

# Setting up for skilling up

Henkel's smart bet for innovation and growth from sustained upskilling efforts



# Customer first, always

**It's hard to find a home that doesn't have a product by German company Henkel on top of the washing machine, under the bathroom sink or on a garage shelf. The world's largest producer of adhesive technologies, from Persil and Purex in its laundry business unit to Schwarzkopf and Dial in its beauty care vertical, the company generates over \$20 billion annually. But people's relationships with brands are rapidly evolving, and with new brands and technologies emerging all the time, there is increasing competitive pressure on large, multinational companies.**

The natural call for Henkel seemed straight-forward: Put the customer first.

That, however, is easier said than done—especially when change is part of the new normal and is happening at unprecedented speeds. Even more so when they're supported by innovative, flexible and fast-moving business models created to disrupt and quickly accumulate market share.

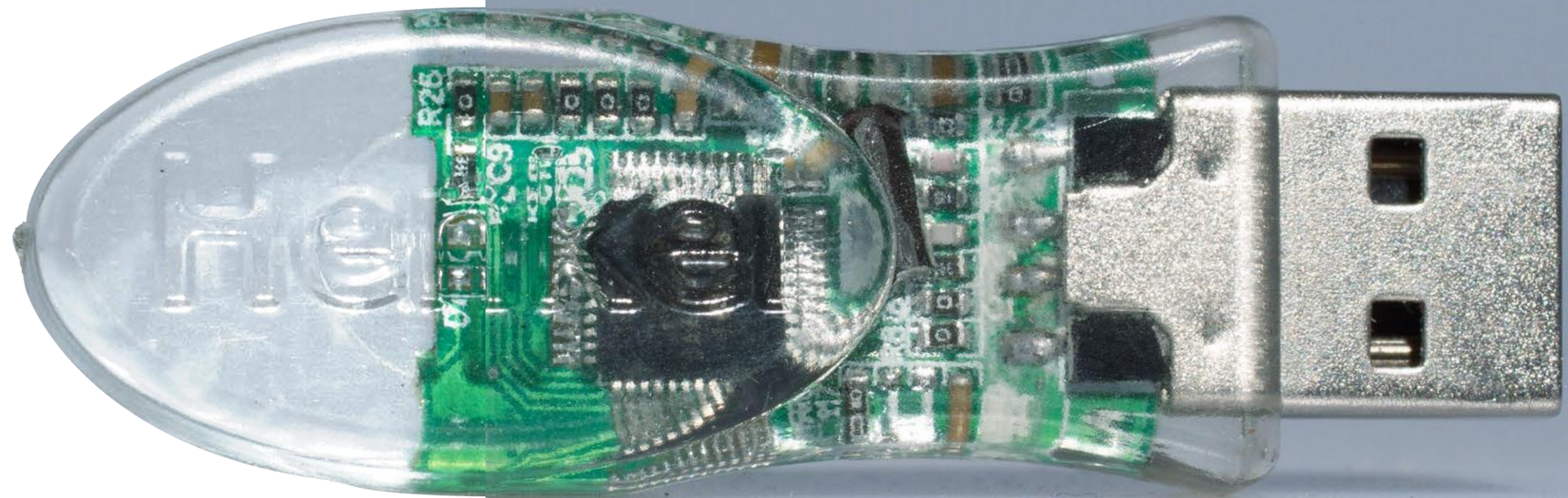
To compete, Henkel knew it needed to enhance its systems to nurture existing talent, pinpoint skills gaps and offer targeted learning programs to its 53,000 employees. By promptly and continually upskilling its workforce, Henkel can better anticipate customer needs and develop innovations and new solutions faster and better.

In order to keep up with developments and stay competitive, it is essential to establish a culture of lifelong learning, to upskill the entire organization on key future capabilities and skills – especially in terms of digitalization.

## When tech meets human ingenuity

Accenture and Henkel already enjoyed a relationship spanning 10 years, with multiple successful initiatives.

As its vision for a global digital upskilling initiative came into focus, Henkel knew that Accenture would be the ideal partner to help execute it quickly across all business units and functions, globally. So they joined forces to roll out the program.



