



Brandon Hall Group
**EXCELLENCE
AT WORK**

Executive Interview

with **Lou Tedrick**,
Vice President, Global Learning & Development,
Verizon Wireless

and **Adriana Lange**,
Executive Director, Learning & Development,
Verizon Wireless

How Verizon's New-Hire Functional
Onboarding Keeps Pace with Hiring

About Verizon

Verizon is one of the largest communication technology companies in the world. With services in more than 150 countries, Verizon is a global leader in delivering innovative communications and technology solutions that improve the way its customers live, work, learn and play.

Founded in 2000, the company operates America’s most reliable wireless network and the nation’s premier all-fiber network, and delivers integrated solutions to businesses worldwide. With brands such as Yahoo, TechCrunch and HuffPost, the company’s media group helps consumers stay informed and entertained, communicate and transact, while creating new ways for advertisers and partners to connect.

Recognition

Verizon won six Brandon Hall Group HCM Excellence Awards in 2022.

EXCELLENCE IN HCM AWARDS

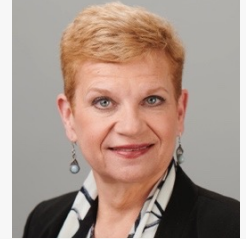


Learning and Development	2 Gold Awards
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	1 Gold Award 1 Silver Award
Talent Acquisition	1 Gold Award 1 Silver Award

The Brandon Hall Group Preferred Provider Program is specifically designed as a single source of truth that can validate your technology selection decisions.

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About Lou Tedrick



Lou Tedrick is a Human Resources professional with expertise in organization development, learning and development, and employee relations. As the Verizon Vice President of Global Learning & Development, Lou is responsible for enterprise-wide learning and development including Verizon’s Learning Strategy, Leadership and Executive Development, Upskilling/Reskilling, Product Training; CS and Sales Training (all consumer and business channels — employee and outsource vendors); Customer Training (business channel); Systems/Process/Policy Training; HR/Legal and Compliance Training; Network and IT Technical Training; Tuition Assistance; L&D Technology, Operations and Analytics, and digital performance support. Lou manages a virtual team of over 850 learning professionals across the globe.

Her team has received numerous Brandon Hall Group HCM Excellence Awards and ROI Institute Awards. Lou earned a Master of Labor and Human Resources, Master of Science and Bachelor of Science — all from Ohio State University. Her two young adult sons’ lifelong affinity for technology has inspired her passion for using innovative, commercial technologies for enterprise learning. She lives in New Jersey with her husband.



About Adriana Lange

Adriana Lange is the Executive Director-L&D who supports the Verizon Consumer Group organization. In this position, she leads Instructional Design and Training Delivery for the entire Verizon Consumer Group, including the Customer Success and Sales organizations. Adriana manages a virtual team of over 440 employees supporting 100,000 learners. Adriana

is a wireless professional with more than 33 years of experience in a variety of positions including Learning and Development, Knowledge Management, Customer Service, Marketing, Operations, Business Sales and Service and Leadership Development.

Adriana joined Verizon in 1990 as a Customer Service Representative and has grown her career by holding progressively more challenging positions in a dynamic industry that has moved the world forward. Adriana holds a Master of Business degree from Rutgers University, where she also earned her bachelor’s degree. Adriana resides in New Jersey with her husband and three children.

About Rachel Cooke



Rachel Cooke is Brandon Hall Group’s Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company’s project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 20+ years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research, and Performance Improvement industries.

RACHEL

Lou, with the plethora of opportunities created by “The Great Resignation” and the general competitive landscape that has been created for critical customer-facing roles, what has been the experience for you at Verizon? How has this impacted your recruiting strategy (such as retail and inside sales representatives, customer service specialists, retail store managers and customer service/call center managers)?

LOU

Prior to the events of the past few years, we were blessed with having relatively low employee turnover in our retail and customer service channels compared with others in the industry. This was a new experience for us; we had to look at how our talent pool might be different and how we recruited in the past. Not all candidates had sales experience in technology; they might have had customer service experience in different industries. We had to take a step back and look at the skills people are coming in with and meet them where they are. There was a certain level of expertise we were hiring for before that we may not necessarily have with our candidates today. We also had to provide our candidates with realistic job previews of working at Verizon while still doing a combination of COVID-19 safety protocols and interactions with customers. We also had all of our Customer Service and inside sales reps working from home. It’s not a work-at-home job with a lot of

flexibility; you’re on the phone for a fixed period of time. Initially, we saw some turnover during training, which we had not previously experienced. A lot of candidates had multiple offers; if another offer came in that looked better, they would leave during training. We also looked at compensation because that was another non-learning-related draw that was taking candidates from us to other organizations. We had to make some comp changes and since then, our turnover during training has leveled off. People now know the jobs they’re coming into; they’re feeling well-prepared and they’re not being lured away by competitive salary offers.

We also experienced turnover within the L&D organization, which we hardly had at all before this. For us, that was an opportunity to bring in some fresh talent but it also created gaps for us at a time when we had to be over-accelerating on delivery of our learning programs. Ramping up our new people quickly was one of the things we needed to do.



ADRIANA

A COVID-19 and “The Great Resignation” destabilized our workforce and we found ourselves in a situation where we were a bit behind the eight ball. That had a direct impact on our customers and employees. We partnered tightly with Talent Acquisition and pulled out all the stops to host number of new hires. We have to have back-to-back, nonstop classes for these frontline positions. These are multi-week new-hire classes; they’re not short. It was herculean work bringing on the thousands and thousands of frontline employees that we did in partnership with TA and the business.

