

Holland America Line®: Using 4MAT® to Engage a Diverse Audience

Holland America Line is a recognized leader in the cruise industry. Holland America Line's fleet offers more than 500 cruises annually to 350 ports in more than 100 countries.

Holland America Line (HAL) was looking for a platform for instruction that would enable their team to deliver engaging learning experiences to an international, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual audience. In 2007, Brian Johnson, Director of Corporate Training and Development, discovered the 4MAT model and recognized that the simplicity and interactive nature of 4MAT would appeal to the audience his team served.

DESIGNING AN OUTCOME-BASED CURRICULUM

The process of bringing 4MAT into the Holland culture began with advanced training on the application of the eight-step 4MAT model. Soon after the initial training, the team began development on a company-wide leadership and professional development curriculum for a catalog of 36 shoreside courses. The team used the 4MAT framework to build an integrated, outcome-based learning experience. "By using 4MAT to construct a course to the specific needs of all learners, the effectiveness of each module is increased significantly. In the model, the learner has the opportunity to practice, refine and extend their learning, and this provides a measurable way to determine if participants have grasped new concepts and to identify if learners are prepared to apply the new information in the workplace," shares Brian Johnson.

One of the advantages of understanding and using the language of 4MAT is the flexibility and speed gained in design. As the team developed curriculum, they identified which steps in the design could be treated as unique "learning objects" that could be easily customized for different audiences. The flexibility of the 4MAT model allowed for the same concepts to be delivered in a variety of ways as audiences changed, while still ensuring the consistency of presentation and corporate messaging.

Why 4MAT?

Holland America Line was seeking a solution for delivering engaging learning experiences to an international, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual audience.

EQUIPPING DELIVERY TEAM MEMBERS TO REACH ALL LEARNING STYLES

“We recognize one of the keys to training success is ensuring the facilitators are familiar with the design of the curriculum ... and fully understanding the 4MAT framework is key. The training team at Holland America are avid users of 4MAT and have been through the train-the-trainer courses offered by 4MAT 4Business®. We licensed a shortened version to ensure the HAL facilitators are prepared to instruct any class. This training has been incorporated into the standard Holland America Train-the-Trainer program, which is attended by all incoming team members, as well as shipboard and shoreside trainers throughout the company,” shares Johnson.

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can transform an organization’s training department.”**

Understanding how the trainer’s natural approach can be adapted to reach all learning styles has accelerated the skill development of the training team. “The Learning Type Measure is a key component of teaching facilitators about the 4MAT methodology. We have found when people understand the other three learning styles, not just their primary, they become more effective facilitators” shares Jaime Seba, Manager of Training and Development.

“While the course offering is newly launched, feedback on the new 4MAT-based program has been extraordinarily positive. Each course has an associated action plan which is supported by the learner’s supervisor. Integrating front-line leaders into the training process has extended the ‘Perform’ part of the learning process into the real world. Demand for internal training and performance consulting has increased significantly as a result of the positive impact of the new curriculum,” states Johnson.

The success of the new curriculum has been overwhelming, as more than 35 percent of corporate employees voluntarily attended training in the four months following the program’s launch. Of those who attended, more than half returned for a second course or more.

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WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM HOLLAND AMERICA LINE

- 1. Equip your delivery team with training in 4MAT.** When delivering “around the wheel,” the trainer plays four very different roles: facilitator, presenter, coach, and evaluator. Build a long-term development plan that supports team members in building skill in all four roles.
- 2. Use the model to build flexibility into your curriculum design.** When working on large-scale curriculum projects, make sure that all involved parties understand the language of 4MAT. This will help accelerate the design process. Think of the activities within each step of the 4MAT model as a “learning object” that serves a particular learning function. You can easily customize curriculum for different audiences by offering alternate activities.
- 3. Involve front-line managers in “pushing” learning out into the real world.** When designing the “Perform” step, involve front-line managers in supporting implementation and measuring learner success.