When tech meets human ingenuity

# Winning over resistance with digital upskilling

**First was the Digital Capabilities Assessment, in which Henkel employees across 10 job families voluntarily participated in an anonymous assessment of their strengths and skills gaps. This garnered a detailed understanding of their current capabilities, plus their aptitude in skill areas likely to grow in the next three to five years. For example, HR staff were assessed for their abilities in sourcing the future workforce, data analytics and driving the digital employee experience.**

**Next came Digital Upskilling.** Once the strengths and skills gaps were identified, the team conceptualized job-family-specific learning programs. Two of the digital

upskilling programs, provided for approximately 500 IT employees and 1,500 Finance managers, were a combination of selected best practice courses from Accenture Academy and newly created Henkel use cases. This combination, offered in a contemporary learning management system (LMS), makes the courses relevant to the participants' daily job functions.

**The third phase was creation of a Digital Talent Experience.** Accenture and Henkel developed new talent-management processes in a third-party cloud HR system. The enhanced system enabled a new manner of assessing employees' existing roles and their ambitions.

The decoupling of evaluating performance and potential would help focus on individuals' professional development; and more accurate digitizing, tracking and optimizing of the talent lifecycle.

**Finally, for Digital Talent Sourcing,** Accenture and Henkel created a "Recruiter Toolbox" for digital roles within the newly introduced talent management system. Essentially, this established a clearer connection between the technical skills required for a certain role and what recruiters should be looking for on candidates' resumes. This helped Henkel gain a deeper, company-wide understanding of the digital-talent lifecycle.

## When tech meets human ingenuity

As the new LMS gained use and delivered insights, Accenture and Henkel began looking at the entire talent lifecycle and ways to improve people's experience. The team will integrate an artificial intelligence (AI) based skill management tool—containing a library of 53,000 skills—on the cloud platform, which will power the LMS, succession planning, and performance management over time. Henkel's HR team can prioritize certain skills in the talent library, and managers can recommend training to make certain people's skills more relevant and their work more impactful. Ultimately, if an employee qualifies for a higher-level job based on the training, HR will be able to identify them quickly and easily.

Henkel wants to offer an environment that welcomes and nurtures an entrepreneurial and pioneering spirit and drive and engenders creative, impactful innovations — at all levels in both the consumer and B2B product categories.

The company effectively sent the message, globally, that learning is fun and that investing in and developing employees' skills is not only valuable, but critical.





A valuable difference

# Fostering innovation and pathways of growth

**The LMS was developed and rolled out in just 18 weeks, kicking off Henkel's global learning initiative. In the first year, employees clocked 272,000 training registrations and recorded 215,000 completions.**

The Digital Upskilling program and its scope have evolved and grown beyond the launch of the IT and Finance learning journeys. Additional Digital Upskilling programs tailored to Marketing, Sales, Purchasing, Corporate Communications have been launched, with HR, R&D, and Supply Chain to launching soon after.

On the recruiting side, two new pathways opened for talent recruitment and development: a manager can quickly create a job requisition based on certain digital capabilities; or an employee seeking a new

role can learn about the digital skills necessary to be considered for the job and then take relevant courses to become a viable candidate. In addition, the application process for external candidates has been reduced from around 30 minutes to 60 seconds. And ever since the go-live, applications for open roles increased by 40 percent.

The global digital upskilling initiative, targeting the entire Henkel workforce, was just the beginning of its strategy to foster retention and growth. As such, two new linked engagements followed the skilling initiative. First, Accenture began supporting Henkel's diversity and inclusion agenda, aimed at achieving more gender equality, as well as a broader agenda for achieving greater ethnic diversity in the workforce.

## A valuable difference

For more than 140 years, Henkel has been taking a visionary approach to supporting environmental and social progress, but now wants to further push this strategic topic, among others by linking its digital skilling efforts directly to its sustainability goals.

This is in line with the company's "Win the 20s through Purposeful Growth" initiative, aimed at creating superior customer value through sustainability, and enabling people to grow with a sense of a belonging. Henkel wants its sustainability efforts—achieved in large part by continually upskilling a more inclusive, innovative workforce—to be a key differentiator in the market.

That's why, moving forward, Henkel only expects to strengthen its prospects in an exceedingly complicated and competitive environment. The key is continuing to double down with major investments in Henkel's most valuable asset: the 53,000 employees around the world.