When you think about a hybrid workforce, you don’t just show up the first day and start training. Equipment has to be shipped out and set up. There’s a whole bunch of stuff that needs to happen before the first day of training. Everything also changes when you’re remote in a hybrid environment. If you were a typical pre-COVID call center worker, you are walking into an environment where there are other people and you feel supported. There’s this feeling of being part of something bigger, so we needed to create those connections and recreate that vibe — but in a virtual environment. That’s something we’ll need to continue to do going forward. If a new employee doesn’t feel connected to the company, they’re not going to stay very long. There’s the opportunity to feel isolated when you’re sitting at home by yourself in front of a computer for eight hours a day. We use technology and cameras. As much as we hear

about Zoom fatigue, Zoom and cameras really do connect you to other people. That has been part of our success in onboarding. Of course, there’s also leadership that’s helped create that sense of belonging and community.

RACHEL

Q Adriana, can you describe Verizon’s Talent Acquisition Strategy and how you have adapted it based on the current market environment?

ADRIANA

A When you are taking what used to be in a classroom and making it eight hours of virtual instruction, you’ve got to make sure everything makes sense. See if you can chuck it or make it shorter, more engaging or more modern. We’ve gone a deep dive on how we can think about doing this differently in a hybrid world. Lean on technology whenever possible. Tools such as Slack allow our representatives to kind of raise their hands and get help in their moments of need. We also keep an eye on wellness because we’ve seen folks start to burn out a bit. We tell leaders what to look for and how to support their teams from a mental-health perspective. Traditionally, we wouldn’t lean in there but it’s what folks need right now.

A

LOU

We had to do a lot of cross-training because of where we needed our resources. We were pleasantly surprised at how well it worked. It allowed us as a business to think about whether there are different stepping models that could be used down the road. We now have reps who can do multiple things versus working for a single function. That allows our organization to be much more flexible in how we staff and use resources because we've created the curriculum that enables that. We measure things like crazy, so we watch how our reps are ramping up. We've learned that certain roles can become feeder roles. We were originally staffing all those roles by hiring people from the outside but this created an internal mobility option. Once we saw how our employees were performing and ramping up and why some of the people who were hired externally were struggling, we recognized there was a base of knowledge they can gain in one role. We don't have to worry about training them in the next role.

Adriana's team had been working on a home-based agent curriculum for years before this, so we were on a slow roll as a company in making that transition. We were able to get the whole workforce converted very quickly because we had that experience. With trials and things that start slow, people might be surprised down the road how learning gets accelerated. We were lucky to have that under our belts.

Q

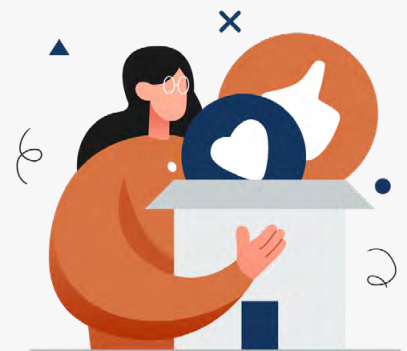
RACHEL

Adriana, as your TA Strategy evolves, were there approaches or activities on the execution that you would have done differently? What were the successes and highlights? Was there anything surprising?

A

ADRIANA

Being so integrated into the business and having a seat at the table, we hear things that are going on in the business. What we are hearing from employee roundtables was that they were stressed out, and felt overworked and anxious. It fell into this mental-health bucket. We said, "Can we do something about that? Can we help?" That's how we leaned in and created that program. It started just for Customer Service but was later bridged across the entire organization. We were happy that we could help from a learning perspective the people who were dealing with it.



RACHEL

What do you anticipate for the next few years? What will recruiting look like? Will there be more or less skilled candidates? What technology will we need? As learning and TA leaders/professionals, how do we prioritize to ensure we have the right TA strategy/recruiting process, culture/brand and effective onboarding approach?

LOU

You have to look at competitive pay and benefits that appeal to you at different stages in your life if you want to have people stay with a company for 24 years like Adriana and me. We've grown up with Verizon and different benefits appealed to us at different times in our lives. Our Benefits team is looking at how we design compensation so that compensation and benefits attract and engage talent for a career here — and not just a job here.

The other thing we've been working on is being open with our employees about all the jobs that are available across Verizon. We've created a program called Talent GPS where you can see the different job families and all the files of different jobs in those families. The Learning team created skill pathways so that if you want to come into Customer Service and move into another part of the business, you can see what skills are required to get that job and then develop those capabilities and experiences. There are exciting times ahead of us, but we need to bear in mind

that we're all competing for great talent. It's incumbent on each organization to have that great Employee Value Proposition.

ADRIANA

While listening to our employees has always been important, it's never been more important. What was important to the last generation isn't the same as what's important to the next generation right now. We need to listen and respond to the changing dynamics so we don't get left behind. Culture has never been more important than it is now.

Here are some ways to listen to the interview on Brandon Hall Group's Excellence at Work Podcast:



Brandon Hall Group
EXCELLENCE
AT WORK

About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Professional Certifications

Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

Membership

Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Advisory Offerings

Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards

Two annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

SOME WAYS WE CAN HELP

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM

uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.