

# CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER

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**SPECIAL  
REPORT**  
**2011 Learning  
In Practice  
Awards**

CLO of the Year  
Veterans Affairs'  
**LISA DOYLE**

# 2011

## CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER

# Learning In Practice Awards

BY CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER  
EDITORIAL STAFF

**T**he eighth annual Chief Learning Officer Learning In Practice Awards are selected from more than 200 nominations. The awards recognize learning leaders, vendors and organizations that have made a substantive and measurable change in their organizations' business and demonstrate vision, strategic alignment and leadership.

Awards were presented to the top three entrants — gold, silver and bronze — in more than a dozen categories. The awards also included the CLO of the Year — Lisa Doyle, chancellor for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy.

Senior learning leaders received awards in six categories with two divisions: Division 1 for companies with more than 10,000 employees and Division 2 for companies with fewer than 10,000 employees. Learning providers were recognized in eight separate categories including e-learning, academic partnerships and social learning.

Winners received their awards in October during the Fall 2011 Chief Learning Officer Symposium at The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel in Dana Point, Calif.

### ON THE WEB

To read coverage of the 2011 Learning In Practice awards and watch video interviews with winners, visit [CLOmedia.com/articles/view/3957](http://CLOmedia.com/articles/view/3957)

### LEARNING IN PRACTICE AWARDS

**CLO of the Year Award:** For the learning executive who is without peer in developing and executing learning and development strategies, marshaling and managing resources and achieving measurable success.

**The Leadership Award:** For learning executives who have demonstrably extended their power and influence within their organizations in the past year.

**The Vanguard Award:** For learning executives who have either launched a new enterprise learning function or completely overhauled existing workforce development initiatives in the past year.

**The Innovation Award:** For learning executives who have successfully applied emerging technologies and/or methodologies to create a stimulating and engaging combination of content and modalities in the past year.

**The Business Impact Award:** For learning executives who have demonstrated measurable business impact of their workforce development programs in the past year.

**The Global Learning Award:** For learning executives who have delivered development initiatives to geographically dispersed and/or culturally and linguistically diverse audiences internally and/or externally in the past year.

**The Learning Team Award:** For learning departments that have performed well as a team to help develop and deliver wide-ranging, effective employee development programs in the past year.

### PROVIDER AWARDS

**The Excellence in LMS Award** recognizes providers that have rolled out a robust new learning management system for a client in the past year.

**The Excellence in Simulations and Games Award** recognizes providers that have rolled out innovative and effective branching, nonlinear and interactive learning programs for a client in the past year.

**The Excellence in Content Award** recognizes providers that have created superior customized and/or off-the-shelf learning content in the past year.

**The Excellence in Academic Partnerships Award** recognizes accredited academic learning providers that have partnered with an organization in the past year to teach its employees about a key business issue.

**The Excellence in Customer Service Award** recognizes providers that have demonstrated a commitment to top-notch implementation, maintenance and support around a client's learning solution in the past year.

**The Excellence in Outsourcing Award** recognizes providers that have taken over all or a portion of an organization's learning and development function in the past year.

**The Excellence in E-Learning Award** recognizes providers that have rolled out an innovative and effective new e-learning program or suite for a client in the past year.

**The Excellence in Social Learning Award** recognizes providers that have rolled out wikis, blogs, communities of practice, social networks and/or any other employee communication and collaboration platforms for a client in the past year.





Lisa Doyle, 2011 CLO of the Year, with Chief Learning Officer Editor in Chief Norm Kamikow (left) and Publisher John Taggart at the Fall 2011 Chief Learning Officer Symposium in Dana Point, Calif.

## LISA DOYLE

*Chancellor of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy*

For the past 29 years, Lisa Doyle has been an acquisition professional in the federal and private sector. This experience has made her a self-proclaimed lifelong learner, a leader of the next generation of acquisition professionals, program and project managers, supply chain managers and logisticians. It's also made her Chief Learning Officer magazine's 2011 CLO of the Year.

