

# Novartis E-Mail Excellence Case Study

by Strategic Learning, Inc.'s Alliance Partner *Get Control!*<sup>™</sup>  
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## Executive Summary

Companies are only beginning to recognize that employees are spending up to 35% of their working-time using e-mail -- a tool for which they have never been trained.

Novartis, a global leader in the pharmaceutical industry with 98,000 employees, recognized that investing in a robust international e-mail training program would yield the following benefits:

- Increased productivity
- Streamlined communications
- Reduced potential for confidentiality breaches
- Reduced legal liability
- Reduced network congestion
- Improved work/life balance
- Reallocation of resources into high return-on-investment activities
- Enhanced global reputation with partner companies

Consequently, in 2006 the Executive Committee Novartis (ECN) defined a key strategic activity to improve the benefit of e-mail and business communication at Novartis.

A 75 minute training program called E-mail Excellence was developed in collaboration with Strategic Learning's Alliance Partner, *Get Control!*<sup>™</sup>. *Get Control!*<sup>™</sup> is an email efficiency & etiquette training company focused on enterprise wide behavior-change initiatives.

## The E-mail Excellence Training Program

Dr. Flora Zaman of the Novartis Group Information Security (NGIS) Team took the lead in refining and implementing Email Excellence which was originally piloted by the Novartis Oncology team. The result was an innovative program focused on a small number of high impact email best practices that could be adopted by all Novartis colleagues. The program was comprised of highly interactive classroom training reinforced by computer based e-learning.

The global E-mail Excellence rollout was supported by a well-orchestrated internal communications campaign. Materials were developed in seven languages and training took place in over 50 countries around the world. The benefits of the global rollout justified a strong investment in a behavior-changing e-mail program. Employment of an experienced, professional training organization ensured engaging and consistent message delivery

### E-mail Excellence Program Objectives

- Demonstrate Professionalism - Appropriate e-mail use and language reflect Novartis' core values of candor, trust, and integrity. Increase Productivity - Novartis set the following goals:
  - Reduce e-mail volume by 20%: If all Novartis associates reduced the number of e-mails sent and received by 20%, on average every associate would save the equivalent of 15 work days per year.
  - Improve e-mail quality by 50%: Brief, concise and to-the-point e-mails are more effective and require less time to process.
- Protection from Liability - Employee awareness may protect Novartis from litigation.



The Average Professional's Day

## E-Mail Excellence – Initial Performance Metrics

5,300 associates attended the live training sessions world-wide and 2,760 associates completed the e-learning module. Impact assessment surveys were conducted two weeks before and after training. 553 colleagues completed the pre-training survey. Two week post-training surveys were completed by 128 classroom participants and 98 e-learning participants. Post training responses were evaluated against baseline.

### Post Two Week Impact Assessment Survey Results:

- Time spent on email was reduced by 26% for classroom training participants and 21% for e-learning participants.
- Classroom training participants reported saving 12 days per year in e-mail processing time compared to 9 days for e-learning participants:
- E-mail Excellence could save over 1,000,000 days per year for Novartis' 98,000 colleagues once rolled out enterprise wide.
- Classroom participants reported a reduction in total e-mails sent per year of 1,162 compared to 960 for e-learning participants.
- The quality and clarity of e-mail increased by 35% for all groups.
- Time wasted on e-mail was reduced by 17% for all groups.
- 99% rated the classroom program as "Excellent" or "Good" compared to 94% for e-learning.
- 91% of classroom participants indicated that E-mail Excellence had improved their productivity compared with 89% of e-learning participants.
- Sharing of e-mail best practices rose by over 100% over baseline for both classroom (28% to 60%) and e-learning participants (28% to 67%).
- 97% of classroom training participants would recommend E-mail Excellence to all colleagues compared to 98% for e-learning participants.

Deployment of the classroom training program will continue throughout Novartis in 2008. E-learning will be made available for three years providing an opportunity for Novartis to achieve long-term, sustained behavior change for existing and new hires.

## Key Insights

- One agreed upon success factor was to “aim high” when setting goals as this tended to motivate and inspire greater participation across the enterprise. The goal for quantity reduction (20%) was exceeded (goal attained=26%) and the goal for quality improvement (50%) was missed. However, all stakeholders felt that a 35% increase in the quality/clarity of email was an outstanding result.
- Live training was generally regarded as superior to e-learning by colleagues who experienced both delivery methods. Live training was ideal for large facilities such as Basel, Switzerland, East Hanover, NJ, and Florham Park, NJ. E-learning was ideal for geographically dispersed colleagues, small teams, and associates who had missed the live training. E-learning is also a low-cost sustainability strategy for new hires and colleagues who need a refresher course.
- Executive endorsement appeared to improve outcomes and turnout for the program. Endorsement from regional leaders at Novartis town hall meetings was also helpful.
- Involvement of cross-functional stakeholders from Legal, IT, HR, Communications, Research, and Executive teams made the rollout more robust.
- Involvement of international stakeholders from key continents and countries helped insure that materials were culturally sensitive and easily understood by all.
- Initial pilots conducted by the Novartis Oncology Division allowed for iterative improvements to the program based on Novartis culture, values and on-going initiatives.
- Translation review from local Novartis associates improved clarity of materials.
- Use of Novartis look and feel elements improved outcomes.

Want to know how you can have a similar high value, low cost E-Mail efficiency program? Get in touch with Strategic Learning, Inc. and *Get Control!*<sup>™</sup>



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