

About Sodexo

Sodexo USA (www.sodexoUSA.com) is the leading provider of food and facilities management in the United States, with \$5.5 billion in annual sales and 110,000 employees. Sodexo USA offers innovative outsourcing solutions in food service, housekeeping, grounds keeping, plant operations and maintenance, asset management, and laundry services to more than 6,000 corporations, health care, long term care and retirement centers, schools, college campuses, military and remote sites in North America. Internationally, Sodexo is the world's leading provider of food and facilities management services. Sodexo serves more than 90 cultures in more than 70 nations.

Sodexo Alliance was founded in Marseille, France in 1966 by Chairman Pierre Bellon; the United States headquarters is located in Gaithersburg, MD. Sodexo USA is a proud endorser of the Global Sullivan Principles for Corporate Responsibility.

Leadership

Pierre Bellon, Chairman

Michel Landel, President and CEO of Sodexo USA

Employees: 315,000 worldwide

Operations: 24,700 sites in 74 countries

Sodexo University is the Corporate University of Sodexo in the USA. Its degree programs in the workplace are conducted with IMCA Socrates™ and gain credit for degrees at Revans University – the University of Action Learning

Price: \$US 20 €20/£15



Sodexho Corporate University was presented the IMCA Egoli Award, for advancing the principles of action learning within the organization, at the IMCA's 20th Annual Multinational Graduation Congregation in August 2002. From left: Dr. Richard Teare – Chief Executive & Principal, IMCA; Arif Khan – Sodexho Corporate Vice President for Facilities Support and Development; Dr. Gordon Prestoungrange, Baron of Prestoungrange; Fran Szabo – Provost, Sodexho University; Harry Lenderman – Academic Dean, Sodexho University; Rick Lenderman – Associate Dean Facilities College, Sodexho University; Fred Lastar – Dean Facilities College, Sodexho University

The Sodexho University Story

Performance-Based Degrees Earned at Work



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*

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Foreword

Everybody Wins! Performance-based degrees at work

By Dr. Richard Teare

President, Revans University – The University of Action Learning
Chief Executive & Principal, International Management Centres Association
Chief Learning Officer, IMCA Socrates™ @ www.imcasocrates.com

This is the story of a journey into a new world of accredited learning at work. It is nothing short of a dramatic shift in thinking and learning in the workplace. The journey began two years ago when a small team from Sodexho Corporate University began to use IMCA Socrates™ to craft customized degrees for Sodexho associates at Associate, Bachelor and Master’s degree level. In these pages, the team, led by Dr. Harry Lenderman, Academic Dean of Sodexho University, reveals the amazing things that have happened since – insights from the lead team, the experiences of associates and their business coaches and much more besides.

What is IMCA Socrates™ I hear you ask? It is a system created by IMCA and Revans University based on three components: (i) the concept of a truly customized corporate university, (ii) an action learning approach (here action learning projects become the curriculum) and (iii) accreditation whereby associates gain credits that eventually lead to a degree. It is a formula with something for everyone. At Sodexho, the organization “wins” by getting practical solutions to operational problems and a highly motivated workforce committed to successful implementation. Individual associates “win” by getting a very worthwhile qualification from Revans University. Sodexho University itself “wins” as it models a new style corporate university where associates apply their knowledge to raise performance and the business coaches are successful managers within the company. According to Dr. Peter Honey, a European learning specialist, the effect is nothing short of the quantum leap required to become a learning organization. The approach invites organizations to behave as if learning through work is king.

Eager to “benchmark” with the best, I was invited by Sodexho University to attend a US corporate university conference in December, 2002. It became evident during the week that Sodexho had in fact created a much more advanced corporate university than most. Sodexho is a place where people talk about what they are

learning and how they are applying it – most corporate universities are still at the stage of fine-tuning their systems for learning. In fact, hardly any of the companies presenting at this major American event mentioned “learners” – not even the award winners!

