



LTCIAcademy.com: Changing the Way LTCI Training is Delivered

The industry's first certificate program for long-term care insurance, LTCIAcademy.com, is growing at a rapid rate as companies both large and small begin to understand how effective eLearning can be. Many are looking toward distance learning to accomplish their training goals—for various reasons. Some want to enjoy the cost savings of eLearning vs. live training classes. Others want to make sure that all reps receive consistent training—nationwide. Still others want to protect themselves from E&O exposure due to poor training and the resulting effects. Whatever the reason, it is evident that eLearning is growing in popularity—and Phyllis Shelton's LTCIAcademy.com is clearly leading the way.

A perfect solution to the LTCI training dilemma

Back in 2000, when instructor-led training was at its peak, Phyllis Shelton and Bill Pomakoy began to explore the next generation of training techniques in preparation for a potential change to their business model. Shelton's company, LTC Consultants, was considered the industry leader in instructor-led long-term care insurance training and business was at an all-time high. From 1998-2000, they were the exclusive LTCI training company chosen by State Farm and Prudential for their LTCI product launches. Given that, it's difficult to understand why they would look at another method of training when theirs was working just fine. According to

Shelton, "Bill and I looked at the business and realized that while we were considered at the top of the LTCI training landscape, that could change in an instant. That's when we began to look for other avenues to deliver the training, in addition to our live classes."

And change it did.

According to Pomakoy, "In early 2000, we made the very expensive and fortunate decision to build a web-based approach to LTCI training and we brought it to market just after

9/11. We thought it was a perfect solution to the LTCI training dilemma carriers faced because the cost to deliver eLearning can be just a fraction of what it costs to deliver live classes.

But the cold, hard facts were that even though web-based training programs can cost much less, carriers, at that time, still had very limited budgets. Adding to the confusion was that eLearning had not yet found its way to the LTC insurance industry so it was a slow learning curve for many of the carriers.

"We found it necessary to change our initial sales approach," said Pomakoy. "We revised our 'Here's our web-based training program for LTC insurance, isn't it great?' approach to 'Here is how eLearning has changed other industries and now let us show you how our LTCIAcademy.com program can fulfill the training needs of

"When 9/11 happened, most of the insurance carriers slashed their training, travel and advertising budgets. That brought our live training business almost to a standstill."

Bill Pomakoy,
VP LTC Consultants

your company.' Because we had no large-group eLearning testimonials from our new program at that time, we had to prove the effectiveness of eLearning by showing other eLearning industry results. The carriers also had to have enough faith in our reputation and experience to trust that it would work. Fortunately, some did and now we have our own proven track record of performance and can rely on that data to prove results."

Now, companies of all sizes are finding eLearning in general and LTCIAcademy.com in particular to be a very efficient learning tool when deploying information to the field.

Ken Murrell, 2nd VP Product Marketing and Research for Berkshire Life (subsidiary of The Guardian), chose LTCIAcademy because he could be assured that the field reps would

"We wanted to be absolutely certain that the Guardian agents were armed with the industry and product knowledge they needed before calling on their agents to discuss long-term care insurance. The LTCIAcademy.com course also gave our reps the confidence to make those calls."

Ken Murrell, VP
Berkshire/Guardian

receive the same high quality education Shelton was known for, no matter where they were located. And that's an important consideration for companies that have reps in almost every state and are rolling out a new LTCI product. In just four months, more than 1100 Berkshire/Guardian agents have completed the course.

Berkshire/Guardian uses a blended learning approach for training. "We also developed an advanced marketing program for agents who complete the LTCIAcademy.com course. It's an onsite program designed to ignite sales in strategic territories," says Murrell.

What really brings LTCIAcademy to life is LTC Consultants' partnership with Little Planet Learning, a company that has built its reputation by adding incredible interactivity to adult-learning content.

