

American Airlines Celebrates Diversity and Inclusion

The business need

Diversity can be a sensitive topic for companies to address, so many turn to tried-and-true training programs to guide these conversations. However, the Diversity Strategies team at American Airlines wanted to create and update their long-standing diversity training program, internally known as the Value of Respect program, and shift from a compliance-based program to one focusing on interaction and engagement. The team envisioned a training course that truly represented the diversity of its employees and customers across races, ethnicities, religions, ages, disabilities, and more. In 2012, American Airlines partnered with Root Inc. to turn their idea into reality.

The solution

Comprised of an online course and an in-person rollout of Strategic Learning Map® modules, the new Value of Respect program was designed to move American Airlines' diversity training from policy-based to experiential. The goal was to empower employees to look at diversity through a new lens. Leveraging icons, infographics, drawings, conceptual illustrations, and metaphors, the Strategic Learning Map® modules told the story of diversity and inclusion visually, and facilitated conversations to create a common understanding across American Airlines' very diverse group of employees.

The captivating modules provided employees with the opportunity and tools to safely discuss diversity and inclusion, and allowed for organic conversations to occur. From this open and honest dialogue, employees could draw their own conclusions as to the best ways to handle situations where disrespect or discrimination might come into play.

In addition to the Strategic Learning Map® modules, employees could also utilize complementary online training, all of which was created to give employees a greater understanding of how the company's internal culture connects with its external brand and how respecting customers' differences will drive business success.

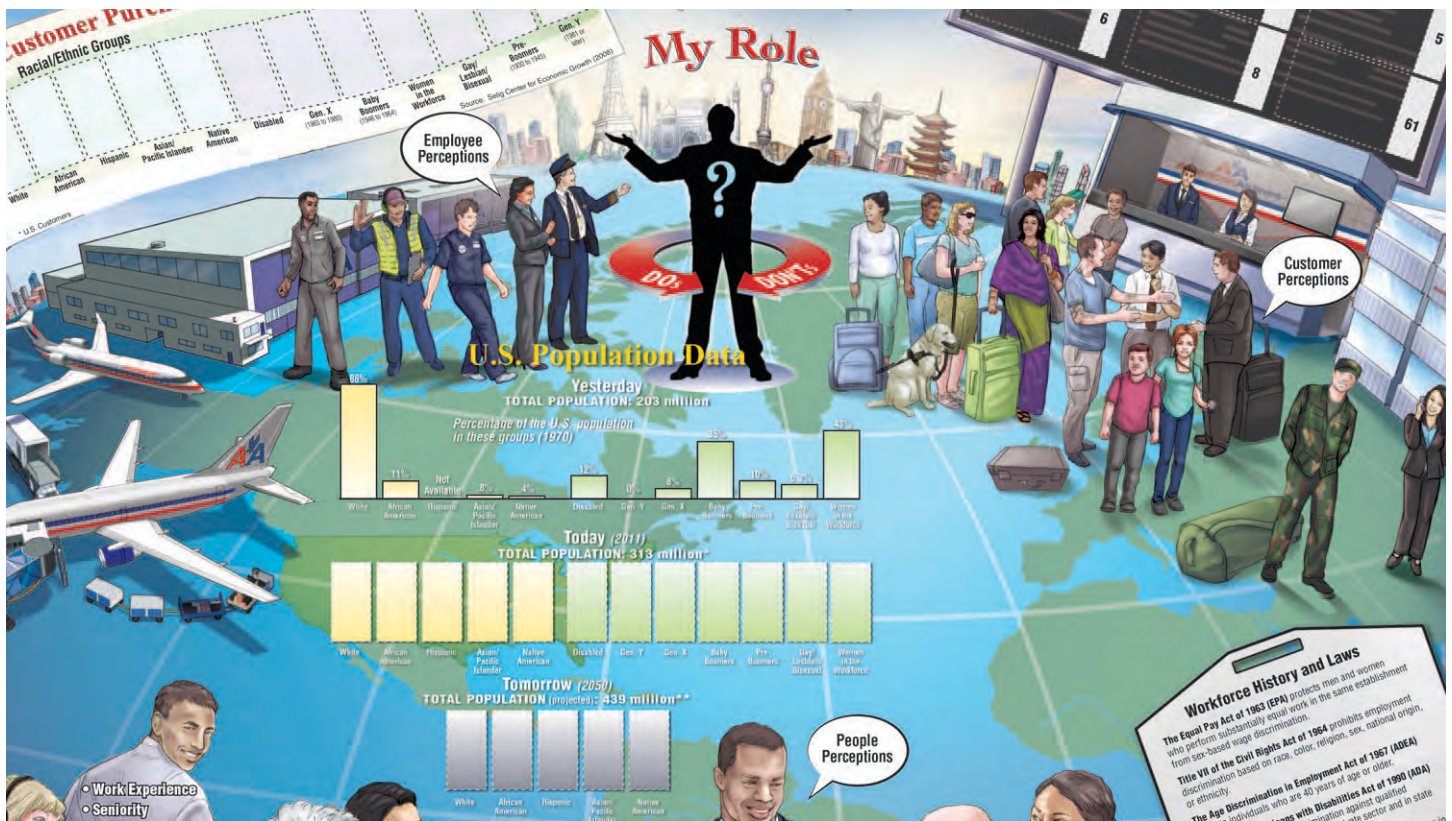
Results

Today, each American Airlines employee – from customer service representatives manning the front line to mechanics servicing aircrafts – participates in the training. It is expected that by early 2014 all American Airlines employees, more than 75,000 people, will have participated in the new Value of Respect program, either online or in person.



From its employees to its customers, American Airlines represents demographics and cultures from all over the world. The company is proud of its diverse culture and its long-standing commitment to creating a safe, welcoming environment for employees, customers, and suppliers around the world.





After completing the course, the Diversity Strategies team heard many “wows” and “ahas!” Employees expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect and have conversations with their colleagues. They sent letters sharing personal appreciation for access to a diversity program that provided the tools to engage in healthy dialogue around an often sensitive topic.

Thanks to the new Value of Respect program, which has also been adopted for international use, American Airlines employees worldwide now have a broader perspective and understanding of what diversity and inclusion are, and what these topics mean to their company’s continued success.

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About Root

Root is a strategy execution company that helps organizations engage people as a catalyst for change using a proven framework that consistently achieves clarity, ownership, and results.