I participated as a panel member in a discussion with corporate university leaders attending this event from around the world. The panel facilitator helpfully asked panelists to imagine that we were looking back on developments from the year 2007. Here is my view:

Professional excellence – the new educational paradigm

- (1) I foresee ever-closer integration of learning and work. In essence this means providing faster, more flexible, customized learning pathways – and much greater use of action learning to facilitate this. I believe that the rise of corporate universities will drive the creation of a parallel, equivalent (but different) paradigm in business and management education. This will happen partly in response to growing corporate dissatisfaction with the MBA culture, centered as it is on inherited notions of “academic excellence”, but more so, as corporate university leaders gain in confidence and begin to see the corporate university as an educational entity in its own right. Professional excellence will sit at the heart of the new paradigm. Further, corporate universities will build their own external credibility via internalized accreditation structures.

Corporate universities as educational entities in their own right

- (2) I predict that in five years time, most corporate universities will be awarding their own accredited degrees, based on real world learning at work, in partnerships such as that described in this book. These new style awards will be highly prized degrees that recognize professional excellence at work and celebrate the fact that managers, supervisors and associates actually learn best at work. They will also reflect personal, portable, professional attainment and they will continue to be every bit as intellectually challenging as a traditional campus based degree. This will be derived from customized, deep level learning in a corporate world that is “fast and getting faster”.

The emergence of performance-based degrees

- (3) The concept of a professional or performance-based degree will build on all the infrastructure developments that have taken place since the advent of e-learning and significantly, it will provide the catalyst for turning input activity (such as training, e-learning, curricula resources) into outputs – all aligned with the needs of the business. The transition from input to output, via performance-

based degrees, will help to ensure that learners are motivated, fully engaged, recognized and rewarded for their professional attainments at work. This paradigm shift has already begun as is exemplified in this book. It will not compete head on with the traditional university world, rather it will provide an alternative, relevant pathway that blends learning and work and defines quality in a fluid, dynamic way as “fitness for purpose” – always as a mirror image of the organizational and personal priorities for individual learning.

The corporate university as a strategic driver of return on investment

- (4) I foresee the gap narrowing between the evaluation of personal and corporate learning outcomes and the outcomes of work itself. In essence, whatever measures and approaches are meaningful to the corporation as business evaluation tools will be deployed. So, whenever and wherever learning occurs, it will have to yield a demonstrable return on the investment in learning (by the corporate university) and on the expectations of the learner via a balanced scorecard approach.

The re-emergence of learner-centered evaluation

- (5) I believe that a predominantly learner-centered approach will come to the fore. The emergence of performance-based degrees will transform levels of engagement and motivation in learning at work. These will have customized pathways with bespoke designs linked to the needs of clusters or categories of learners (based on variables like seniority, experience, job roles and responsibilities). In this scenario, the outputs or applications will attract credit (rather like currency). Further, it will enable learners to align their own self-development with the needs of the business and formalize their own development in a way that is relevant and meaningful. As learners create and implement outputs from their own work, they become “experts” or put another way, “nodes” in the corporation’s own knowledge network.

The role of technology in the corporate university of the future

- (6) I have found that action learning provides a near perfect fit with e-resourcing. Here, the learner begins – not with the content or the courses, but with the questions and challenges they are facing at work. Then in practice they “draw in” the content, including online library resources, that might best shed light on or illuminate their questions. What arises from a learner-first, learner-driven approach to using technology is both liberating (for the learner) and valuable for the business. Here, the learner is able to customize how they use content or input work to create a “dynamic curriculum” that will enable them to find and

apply the answers and solutions to their questions. The body of knowledge is now so vast that unless learners can define their own questions, they will never know where to look! This mirrors and helps adults re-discover the power of self-directed enquiry that most of us used as children – asking innocent questions that are so often over-looked.

This book demonstrates that such future predictions can come true – in fact, my view of the mainstream future reflects what IMCA Socrates™ users have already accomplished. It is at the leading edge.

I am delighted that Sodexo has been able to utilize IMCA Socrates™ to create, customize and drive-forward its own performance-based degrees. Everyone certainly wins and the stories in this book couldn't be more powerful and compelling.

In every organizational setting there are heroes – I suspect that there are many at Sodexo, but I would sincerely like to thank Dr. Harry Lenderman, Dr. Frederic Lastar and Richard Lenderman and their colleagues for believing, trusting and leading the way, indeed for shaping the future of learning at work in the USA.

Buckingham England
October 2003



Lourdes Pichardo sings the national anthem at the commencement ceremony.



