

new

needs



products



services

Industry Needs Inspire New Products and Services

Find a need and fill it has always been the mantra of those in commerce. Workplace performance suppliers in particular know that to stay viable in an ever-evolving industry, they must not only follow the trends but also stay one step ahead. Now that training is percolating again they are introducing ever more innovative products and services to meet the needs of the reinvigorated profession.

In this New Products and Services Preview, the following companies share their new offerings and explain what the drivers were for these developments.



Advertorial



www.benchmarkhospitality.com

The most helpful site visit you'll ever take.

When you visit benchmarkhospitality.com, you'll find everything you need to plan your next meeting in one convenient location. We've used our experience as an industry leader in corporate and group meetings to assemble all of the tools and resources necessary to make your meeting a success. And with our unique properties found within the Benchmark portfolio, you're sure to find the perfect location for any occasion.

New Strategies for Developing Your People Portfolio

"A consistent top challenge for many companies is how to hire and retain talent," says Steven Krupp, senior managing vice president, **The North American Consulting Practice for Right Management**, Philadelphia. (www.right.com) "The aging of the workforce and the slow but steady economic recovery has created an urgent need for many organizations to fill holes in their talent pipeline. In addition, companies need to manage talent differently than they did in the past—with a sharper focus than ever on cost-effectiveness and productivity. And, of course, organizations not only want to ensure they have the right talent in the right place but also that their talent investments are aligned with their goals.

"In our quest to find a solution to this pressing need, we applied the principles of supply chain management to the human side of the business and created a new process we call Talent Value Management. By using supply chain principles, Right Management helps an organization determine the kind of talent needed; where to get it and how to develop it; and how to classify and organize the talent. The process is also used as a way to help HR professionals become better business partners with the senior leadership of their companies.

"This timely solution helps organizations become more strategic in how they invest in human capital—their people portfolio. The

most critical component of this solution is what we call talent segmentation, which analyzes not the individual talent but the critical role the position plays within an organization.

"Traditionally, organizations developed their high potential people. But we say that before an organization even thinks about grooming their high potential employees, they first need to think about which roles are most critical to their business strategy and goals.

"We have identified four roles: 1) Production, 2) Master, 3) Ambassador, and 4) Prime Mover. Production roles are not complex and are relatively standardized from one organization to another. Master roles are highly complex, such as technology or engineering in some organizations, but the talent needed to fill these roles is neither markedly different from that employed by others nor distinctive in terms of the company's strategy. Ambassador roles are distinctive and important in delivering company products or services, such as sales or customer service, but they are not highly complex in themselves. Prime Mover roles are the most critical to a company's strategy in terms of both differentiation from the competition and difficulty in acquiring or replacing.

Once the roles are analyzed, a company will know where to put the bulk of its resources and which roles to invest in modestly or even to outsource. With this information in place, the company is prepared to train, develop a succession process, work on re-

tention factors, and address other human capital issues with solid strategic grounding.

"After the Talent Value Management process, we offer a variety of implementation assistance to clients, including an additional year-long, key talent development program, Leading for Performance, which is targeted specifically to the Prime Movers or those employees who have the potential to be Prime Movers. There are five elements that make Leading for Performance unique: 1) It includes a comprehensive, targeted assessment. 2) It's specifically designed for Prime Movers. 3) Each Prime Mover has a personal coach. 4) Several leadership workshops are offered that are a partnership between Right Management and the company's internal sponsors. 5) The Prime Movers work in groups on real business problems that are critical to the organization's success."

Redesigned Website Facilitates Planning

"We deal mostly with people who plan meetings but who are not necessarily professional meeting planners," says Jack Schmidt, chief marketing officer, **Benchmark Hospitality International**, The Woodlands, Texas. "We wanted to make their task easier and to become known as an industry resource. Our idea was to redesign the Benchmark Hospitality Website and to offer extensive advice and information on how to plan a meeting. We wanted to guide those people whose main responsibility is

something other than meeting planning through all the steps that are involved in such a venture, regardless of whether they book their meeting with Benchmark.

"Also now that the industry has rebounded, meetings are once again being planned farther in advance, so we wanted to encourage trainers to book early enough so that they get the type of space they need. Because so much time was lost over the past couple of years, trainers are now really focused on their meeting content and business objectives. If we can offer an easy-to-follow tool to help them plan their meetings, then they can focus more on the task at hand—meeting their organization's informational needs."

Benchmark did not undertake such a redesign project lightly, nor did they presume to know exactly what people needed. To elicit the data, Benchmark designed four flights of research and worked with a field of 500 customers who agreed to provide feedback. With their customers' input, Benchmark continued to refine the site's development through all four levels of research. "We credit the resulting Website—both the information and the design—in large part to the input of our customers," says Schmidt.

On the newly designed Website (www.benchmarkhospitality.com) the "Planning Resources" section offers 12 informational categories for those involved in planning a meeting. They include conducting a needs assessment, contracts, planning and logistics, and evaluation and ROI. In addition, there is a meeting "Tip of the Month," two built-in calculators for estimating the space needed for an event and determining the currency exchange rate in another country, and links to meeting planning publications.

"We really wanted a less sales-driven approach to business and to position ourselves as a solutions provider. Our hope is that those customers who are not affiliated with a professional meeting planner will gain value from our site and in using it will consider booking one of our 26 Benchmark proper-

ties. If Benchmark Hospitality can be a resource provider to people who plan meetings, they will come to know us for that and perhaps will select us as their meeting venue provider at some point."

Electronic Learning for Soft Skills

"E-learning continues to be a popular way to deliver instruction, but there are pitfalls when it comes to using it to teach soft skills," says Mervyn Rosenzweig, president, **MR Communication Consultants**, Toronto, Ontario. (www.mrcomm.com)

"In response to the demand, we revisited a number of our programs and added electronic software to support them—but as performance aids rather than as e-learning. Management One, our 12-module supervisory core program, has been redesigned around such performance aids. For example, one is a six-step process to learn decision making; the participant now has an electronic tool that can be used anytime, anywhere when making a decision by themselves or electronically with others. We found that with soft skills it's hard to successfully use electronic learning unless you build it around a process—like the six steps for making a decision.

"Our two latest software programs are the Presentations Coach and the Negotiations Coach. The Presentations Coach came from our workshop Presentations at Work, which won the top international award for best instructional program from the International Television Association. The software is designed so that the learner builds a presentation in five successive steps. Then with one single click the program turns into a PowerPoint presentation. It's in effect a powerful performance aid.

"The Negotiations Coach takes the learner through a five-step process of preparing for a negotiation. The final result is a complete outline of a negotiation from opening offer to strategy and tactics.

"Our innovative, e-coaching support approach works, and allows us to address our customers' demand for effective e-learning in soft skill topic areas."

Masterful Presentations & Negotiations...



...Introducing *The COACH* e-Coaching Software

This unique software coaches you to create your most successful presentations and negotiations ever!

•
Stimulates you to drill down through 4 levels of critical thinking.

•
One click creates and formats all your PowerPoint slides in seconds!

FREE TRIAL OFFER
Try The Presentation *COACH*
or The Negotiation *COACH*
without obligation!

Call
1 (800)263-TEAM ext. 220
or **info@mrcomm.com**

The COACH
"Critical Thinking"
www.mrcomm.com



MR Communication Consultants Inc.