

Smart City Networks Implements New Training Plan, Saves \$22,000, Increases Productivity



Smart City Networks

Industry – Technology

Established – 1986

Headquarters – Las Vegas, NV

Products – Provides technology solutions for convention centers and hospitality venues

Footprint – Nearly 300 employees in 40 different sites across the country

Business Challenges

- Deliver training to employees in various locations — who are all on varying seasonal schedules
- Implement flexibility in training formats and time frames for training
- Eliminate travel costs associated with in-person seminars and training

Solution Results

- Flexible program and variety of topics to meet location schedules and manager needs
- Cost savings through local seminars and online training options
- Increased productivity and knowledge on key topics

Executive Summary

More than 25 years ago, Smart City Networks became the first company in its industry to recognize the importance of telecommunications for the exhibitor experience at convention centers. It began focusing its mission on making superior service delivery a reality.

Today, Smart City Networks manages the technology services for more than 6,000 events annually ... in more than 35 facilities, including trade/consumer exhibitions, conferences, and meetings. It serves more than 60 sectors – from consumer electronics to home and garden shows.

Linking the Educational Connections

Smart City Networks decided to develop a consistent training program for its management teams. It needed a solution that provided a variety of subjects and presentation formats while keeping costs low. Smart City Networks looked at several different opportunities and training providers. National Seminars Training was one of those providers.

J.P. Windle, director of human resources at Smart City Networks, spoke with a STAR12 account representative at length, and ultimately chose STAR12.

According to Windle, “The STAR12 program offered the most cost-effective, dynamic, and diverse training opportunities for Smart City Networks on a national level. It was tailored enough to cover all of our needs and, overall, was exactly what we were looking for. It was the right combination for us.”

Working together, Smart City Networks and the Enterprise Learning Solutions team put together a combination of public seminars and online audio and webinar training options that would accommodate managers in each city location in the company, no matter what their work schedules were.

“We are located all over the country, and with the recession, the cost is too high to fly managers in for training. This is why we love STAR12. We can still train and reach out to others at the same time,” said Windle. “The program itself is exceptional and outstanding. Anyone can benefit from it, and there is such a great offering and variety, it's easy to choose from.”

Communicating Past the Challenges

Cost and flexibility were two main concerns for Smart City Networks when it started looking for a training solution, and the Enterprise Learning Solutions team helped with both.

Smart City Networks has many locations across the country, and each hosts different event schedules. It became difficult to coordinate training for all Smart City Networks managers at one time, in one place.

According to Windle, "The majority of our centers all run differently, so we can't really do traditional training. A busy season for one location might be the downtime for another. In the past, we tried to bring all of our managers to our headquarters for formalized training, but that quickly became very costly."

The Enterprise Learning Solutions team helped Smart City Networks create a training program that was flexible enough to let each city participate as time and event seasons allowed. Each manager had to attend four in-person seminars and four online webinars a year. Smart City Networks put together a combination of public seminars and online audio and webinar training options that employees could choose from in order to fulfill their training goals.

Windle states, "This solution lets our management go to webinars or seminars when they have downtime or are available. As some areas enter their slower times of year, we've seen participation pick up. We really appreciate the flexibility that STAR12 has created in this training program."

The program includes a variety of one- and two-day seminars in all the cities where Smart City Networks operates. Training can be scheduled quickly and easily – at the best time for each area's event schedule. With the combination of local seminars and online options, all costs for travel and lodging have been eliminated.

A Training Solution That Exhibits Positive Results

The program was offered to 70 members of Smart City Networks, mainly general managers and exempt management team members. As of spring 2011, the group had participated in over 1,000 audio conferences and webinars and nearly 60 public seminars, with a cost savings of nearly \$22,000 from previous training options.

"They think it's awesome," said Windle. "Since implementing STAR12 training in our company, we have seen more productivity, more understanding on subjects such as communication and leadership, and new ways to incorporate things they've learned into their jobs."

Why Choose NST?

Smart City Networks chose STAR12 for online training and public seminars because of the program flexibility and the large variety of topic choices employees have.

The STAR12 program offers unlimited access for an entire year to every live seminar produced by NST. In the last year, more than 11,000 seminars were offered in more than 350 locations throughout the United States and Canada, and members can attend seminars in their immediate area or anywhere training is provided in North America.

Customers also receive unlimited 24/7 access to the STAR12 online learning collection of training tools, videos, webinars, skill assessments, and more.

"Being well into the program, it's just a great way to go. We love the variety and that we don't have to pay individually for things. This program offers the most bang for the buck. I'd highly recommend it to anyone, and in fact, I have recommended it to those in my local human resources chapter and other monthly meetings I attend," said Windle.

"We look forward to continuing our training through STAR12 and working with them to improve our reporting tools and streamlining our course structure to fully benefit managers of all levels and to be more facility specific."