

# Diversity Course Development Highlights Virtual Teamwork



*Although there were many challenges associated with the logistics of this project, the team pulled together and delivered a consistent and quality product. Teamwork, clear communication and an understanding of cultural differences made this project a success.*

*- Team Project Member*

## Business Challenge

Given the changing demographics of the U.S. workforce and consumer base, it is critical for organizations to know how to leverage diversity to their advantage. The Animal Health Division of Bayer Pharmaceuticals needed to deliver an online version of an instructor-led diversity course to dozens of high level executives across six continents. More than an awareness course, this training was part of an important Bayer goal to deepen employees' understanding of how major identity groups differ and what it takes to connect cross-culturally.

## Solution

The project goal involved designing and developing six e-learning modules and delivering them using Drake Resource Group's Learning Management System. Drake assembled a highly skilled core virtual team including: a client/subject matter expert in California, a developer/graphic designer and a project manager in Illinois, various technical support team members throughout Chicagoland and reviewers in Kansas and Michigan. The final client and his technical manager were located in Germany.

The team encountered numerous challenges along the way: technical glitches, time zone differences, language barriers, differences in cultural expectations, team member availability issues, and scope changes, to name a few. The complexity required consultants to regularly clarify roles, responsibilities and processes because they did not have the luxury of working through each issue in person as it arose.

## Results

Drake Resource Group was able to demonstrate how a virtual team project plan must be clear and monitored more frequently than that of a traditional team project. Despite all of the cultural and technical challenges, the Drake team completed the project and delivered six quality modules over a seven month period, without any team members ever meeting in person. During a follow up review conference in Rome, Italy, the client's end users expressed great satisfaction with the final content and delivery.