Preface

Navigation Directions

A word about how to navigate your way through this book is in order. You will notice that there are sixty-one chapters listed, as well as thirty-six participant articles. Each chapter is an individual output that can be read on its own. In fact, each chapter was written as it became obvious that there might be some value in sharing it. Due to the highly personalized nature of action learning, if you were to write this book the topics and order would be different. As you read a chapter, think of how it may serve as an example for your particular learning team. However, please keep in mind that even if you read every word we have written, the process of action learning best takes root when you actually take action! After a few action learning sessions, some of these chapters might make more sense. In that case, please feel free to use this book as a reference guide. We have tried our best to give future action learners a boost that can come from what we have learned. We do this hoping to supplement your own personal action learning experiences, not replace them. It will not be long before you might want to add a chapter or two of your own. In that case, please let us know so we can add it to the next edition or book. There is so much to learn from the process of action learning that no book will ever be able to cover everything about it. That is one of the attractions of the action learning process – in the end, the unique experiences and growth of many cannot be compressed into a book of any length. So please feel free to browse chapters that appeal to you or read the book straight through. It works fine either way.

This book is written so that you can see action learning through a multi-faceted lens. It is kind of like looking at a well-cut diamond. If an idea is presented from many different perspectives, then it starts to present a better picture of the whole than simply viewing it from one angle – even if it is the best angle. Some lessons overlap or even take differing views, but, just like looking at a diamond, the object itself remains complex and beautiful as a whole. Our hope is that eventually you will catch on to a core of ideas and results that action learning can produce. Enjoy the view!

Dr. Harry Lenderman



Acknowledgements

There are three of us who started the process: Dr. Harry Lenderman, Dr. Fred Lastar and Richard Lenderman. However, it was not long before a multitude of others joined us in our quest for learning. Dr. Burt Streicher and Dr. Arif Khan grasped the power of this process early on and sponsored others in their chain of command. Bob Richards and Judi Brubaker took up the torch immediately and led their teams through first graduation in July, 2003. You will see chapters in the book written by members of their teams.

Dr. Richard Teare of IMCA Socrates™ had the vision to place learning in the workplace and presented this concept to Sodexho. Thanks also to The Baron of Prestoungrange, Dr. Gordon Prestoungrange, Chancellor of Revans University – The University of Action Learning and President Emeritus of the International Management Centres Association (IMCA) in Buckingham, England, for his forty years of work in the area of action learning. We have stood on these great men's shoulders to begin our work here at Sodexho.

Dr. Sandy Shaw, VPHRD of Sodexho, trusted that we knew what we were doing and backed us from the beginning. Dr. Francis Szabo, Provost of Sodexho University, held our feet to the fire when it came to producing outputs that met the needs of Sodexho. The Division Directors of Training, all enthusiastic and supportive of our pilot, have each joined together in an action learning team that demonstrates their commitment to the growth and development of Sodexho employees. Denise Ammaccapane, Yvon Langlois, Brett Moore, Bob Schondelmeier and Andrea Woliver are to be commended for their leadership and vision. Also, thanks to Susan Goodwin for putting together the graphics for this book and Francine Dowd for her help with organizing it.

Then there are the real heroes of the process. We would hold up the achievements of our action learning graduates to the standards of any other university. We had confidence in them from the beginning, but nevertheless we were still amazed at the quality of outputs and positive impact these teams have had on Sodexho and our clients.

About the Authors

Harry Lenderman, Ed.D., is a consultant acting on behalf of Sodexho as the Academic Dean of Sodexho University through his Elk Forge Consulting company. He has spent the past twenty-five years at Sodexho developing management and leadership talent. His interests lie in the areas of leadership and innovation. His quest for a process aligning company goals and initiatives while serving the individual needs of the learner has led him to partner with IMCA Socrates Corporate University and Revans University. This partnership has allowed Sodexho to award accredited degrees to its employees. Dr. Lenderman received his doctoral degree in educational leadership and innovation from Wilmington College, and his master and bachelor's degrees from the University of Delaware. Dr. Lenderman can be reached at harry@elkforge.com or at (410) 392-9012 for business consulting purposes and by individuals interested in learning more about the action learning accredited degree program.

