



CVS Caremark and The TJX Companies Inc. Retail Training and Education Innovation in the Works

Retail growth in the United States is expected to outstrip other industries in the next 10 years. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the retail trade industry is projected to add 687,000 jobs from now through the year 2016 and grow to an industry of \$1.9 trillion.

Because both CVS Caremark and The TJX Companies, Inc., are facing near- and long-term critical shortages of supervisory and management staff to address this projected growth, the two companies have joined forces to find an innovative way to address their similar challenges.

They have partnered with WorkSource Partners, Jewish Vocational Service and Massasoit Community College to create a work-based learning program that aims to provide greater opportunity for advancement within their current workforce.

■ **Joining Forces for Common Goals**

While CVS and TJX are two distinct businesses, their priority workforce needs are consistent:

- 1) Improve entry-level “promotability” so employees can more effectively train for and fill first-level supervisory positions;
- 2) Improve the quality of customer service and maintain leadership; and
- 3) Backfill entry-level positions with individuals who are eager to learn.

By enabling employees to gain these critical skills *while* they train for advancement, both companies will prepare them to move up the ladder within the organization, achieve college readiness and obtain a college degree during their employment.

The companies’ existing training programs focus primarily on workplace tasks and competencies, yet the lack of core skills prevents many entry-level employees from advancing to management positions. By enabling employees to gain these critical skills *while* they train for advancement, both companies will prepare them to move up the ladder within the organization, achieve college readiness and obtain a college degree during their employment.

■ **Meeting Employer and Employee Needs**

This new program will be piloted within both companies’ operations in Boston and Brockton, MA, and is being developed in three stages:

- **Stage 1** — For entry-level employees who are interested in advancing at CVS and TJX but lack basic foundational skills. Education at this stage will include basic reading and writing (and English for speakers of other languages support for those who need it) contextualized to retail and blended with customer service content. The goals for this stage are to prepare individuals to enter shift supervisor (CVS) or coordinator (TJX) training and access precollege coursework.
- **Stage 2** — For employees who begin training for shift supervisor or coordinator positions. This stage will integrate the required academics (precollege math and English) with company-specific internal training, using work-based learning methodologies. The goals for this stage are to help individuals complete the training and be successful in these first-level management positions and prepare them for college coursework.
- **Stage 3** — For employees who begin training for assistant store manager and store manager positions. In this stage,

participants can enroll in an associate degree program adapted for the industry — a business program with a retail management concentration — that will complement their internal training and prepare them for success.

■ Learning While Working

Employees who are interested in this program will go through an internal assessment to determine their readiness, including evaluations of their performance, potential for advancement, work ethic and current academic level.

Because of the nature of retail, taking time from the job to study is a significant burden for both employers and employees. To address this concern, the CVS and TJX programs have been structured so that much of the learning takes place on the job.

When it comes to classroom activities, the companies plan to provide 50 percent release time to attend classes and will encourage store managers to be flexible with their participating employees' schedules so that they can participate in the program activities.

■ Encouraging Growth and Development

Through this initiative, CVS and TJX will be able to improve their abilities to hire and promote from within the current ranks of employees and enable better succession planning throughout the organizations. They also hope this new program will increase overall employee retention and enable them to become employers of choice across the country.

Ultimately, however, one of the most important goals for this initiative is to create systemic change. Through all these efforts, the companies are ultimately trying to create a culture change in the retail environment — one that encourages growth and development for all employees.

CVS and TJX recognize that college education is one of the most critical factors in an individual's ability to advance in life, so by bringing formalized learning to the workplace and working with college partners to establish protocols for earning college credit on the job, they hope to dramatically increase employees' access to education and the opportunities it affords across the board.

About CVS and TJX

www.cvs.com • www.tjx.com

Through its unmatched breadth of service offerings, CVS Caremark is transforming the delivery of health care services in the United States. The company is uniquely positioned to effectively manage costs and improve health care outcomes through its 6,300 CVS/pharmacy stores; its pharmacy benefit management, mail order and specialty pharmacy division, Caremark Pharmacy Services; its retail-based health clinic subsidiary, MinuteClinic; and its online pharmacy, CVS.com.

The TJX Companies, Inc., is the leading off-price retailer of apparel and home fashions in the United States and worldwide. The company operates 859 T.J. Maxx, 787 Marshalls, 297 HomeGoods, and 132 A.J. Wright stores, as well as 34 Bob's Stores, in the United States.

About Corporate Voices for Working Families

Corporate Voices for Working Families is the leading national business membership organization representing the private sector on public and corporate policy issues involving working families. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, we improve the lives of working families by developing and advancing innovative policies that reflect collaboration among the private sector, government and other stakeholders.

Find Out More

This case study is part of the comprehensive research report *The Ill-Prepared U.S. Workforce: Exploring the Challenges of Employer-Provided Workforce Readiness Training*. This research study and publications, other research studies and toolkits on a host of workforce readiness, flexibility, family economic stability, and work and family balance issues are available on the Corporate Voices Web site at www.corporatevoices.org.

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