**NST™**
National Seminars Training

# Strong Training Options for SofterWare

## SofterWare

**Industry –** Software

**Established –** 1981

**Corporate Headquarters –** Horsham, PA

**Products –** Software solutions for nonprofit organizations, child-care centers, camps, and schools and online payment solutions

**Footprint –** Over 150 employees

**Business Challenges**
- Finding a cost-effective solution for training that offers a large selection of subjects to fit education goals of employees

- Need a variety of learning methods to provide the environment that best meets employee-preferred styles

- Flexibility to allow employees the option of choosing the best time to attend training

**Solution Results**
- Reasonable training costs especially with the inclusive STAR12 program

- Easy-to-use training site with a broad range of training topics and venues

- Lunch-and-learn events to share training as a group to enhance the learning experience

## Executive Summary

*SofterWare's mission is to develop and support software that is easy to learn, easy to use, and adaptable to a user's unique needs. Current products include multiple software solutions and platforms for use by the nonprofit community, child-care centers, camps, and schools, along with a patented online payment solution. The SofterWare staff offers expertise and longevity to its clients with a team of professionals that is dedicated to providing complete customer satisfaction through outstanding products and services.*

## Flexible Systems to Reach Educational Goals

With a staff of over 150 employees that includes programmers, trainers, support teams, and account managers, SofterWare needed a training program that could match its diverse employee needs. It required both access to a large selection of topics that appealed to various employee education goals, plus a variety of content delivery methods to fit individual preferred learning styles. In addition, not all employees are based at the corporate headquarters, so the training solution needed to be flexible enough to accommodate various locations.

SofterWare chose NST and the STAR12 program for its employee training program. "We looked at other programs, but with the breadth of topics available and the STAR12 program, NST won out," said Dr. Nathan Relles, president of SofterWare. "It is reasonably priced and delivers topics that appeal to everyone in various categories, including technical skills, soft skills, and communication."

SofterWare employees have embraced the STAR12 program and continue to sign up to participate in the training. Their satisfaction with the program has encouraged other staff members to get involved. "We plan to increase membership in this valuable program as we encourage more employees to join," said Kathy Piunti, director of human resources for SofterWare. "This program plays a role in increasing employee engagement as well as attracting top talent to join SofterWare."

## Solid Implementation, Solid Results

Since implementing the STAR12 program at SofterWare, it has empowered employees to become even more involved in the learning process and to take the initiative for making the program into a tool that can benefit the entire company.

To encourage participation, SofterWare has created programs to accommodate group learning. "We have a monthly Lunch-and-Learn scheduled so the STAR12 members can attend a webinar as a group, which encourages discussion and enhances the learning experience," said Piunti. "We have someone go through one of the webinars ahead of time, and then at the lunch they discuss what it covered and ways everyone can implement the training afterwards."

SofterWare also gives employees training benchmark goals to achieve to help them continue on their learning path. "We encourage our employees to complete one STAR12 program a month, whether it is a webinar, a self-study program, or another type offered," said Piunti. "We also encourage employees to attend one external program each year to get them out of the office. We recommend they attend in groups of more than one person to get them to open up and share their thoughts with those in their group, which helps them form a bond with others."

Feedback on the training is also important at SofterWare, and it has created a shared document for employees to provide feedback on the courses they have completed. "This is a very valuable resource to enable employees to understand more about the programs before they register," said Piunti. "It also creates a network of employees with specific interests and expertise, which also encourages group learning and accountability."

## Building on Program Success

With the strong initial participation by employees, SofterWare is constructing a more formal process for enrolling employees in the program and monitoring effective use of the training resources. Included in this process will be an evaluation by and with the managers of the STAR12 participants. "We hope to establish ways of measuring the program's success in terms of improved employee skills and knowledge, as well as their overall participation," said Piunti.

Another facet of the STAR12 program's success at SofterWare includes the company's ongoing relationship with its senior training consultant. "Our training consultant offers a positive and helpful approach to all of our questions," said Piunti. "When we held our kickoff meeting for current and new employees, our consultant provided a very informative demo and an additional one for others who couldn't attend. We consider our training consultant the star of the STAR12 program."

## Why Choose STAR12 and NST?

SofterWare chose STAR12 training as a cost-effective training program for its employees that would be flexible and offer the variety of topics and training methods to fit all employees. The training solution has delivered on all of SofterWare's critical needs and offered a valuable resource to the entire company.

"Our experience with NST and STAR12 has been phenomenal," said Relles. "We have our own online training for our clients, including a webinar program, courses our clients can attend, and online documentation, so our appreciation of the STAR12 training program comes from experience. They do a great job, and we know the difference."