Frederic C. Lastar, D.Mgt., is the Dean of the Facilities College at Sodexho University. Prior to his current role, Dr. Lastar held several operational and support positions within Sodexho, including District Manager and Area Support Manager, Engineering. Prior to leaving the Navy in 1995, Dr. Lastar was a Leadership & Management Education & Training Instructor, and the Total Quality Management Implementation Facilitator on the west coast. Lastar received his doctoral degree in business management from the Global Campus of the International Management Centres Association in England, his master's degree in business administration (M.B.A.) from Webster University, and is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, B.S. Aerospace Engineering.

Richard A. Lenderman is the Associate Dean of the Facilities College of Sodexho University. He oversees the accreditation process for all degree candidates in the New England area, where he serves in the Sodexho Facilities Management Department at the Providence School District. Lenderman is a doctoral degree candidate with the Global Campus of the International Management Centres Association in England. He holds a Master of Science degree in Learning and Development from Revans University and a bachelor's degree in Latin American studies from Brigham Young University.

Participant Comments

“This is an exciting time for the Providence Facilities team, as we now have the opportunity to advance our education and strengthen our knowledge of facilities management, thus elevating our self-esteem. The ultimate beneficiary of the education initiative is our client. We’ll be better prepared to understand and respond to our client’s expectations, improve our performance, and develop the requisite skills necessary to move forward in the true spirit of Sodexho’s mission and values. The end result is client retention.” Bob Richards, master’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“Sodexho University is an excellent example of how unions and corporations can work together to improve the quality of life for all employees.” Ron Coia, Local 226 LIUNA Union, Business Manager

“I hope to better myself and help others to better themselves through Sodexho University. There is so much knowledge out there. Communication is the key to unlocking that knowledge.” Jo-Ann Scott, Sodexho hourly employee and associate’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“Action learning has helped me become a better person and leader. It has helped me understand and communicate in a better manner. It has helped me realize how much I have grown. With action learning you have a powerful learning tool for everyone.” Michael Hill, Sodexho hourly employee and associate’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“The knowledge and awareness it has given me helps me realize how important I am to this company.” Joe Garcia, Sodexho hourly employee and associate’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“Personally I have realized that managers and supervisors are human and that they make mistakes. Professionally I have learned how to manage a company and its money. I’ve learned to use action and development in my school.” Jessie Richardson, Sodexho hourly employee and associate’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“Action learning has had a tremendous effect on my learning. I find that this procedure of learning involves everyone. Sodexho should be commended for providing such a program. When everyone is included people feel a part of what is happening. Keep the program rolling; I see a great outcome from this program.” Stephen Brunetti, Sodexho hourly employee and associate’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“Sodexo University is an innovative degree program that allows us to delve into the aspects of the business that we would not normally be involved in. All of us are allowed to explore possibilities that would enhance the business as a whole and in doing so we are working towards a degree in higher education. Basically, Sodexo University provides us the opportunity to learn from where we work and increase what we earn from what we learn.” Lou Ricci, bachelor’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“Sodexo University has served as a motivational program to keep me on task due to the fact that I learn while performing my daily responsibilities at work. It’s a university that has a tracking schedule which I must follow in order to create a productive plan.” Miosotis Alsina, bachelor’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“Action learning gives workers with a busy lifestyle such as mine a chance to reach their potential, the commitment Sodexo shows its employees will be the standard by which all other companies will be measured. Sodexo University is improving our employee morale because we have jobs that have little or no advancement potential but with this program, it opens the door for many more employees.” Michael Burgess, bachelor’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“As a single parent, Sodexo University has provided me with an opportunity to achieve one of my lifelong ambitions. When would I find the time, let alone the energy, to obtain a degree? Like many others, I would get ‘the bug’ for a while and take a night course. I soon realized that there aren’t enough hours in a day to accomplish all there is to do to be successful. When the concept of action learning was initially proposed it piqued my interest. What a brilliant program! Life experience and a carefully outlined work-based curriculum quantified by outputs that would be unattainable in a traditional university setting could make the elusive degree become a reality. I soon realized that the process closely resembled my own philosophy of effective learning. Taking the ideas of many to solve work based problems is an effective team building method that allows all members to become involved in the decision making process. I feel that not only have I been able to gain valuable insight into others thought processes, I have imparted some of the knowledge that I have gained through my life to the rest of our action learning team. I am both proud and humbled to be a part of the inaugural class of Sodexo University.” Robert Richard, bachelor’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“Anything that is worthwhile in life is worth doing and doing well. This I feel is the case in my experience, being involved in action learning. I have found that problems can be solved by working in a team environment. I have also realized that you cannot

handle everything by yourself. Delegation and working with my peers has helped me in many aspects by enhancing my position as Assistant Custodial Manager. Also, I see other individuals in our company improving themselves through this action learning program by earning a degree. That is why Sodexho University is worthwhile and should be expanded upon.” Jim Norberg, bachelor’s degree graduate, July 2003, Sodexho University

