

Collaborative Strategy by DuPont Pioneer Helps Employees Understand The Importance of Connecting to Business Processes



DuPont Pioneer strives to be the world's most innovative plant genetics business, delivering industry-leading products and unmatched service and support. While there have been many changes since the business was founded in 1926, it has remained steadfast in its dedication to one guiding principle – the success of the business is based on its customers' success. That belief has helped Pioneer become a leading developer and supplier of plant genetics to farmers worldwide and has helped those farmers improve their lives by boosting productivity, profitability, and sustainability.

The business need

Already regarded as an innovator in its industry, Pioneer wanted to find a way to increase employee engagement with the goal of creating clarity, alignment, and a sharpened focus across the organization. Pioneer needed a program to help them understand the dynamics of a rapidly changing industry and an intensely competitive landscape. These factors provided the context for the overarching strategy. All employees needed to understand how they:

- Contribute to accomplishing the strategy
- Contribute to increased profitability
- Connect to one or more of the core business processes

Pioneer knew it wanted to move away from slide presentations and siloed communications plans. First and foremost, Pioneer wanted every employee to think like a businessperson, so the company needed to make business concepts clear and memorable.

Pioneer selected Root for its expertise and unique methodologies including visualization, dialogue, small-group interactivity, and facilitation.

The solution

The first order of business was to create an integrated team made up of individuals from Employee Communications and HR/Finance to lead the charge. More than 100 employees were tapped to help develop the first three *Strategic Learning Map*® modules focused on Pioneer Strategy, Planting Seeds for Growth, and Delivering to the Customer. These modules used icons, infographics, drawings, conceptual illustrations, and metaphors to tell a story in a visual way and facilitate conversations to create a common understanding across all functions, levels, and geographies.

“Root allowed us to bring together people from different areas throughout our organization and get them all on the same page. The *Strategic Learning Map*® modules provided such strong visuals that our employees were able to quickly comprehend and remember the content we were sharing. The result was a truly connected workforce that better understood our strategy, our key financial metrics, and our core processes.”

— Chris Jensen, APR
Employee Communications Manager,
DuPont Pioneer





Pioneer tested the modules using focus groups in three different regions, the U.S., Latin America, and Europe and subsequently rolled them out to the entire company. Pioneer held an off-site learning day near its headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa. More than 1,600 employees and 100 facilitators participated in the launch event in small facilitator-led sessions of no more than 10 employees per group. These sessions were specifically designed to help Pioneer employees:

- Understand the context for them in the marketplace and grasp the big picture regarding strategy
- Understand their role in accomplishing the strategy
- Comprehend financial metrics in a relatable way, allowing them to understand how they impact the bottom line
- See how their jobs correlate to business processes, own their actions, and improve productivity

Ultimately, approximately 8,500 Pioneer employees participated in the Root strategy sessions, which were offered in multiple languages around the globe.

Pioneer was able to provide employees with clarity regarding its strategy, including priority markets and crops, and to leverage the power of a well-defined vision.

Results

Root's innovative approach fit the bill for what Pioneer was seeking – a partner to help integrate its communications objectives in a memorable way, creating the greatest possible impact. Working closely with Pioneer subject-matter experts, Root creatively presented the critical information that helped employees avoid overload and embrace what really mattered to their jobs and the company.

Root's Strategic *Learning Map*® modules and accompanying materials allowed Pioneer to bring employees together and gain a shared sense of purpose. Pioneer was able to provide employees with clarity regarding its strategy, including priority markets and crops, and to leverage the power of a well-defined vision.

Root's *Learning Map*® methodology helped Pioneer successfully:

- Engage employees in every part of the organization
- Significantly increase employees' understanding of Pioneer's business
- Create memorable shared experiences
- Enable conversations that stimulated additional dialogue about where Pioneer was going, why, and how

A Pioneer survey deployed to gauge the reception to Root's program revealed the following:

- Ninety-five percent agreed/strongly agreed that the first *Learning Map*® visual increased their understanding of Pioneer's strategy and its link to customers and markets.
- Ninety-four percent agreed/strongly agreed that the learning session helped them understand how customer needs, strategy, financials, and core processes relate to each other.

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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.

