



Increasing user adoption, enabling scalability, and building a learning organization

Founded 1988 and the nation's leading producer of organic dairy, Organic Valley is a cooperative of farmers producing award-winning organic milk, cheese, butter, produce, healthy snacks, and more.

Between 2006 and 2016, Organic Valley expanded rapidly, increasing gross revenue by 350% and staff by 160%. While this growth enabled the company to capitalize on rising consumer demand for organic foods, it also strained the company's manual talent management processes.

"We had numerous manual protocols in place that weren't scalable," said Mark Schroeder, HR/L&OD Technology Strategist at Organic Valley. "Learning, performance management, and succession were all managed with a combination of spreadsheets and hand written documents. We have a lot of required training—USDA, FDA, OSHA—but making sure that everyone took their training was both challenging and time consuming."

Organic Valley's rapid growth also led to the need to rethink leadership. "As the organization grew quickly the emphasis for managers and leaders was technical expertise," says Jerry McGeorge, VP of Cooperative Affairs. "As we've matured organizationally, we've recognized the need to hire and develop for strong leadership ability and overall business acumen."

Why Cornerstone

In 2016, Schroeder attended the HR Tech Conference—and had a key "aha" moment which led him to establish a tenet that Organic Valley was going to use as few HR platforms as possible.

Learning

Recruiting

Performance

Succession

Industry: Manufacturing (Food and Beverage)

Region: United States

Employees: 950

Live Since: 2016

Business Impact: Increased applications by 42%, Increased training completions, Enabled customization, Created a one-stop shop for learning, Reinforced learning with mini lessons, Delivered manager training.





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- Mark Schroeder, HR/L&OD Technology Strategist, Organic Valley

He was committed to purchasing technology that was integrated, scalable, and customizable at no additional cost. “Cornerstone aligned with everything I had written in my HR manifesto. In addition, Cornerstone had passed our four-month security review with flying colors.”

Today, Organic Valley relies on Cornerstone Learning and Cornerstone Recruiting and plans to roll out both Cornerstone Performance and Cornerstone Succession. “Cornerstone can do just about anything. I like to say I’m not in the food industry, I’m in the L&D industry. And Cornerstone is a platform where I get to leverage everything I know about L&D to make our organization better.”

The Results

Increased applications by 42%. Since implementing Cornerstone Recruiting, Organic Valley has seen a significant increase in applications. “As the talent market continued to constrict, we sensed we were losing applicants due to a lengthy online application process,” said Ashley Dahlen, employment Manager at Organic Valley. “With Cornerstone, we’ve seen an increase of 42% in applications. Candidates comment on how simple it is to apply. That’s feedback we love to hear!”

Increased training completions. Previously, employees had little visibility into training. “We’ve seen an increase in completions because opportunities and records are in front of people,” said Schroeder. “We have almost 100% user adoption. With Cornerstone, I also have 100% confidence in the fact that training has been assigned.”

Enabled customization. The team can align Cornerstone’s functionality with Organic Valley’s unique processes, at no

additional cost. “The ability to customize so many aspects of the platform has been key. There aren’t many platforms that can do what Cornerstone does. Of all those platforms, Cornerstone is the easiest for the end user and for the administrator to get what they want without feeling they’ve invested tremendous amount of customization.”

Created a one-stop shop for learning. To engage new users, the team held a contest for branding Cornerstone Learning. “An employee suggested we call it ‘The Tool Shed,’ which is genius, because it’s the place you go to get the tools you need to do your work,” said Schroeder. “Everybody knows that for anything learning, they visit The Tool Shed.” Organic Valley is also using Cornerstone to manage enrollment for upcoming in-person trainings taught by SMEs, as well as cultural and social events, instead of relying on emails.

Reinforced learning with mini lessons. Organic Valley uses Cornerstone to manage the Continuum of Learning Program. Designed by Carrie Bero, Senior Learning and Organizational Development Specialist at Organic Valley, the program increases learning retention and engages managers. “We use Cornerstone to deliver 7-, 14-, and 30-day interval lessons and ‘engagement guides’ to managers before and after employee learning,” said Bero.

Enabled manager training. Managers and executives take ongoing leadership development training through Cornerstone. “Our development focus for leadership has shifted to influence current and future leadership capability, style, and execution, while also creating unity at all levels of leadership,” says Kimberly Frederickson, Director of Learning & Organizational Development.

Cornerstone | small & medium business

Cornerstone is committed to helping small to medium-sized businesses develop an engaged workforce to drive higher performance and revenue.
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