requirements. Not

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only is Yum able to meet these training demands, the company is able to deliver training personalized to an individual based on his or her job role and restaurant concept. For example, restaurant managers and delivery drivers may enroll in the exact same course, and the manager sees all the course content while a delivery driver sees only the content that pertains to his or her specific job.

In Yum’s LCMS, there may be a master course for a procedure employees need to complete. When an individual logs in to one of these courses, attributes are passed to the LCMS about that learner. Depending on that person’s job role or the type of restaurant he or she works in, content is dynamically removed from the course that doesn’t apply to that individual. For example, references to a drive-through procedure are removed for someone in a store without a drive-through.

“The benefits of personalization are twofold for Yum,” Schuckman said. “First, we are able to consistently and efficiently train our workers to deliver the experience our customers expect. Second, our content developers can efficiently create one e-learning course, and with the use of metadata, deliver it to a variety of audiences only providing content that applies to each unique learner.”

Benefits for the Business

Starting in quarter four of 2010, Yum and its brands started to measure the effectiveness of its learning programs in the U.S., and early data suggests training has a big impact on the organization. “To see if we could get some understanding of how effective our training programs are, the brands started to track learning data against staff turnover and retention rates. We learned for one brand, where all training was completed by staff, versus only 10 percent completed, turnover rate dropped from 134 percent to just under 79 percent, significantly below the brand’s average,” Schuckman said.

“In another comparison, we found that retention jumped from 57 percent to 77 percent when training was fully completed by the staff. In both of these studies, we are hesitant to attribute the entire gain in retention to our training, but it is clear there is a direct correlation between training and retention,” she said.

Yum also ties training back to measurements of restaurant quality. To grade each restaurant, Yum created CHAMPS — customer, hospitality, accuracy, maintenance, product and service. The average national rating for one brand’s restaurants in the U.S. is 86.5 percent. For restaurants that received training, the average is 89 percent, and for those that received less than 10 percent of the training, 83 percent. This indicates training is important to the overall restaurant experience.

“Without a doubt, the personalized delivery and content creation and management functionality the LCMS provides is critical to the success of our learning program and contributes to the overall success of our brands,” Schuckman said.

“The more we learn about and use the LCMS, the more possibilities we see for the future of training at Yum,” she said. “We want to further support the need for our restaurant teams to access just the right personalized content at just the right time. Also, by having the content centralized within the LCMS and with the content separated from the delivery technology, we’re confident we can meet new demands even if we don’t know what they are right now.” **CLO**

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