

2017 **OUTCOMES** REPORT

DEGREES @WORK

Improving Employee
Retention and
College Access
with FCA US LLC
(Fiat Chrysler
Automobiles)





RECOGNIZING THAT A CLOSER CONNECTION BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION HAD

the potential to improve employee skillsets and retention, Strayer University launched Degrees@Work with FCA US LLC (Fiat Chrysler Automobiles).

RESULTS

Degrees@Work is a successful recruiting tool and also improves employee loyalty and performance.



LOYALTY

Nearly **40%**
higher employee
retention



GROWTH

17% higher
revenue growth among
participating dealers



CURRICULUM

Employees scored
curriculum
9.4 (out of ten) on how
it relates to goals

Learn more about the
innovation that provides
a win-win for employee
and employer. ►



SITUATION

Employers today are seeking ambitious, career-oriented candidates who can adapt to the rapidly-changing 21st century workplace. They want employees who can offer core competencies as well as soft skills like time management, self-confidence, problem-solving and teamwork. A study from workforce analytics firm Burning Glass noted that, when it came to job postings, “a number of baseline skills are emphasized in the postings out of proportion to what traditional job definitions would indicate—suggesting that employers struggle to find people with these skills.”¹

This emphasis has revealed a void in the talent available to employers, which creates added pressure for talent attraction and retention. In industries with traditionally high turnover rates, such as automotive sales, this void is that much more apparent. Capable, experienced employees are often the distinguishing factor between successful automobile dealerships and those that struggle. **That’s why cultivating and retaining employee talent is essential to a thriving dealership**, which also leads to fierce competition for the most talented sales professionals, repair technicians, marketing and accounting staff.

In the search for improved employee performance and retention, FCA US turned to a new model offered by Strayer University that launched in 2015.

SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT:

- Time management
- Self-confidence
- Problem-solving
- Teamwork



“When we began to seek out a partner to provide education benefits to our employees and their families, we focused on finding a top-notch institution. Strayer has the resources and the experience to provide a world-class education to our employees and their families.”

— AL GARDNER, Head
of Dealer Network
Development, Fiat
Chrysler Automobiles,
US, LLC.

¹ The Human Factor. Report. http://burning-glass.com/wp-content/uploads/Human_Factor_Baseline_Skills_FINAL.pdf.

APPROACH—STRAYER’S DEGREES@WORK

“American businesses need employees with the right skills, and students need a good return on their educational investment. At Strayer, we’re working to improve both sides of that equation, and we’re proud to be part of the solution.”

— KARL MCDONNELL, CEO, Strayer Education

With a successful history of integrating higher education and business through corporate partnerships, Strayer University was prepared to create a brand new model to meet the joint needs of students and employers. Strayer developed the Degrees@Work program to help companies transform their workforces by offering employees a customized Strayer University degree at no cost. Courses within degree programs are specifically designed to teach skills that support a company’s objectives and help employees advance their careers. FCA US partnered with Strayer to offer the program to dealership employees, setting an example for how higher education is positioned to help a company invest in its existing talent—with tangible benefits for the organization and individual employees.

FCA US dealerships can opt-in to the Degrees@Work program for a nominal monthly fee that, in return, provides educational benefits to their employees and their families. The Degrees@Work program credits employees’ previous academic work and professional experience, allowing them to accelerate their degree completion, and it uses company-specific competencies aimed at improving work performance.

Two areas of emphasis ensure that employees are successful in degree attainment and that employers meet their skill development and talent needs:

ROBUST STUDENT SUPPORT

Employees and family members can **earn their degree at no-cost**



while working. Each student is also assigned a **personal success coach** who serves as a guide throughout the degree program.

EMPLOYERS ARE ENGAGED

The program requires employer buy-in, which serves as a signal to employees about **the dealer’s investment in, and support for, cultivating and supporting their careers**. Employer engagement also ensures that learning

outcomes align with business needs and objectives.

The investment dealers make in their employees allows them to **combat employee turnover by mitigating training costs** and improving productivity. After initial success, the program was expanded to include employees’ immediate family members, so that dealers can offer a no-cost degree to not only their employees, but also their employees’ families.



INITIAL RESULTS

After one year of the FCA US–Strayer partnership, outcomes indicate that participating dealerships not only use it as a successful recruiting tool, but are seeing improvement in employee performance and productivity.

The initial success of the Degrees@Work model reinforces existing evidence about the long-term value of employer investments in the educational attainment of their employees.

Initial findings include:

CLASSROOM AND CAREER ALIGNMENT

When surveyed, employees participating in Degrees@Work scored the curriculum **9.4 (out of ten)** when asked how

well the Strayer courses related to the employees' career goals. Strayer largely attributes this high score to the

company-specific competencies built into the curriculum.



EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Participating dealers experienced nearly **40 percent higher** employee retention than non-participants.



IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

Improved retention also increases the productivity of sales consultants. Participating dealers reported that an employee with four to five years of dealership experience will

sell an average of **10.8 vehicles per month**, compared to **6.8 vehicles per**

month for sales consultants who have been at the dealership for one year or less. Enrolled dealers experienced **17 percent higher revenue growth** than non-participating dealers.



“The way that we’re going to find innovative growth is to bring business and education together. Throughout this program, we have gone through an amazing collaboration with Strayer University, challenging each other on ideas all to the benefit of the FCA Dealership workforce.”

— JOHN FOX, Director of Dealer Training, FCA US



OPPORTUNITY FOR CONTINUED ANALYSIS

As participating FCA US dealerships expand and the first cohorts complete their respective degree programs, further analysis will reveal the extent of the program's long-term impact on talent attraction, retention and productivity – including benchmarking against industry averages.



Closing the Gap Between Business and Post-Secondary Education

With relationships with more than 300 Fortune 1000 companies, Strayer University is fully aware of the skills employers are looking for in prospective candidates. Those insights allow Strayer to adapt its degree programs to ensure students are prepared to meet the demands of the ever-changing workforce.

Corporate partnerships include:

- Workforce skills diagnostic and development plans
- Customized skill building curriculum
- Onsite faculty and classrooms in which employees take classes and earn a degree where they work
- Tuition assistance programs
- Degrees@Work, a unique corporate academic partnership, in which employees can obtain a degree tuition-free

Visit degreesatwork.strayer.edu to learn more about how Strayer helps companies improve their workforces.

About Strayer University

Founded in 1892, Strayer University is an institution of higher learning for working adult students. It offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business administration, accounting, information technology, education, health services administration, nursing, public administration, and criminal justice.

Strayer University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104 (267-284-5000, www.msche.org). The Commission is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. For more information, visit www.strayer.edu.