Bank of America has sent over 1200 representatives through LTCIAcademy.com and the results have been impressive. They are experiencing a 90 percent completion ratio of those who enter the course. According to Shelton, "That is almost unheard of in the eLearning industry. Believe me, if the content was not delivered in a very entertaining way, we would not be experiencing that high degree of completion. That's what made our live classes so successful and we were absolutely determined to make the eLearning experience just as entertaining."

To accomplish the "entertaining" part of the online training experience, Shelton and Pomakoy looked nationwide for a technology company that could deliver what they demanded: edu-tainment.

They found just that in Little Planet Learning. Bill Nelson, president of Little Planet and an Academy Award nominated Hollywood producer, combines cognitive science with technology through a long-standing relationship with Dr. John Bransford, director of the Learning Sciences Institute at Vanderbilt University and author of the book "How People Learn". The course was designed to be highly interactive thereby keeping the attention of the learner. The combination of LTC Consultants' content and Little Planet's ability to deliver it in an exciting format is unparalleled in the LTCI industry!

The LTCI Certificate Program

The LTCIAcademy.com course is divided into 14 lessons. The average time it takes to complete all 14 lessons along with the test is somewhere between three and six hours, depending on the speed of the learner. Each lesson takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The cost of this course is just \$169 per seat with multiple seat pricing available for 25 or more agents. Insurance carriers can purchase large blocks of seats at substantial discounts. CE credits are optional and are available in all 50 states at an additional cost of \$35, payable online by the agent or in advance by the organization. Students have up to 90 days to complete the course once they enter the first time. Upon obtaining a passing grade on the summative test at the end of the 14 lessons, agents are able to print out a "Certificate of Knowledge in LTCI."

The idea behind the certificate program came from the concept that agents need to be educated enough to be effective while at the same time avoiding any E&O exposure. Pomakoy points out, "We are a big believer in high-quality designation programs and have been involved with a couple in the industry. LTCIAcademy.com is *not* a designation course, it is a certificate program that achieves the initial education financial service professionals need to begin selling LTC insurance". Shelton adds, "In my opinion, once agents get a bit of experience, that's when they should explore a designation course such as CLTC, CSA, LTCP or others."

Harley Gordon, president of the Corporation for Long-Term Care Certification (CLTC) offers graduates of LTCIAcademy.com a

full-tuition credit toward the CLTC program. Says Gordon, "Our CLTC program expands on Phyllis' efforts by teaching students that success comes in working with clients to establish a plan for long-term care". In fact, over 500 call center representatives from the Federal

Long-Term Care Insurance program in 2002 completed LTCIAcademy.com before taking the CLTC designation course. Adds Gordon, "The CLTC designation is recognized by all major carriers and currently has over 8,000 graduates".

LTCIAcademy.com is changing the way LTCI education is delivered to financial services representatives all over the country, an absolute necessity as the NAIC is expected to introduce a new regulation in Fall 2005 that will require a long-term care insurance training course with CE credits before an agent can sell LTCI in that state.

"LTCI Academy is the perfect solution for carriers to not just meet a regulatory requirement, but increase sales production at the same time - what a novel idea!"

Phyllis Shelton,
president, LTC Consultants

Proactive companies like Berkshire/Guardian and Bank of America aren't waiting for regulation to dictate training and as more and more progressive organizations in the country embrace the idea of eLearning for their training needs it should grow exponentially.

Insurance carrier home office or marketing organization personnel interested in reviewing the course may request a free user name and password to LTCIAcademy.com by contacting Bill Pomakoy or Phyllis Shelton.

Individual agents can preview the course by clicking on the "Try Before You Buy" button on the home page of the website: www.LTCIAcademy.com. ♦

LTC Consultants is a Nashville-based company specializing in long-term care insurance training and marketing materials. To obtain more information about LTCIAcademy.com, call (888) 400-1118 or visit their website: www.LTCIAcademy.com.

"The LTCIAcademy.com course fits perfectly with the CLTC designation course."

Harley Gordon
president, CLTC