



An innovative approach
to learning design creates
pathways to management
for frontline workers.

Guild

Executive summary



The challenge

Despite a wealth of frontline talent, many of Guild's retail partners were having trouble fully staffing team leadership and store manager roles. These companies needed the right learning solution to skill frontline associates for those positions — roles in high demand that required specific skills around technology systems and HR practices, but also soft skills such as management and leadership.

The solution

Guild tapped our network of innovative learning partners — working with Bellevue University and the University of Denver — to offer and co-create new skilling solutions: the People & Business Leadership Certificate and the Frontline Manager Leadership Program. Our deep technological integration and expertise on working adult learners also enabled progress tracking, real-time support, and intervention.

The impact

As of February 2023, nearly 2,000 frontline workers have completed the People & Business Leadership two-course certificate program that launched in 2020. Nearly 1,000 have completed the Frontline Manager Leadership Program since launching in 2021. Guild's close integrations with learning partners have also allowed us to optimize the programs. With additional support such as orientation sessions, introductory webinars, and more, the Frontline Manager Leadership Program in particular realized a 20% increase in successful course completion.

With a sizable workforce distributed across the United States, a large retail organization knew it had limitless potential with its internal talent. Yet, the company was struggling to fill open roles for team leads — so they turned to innovative learning institutions through their partnership with Guild.

A few years ago, one of Guild’s retail partners hit a roadblock: they had a wealth of talent in their stores, but no way to train those workers and equip them with all the skills needed to move into the team lead role — a critical and in-demand position.

The talent and potential were there, but there weren’t yet pathways to opportunity.

In partnership with Guild, the retailer had already built and launched a generous education benefit and career growth program. There were plenty of courses to help associates build new skills, but the company wanted to do more to build the full range of knowledge needed to take a frontline employee to a store manager position. They wanted to help employees understand the connections between supply chain, customer service, leadership, and the many other skills needed to run a retail store.

So they turned to Guild and their network of innovative learning partners to make it a reality.



The power of partnership: A program for the frontline workforce

Guild tapped Bellevue University to add a two-course certificate for the company’s skilling catalog: the People & Business Leadership Certificate. This offering — two online courses that combine synchronous and asynchronous learning, with weekly discussions and a case study approach — is suited for frontline workers looking to build new skills in management and leadership so they can move into a team lead role.

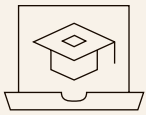
Crucially, the certificate can be taken as a standalone course or as a “stackable” credential that doesn’t just build new skills but also awards academic credit toward a degree. This approach can be particularly useful for frontline workers — helping them build in-demand skills in the short term while working toward the full economic value of a college degree over time.

Guild partnered closely with Bellevue University upon rollout to ensure the certificate was serving working adult learners. From its launch in 2020 until February 2023, **nearly 2,000 employees have completed the program**, with **~500 of those deciding to continue their studies and become degree-seeking students.**

~2,000 employees have completed the program since 2020

~500 have continued their studies to become degree-seeking students





Expanding learning offerings for frontline leadership

Given the success of the People & Business Leadership Certificate, Guild found that our partners had a strong need for frontline management and leadership skills in their workforces.

To scale and unlock even more opportunity for frontline employees, Guild worked to expand their leadership training offerings by partnering with the University of Denver (DU) to build a custom management training program designed for first-time and aspiring frontline managers.

The program was inspired by Guild's employer partners and built with their insights — including which operational and people skills are most needed to manage a store — so that it could meet the needs of organizations across the retail, food service, and hospitality industries.

To start, Guild conducted a six-week program design advisory engagement with DU to guide the development of the custom management training program. During that time, Guild synthesized the needs of current employer partners for frontline manager training by industry and offered curricular design recommendations so that DU could develop a learner experience that meets the specific needs of frontline working adults — particularly those with no college experience.

With DU's higher education expertise, Guild's employer partners' insights on the skills needed and in-house knowledge on working adults and employer needs, the Frontline Management Leadership Program was born — an online course combining real-time learning with flexible coursework.



Deep integrations lead to early intervention and a

20%

increase in completion

Because Guild's platform is directly integrated with our learning providers, we have unique insight into data that can help us optimize programs in real time.

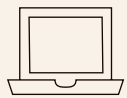
Midway through the first cohort of the Frontline Management Leadership Program, DU shared early data that a large number of learners were disengaging and not likely to complete the program.

Guild worked with DU to better understand the key factors leading students to disengage. Many were first-time college students, and even those with some higher education experience were new to fully online learning.

To help students gain context for course expectations and confidence in the process, we aligned on early interventions such as



Hosting **live orientation sessions** to allow learners to develop a sense of belonging and build trust with DU's support staff of instructors and advisors



Offering webinars prior to the first week of class to support learners in **improving their digital literacy**



Sharing **success strategies** from learners and **newly developed templates** for program assignments

The result of these changes? **A 20% increase in successful course completion for learners in the program.**

That meant more success for employees on their path to unlock opportunity, more team leads and managers for our partners, and more students well served at DU.



Programs for retail, restaurants, and hospitality offered at scale

Today, both the Frontline Management Leadership Program and the People & Business Leadership Certificate are offered to many of Guild's employer partners with large frontline populations across retail, restaurant, and hospitality industries across the U.S., including Chipotle, Kohl's, Lowe's, Macy's, and many more.

Thanks to Guild partners' commitment to building talent from within — combined with integration and close partnership with leading learning institutions — thousands of frontline workers have unlocked opportunity and taken the next step in their careers.

"I'm learning how to be a good leader. You're learning how to be relevant. You're learning how to be, how to accept differences and how to act accordingly because we're going to be faced with things that we might not even know that we'd be faced with...I do want to help myself in my current role. Of course we can always get better. I've been applying for coaching positions, which is the next step up."

Carrie P, Major U.S. Retailer

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