“I have learned to communicate on a different level through Sodexho University. I now can look to others for help, I can better put things into perspective for the future, and I’ve learned how to advance in my learning. It’s like jumper cables: it shocks you into starting. It’s a step-by-step process: it helps you better organize and open your mind to see things. Again, it’s given me the skills I need to be successful in the future. I am grateful that the Sodexho University program has come to me.” Jorge Silva, bachelor’s degree graduate, July 2003, Sodexho University

“Sodexho University has afforded me an opportunity to achieve a bachelor’s degree. This would have been nearly impossible for me at this point due to some major responsibilities that I have taken on so early in my life. The decisions that I have made always required me to work full time leaving little time for attending college. The ability to work towards a degree in conjunction with doing my job is priceless. Thanks to action learning, I have earned my degree.” Michael DeFreitas, bachelor’s degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

“I believe that for the first time in my twenty-one years of working for Sodexho (and its antecedents) that I have been empowered to help guide the direction in which the Company is heading – and encouraged to do so – that our opinions do matter.” Peyton Lewis, master’s degree candidate, Newark Campus

“I’ve learned that we have the ability to alter our direction and that we need to be very careful about our decisions and the effect they will ultimately have on our clients and our company.” Louise Salinski, bachelor’s degree graduate, July 2003, Newark Campus

“Less than six months ago we were a group of ‘go with the flow’/don’t confront management kind of people. Now we know that we can influence management if we approach them in the right way. Management will listen when the problem and resolution is clearly structured.” Ninnie Carey, master’s degree graduate, July 2003, Newark Campus

“Action learning opens the mind to the skills that are required in the 21st century, such as daily business downsizing and reorganization of large companies. For example, our

own reorganization, or Output three, was a \$1.1 million custodial budget reduction. Through the team approach, and with our minds together, we came up with many ideas. We saved the client \$1.1 million and did not lose any productive work hours or lay anyone off. I've been in this business for twenty-eight years. I was a skeptic of action learning before I entered Sodexo University, but now I am a strong believer in this process." Charles O'Brien, bachelor's degree graduate, July 2003, Providence Campus

"Determination to learn is the key to a brilliant future. Ideas are exposed rather than being imposed. The action learning degree program is the most effective strategy to combine learning with real business applications. The Sodexo University concept has been a superb solution to increasing our employees' knowledge with reference to their jobs, as well as motivating them to have a brighter future, both professionally and personally. Action learning is an objective approach to developing professionalism and workplace excellence." Jorge Cardenas, master's degree graduate, Providence Campus

"The amazing fact we all learned was that there was nothing about this project that was simple.... I am very pleased with the progression of our team. We committed to one another, set goals and deadlines (and missed a few) and didn't give up even when we were overwhelmed. We listened to and respected each other's questions, even when it meant doing more work." Judi Brubaker, master's degree graduate, July 2003, Newark Campus

"Action learning has been a wonderful journey. I have learned so much from this experience, and I feel that my company has gained as well. In my opinion, institutional learning is important. However for those who have not obtained a degree, this is as good if not better than the traditional degree. You gain new learning and couple it with your business experience. If you take this combination and add in the team synergy, you have the formula for success." Louise Salinski, bachelor's degree graduate, Newark Campus

"Action learning is an on-going processes that, once you get really into, you never really step out of again. It's like an addiction; you can't stop thinking about problems in a non-Action learning way." Ninnie Carey, master's degree graduate, Newark Campus



*Sandra L. Shaw, Vice President
Human Resource Development,
speaks at the showcase of
achievement for the Class of 2003.*



*Frances Szabo, Provost Sodekho
University, congratulating
the class at the showcase
of achievement.*