

**Headquarters:**

St. Louis, MO

Company size:

201-500 employees

Industry:

Consumer goods

Founded: 2002

A privately held, rapidly growing natural pet food company located in the Midwest, Nature's Variety is dedicated to empowering people to transform the lives of pets. They're leading a movement toward better pet health with their line of raw pet foods.

CHALLENGE

Nature's Variety needed a new perspective. In order to make progress toward company goals, they knew they had to start thinking about challenges differently. They sought training to help their sales and marketing teams shift their mindset, think strategically and find out-of-the-box answers to unique company challenges. Leaders within the business were familiar with design thinking—an approach to problem solving that involves empathy and iterative refinement—and were looking for a way to effectively train 50+ members of their team on the process.

SOLUTION

With an established design thinking course and instructors in place, Creighton University's Center for Professional and Corporate Excellence was uniquely positioned to provide the training needed. To accommodate timing and budget, Creighton proposed selecting 12 members of the cohort for in-depth design thinking training. These 12 employees would become design thinking champions within the company and assist during the two-hour training session offered later to the larger group of 50.

The three-week course offered to the group of 12 took a close look at design thinking for businesses with videos, reading assignments, group activities, discussions, a final reflection and more. Members of this smaller group were introduced to the concepts of design thinking and then asked to put them into practices, ensuring they were well-equipped to help pass along the ideas to other teammates at Nature's Variety. After the group of 12 completed their coursework, an on-site workshop was held with the larger group.

OUTCOME

Creighton's solution and training methods were successful. By establishing design thinking experts within the company, Creighton was able to help Nature's Variety make the most of their training time.

For the on-site portion of the program, participants were divided into groups of six with at least one participant from the longer online course at each table. The training consisted of two activities—the first to introduce the design thinking concept and the second to address a challenge faced by Nature's Variety. The sales and marketing teams were able to sort through real challenges while also learning new skills to take back to their day-to-day jobs. Along with coming away with actionable solutions for current challenges, trainees are also equipped to address new challenges.

LET'S PARTNER FOR YOUR FUTURE

The Creighton Center for Professional and Corporate Excellence brings the strengths and expertise of Creighton University to organizations in every industry. Through professional development, continuing education and custom collaborations, we build partnerships that further the University's mission of engaging with and improving our world.

➤ **What can your company do with the right partnership? We can't wait to see.**