Doyle spent the first 16 years of her career with the Department of Defense, where she began as a procurement intern and then progressed through the contracting career field, ultimately assuming the responsibilities as a contracting officer at the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command. From 2002 to 2008 she served as executive director of Acquisition Solutions Inc., where she directed the Acquisition Solutions Training Institute and built a training program designed to develop federal acquisition professionals capable of leading successful projects. This curriculum helped government agencies transform their acquisition practices and become change agents to improve acquisition results.

"The benefit of me being an acquisition professional was that I knew what they needed to be trained on and how to best train them," Doyle said. "I was able to create the right type of curric-

ulum, the right type of learning interventions, using the right models to train them with."

Prior to her time in private industry, Doyle spent 22 years in federal acquisition, capped by her experiences at the Department of Commerce headquarters, where she served as deputy senior procurement executive, director of acquisition policy and programs, director of acquisition services, head of the contracts office and chief of acquisition policy. She also served as a senior acquisition official at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Her consistently demonstrated leadership and judgment in resolving complex personnel, organizational, teaming and training problems led her to become the chancellor of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Acquisition Academy, where she creates learning interventions to change behavior and improve performance.

With more than 300,000 employees, the VA is the second-largest agency in the federal government. Its annual contracting expenditure budget of approximately \$15 billion puts it on par with a corporation ranked in the top 15 on the Fortune 500 list. But while Doyle's programs impact an audience of 40,000 individuals, her vision is precise.



Lisa Doyle receives the award and a sash and tiara compliments of outgoing CLO of the Year Tamar Elkeles at the Fall CLO Symposium.

“Her advocacy is ... about making certain at the end of the day, students are competent and confident to enter the workforce.”

— Richard Garrison, vice chancellor for the academy program management school

“Within the VA, we have an incredibly noble mission: to serve our veterans,” Doyle said. “We want to make certain we train our workforce to ensure we spend every dollar wisely, manage every program effectively, dedicate every resource and pay back the tremendous debt we owe our veterans. Being an acquisition professional myself, when asked to step into this role I knew it was important to have not just technical skills, but to be a great contracting professional, to have interpersonal skills, powerful speaking and listening skills and team-building skills. Much of what we do is in a team environment. We work in teams, negotiate in teams, and work with vendors and partners to execute the mission.”

The Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy was established in 2008 and aims to grow, train and retain the acquisition workforce. Doyle was selected in July 2008 as the first chancellor of the academy with the challenge to quickly align a program to support the president’s transformational goals and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki’s ADVANCE initiative, a strategic goal to transform the agency by providing the tools, training and support necessary to advance careers and improve the services provided for the nation’s veterans by building the academy from the ground up. This included building a record of success in support of the VA acquisition mission; brand and create broad awareness of the academy’s successes; establish support for the academy with Congress and other federal agencies for the academy as a primary training service; and develop the capacity to support a government-wide customer base.

Doyle decided early that the curricula should be practical, relevant and easy for students to effectively translate into on-the-job application. She implemented an applied learning approach using a competency-based, experiential learning model to emphasize translating theory, fundamentals and concepts into practical application. This approach recognized that to accelerate the student’s learning curve, even the most important theory must be relevant, usable and customized to meet specific VA needs.

“Her advocacy is saying, ‘How do I really get a competent worker?’” said Richard Garrison, vice chancellor for the program management school at the academy. “It’s not about checking a box. It’s about making certain at the end of the day, students are competent and confident to enter the workforce.”

The 16-classroom, brick-and-mortar facility houses three professional schools: Acquisition Internship School, Contracting Professional School and Program Management School; with two additional schools — Facilities Management School and Supply Chain Management School — scheduled to open shortly.

Doyle serves on the interagency Council on Veterans Employment under President Obama’s Veteran Employment Initiative to help federal agencies increase employment of veterans in the federal government. She has led the curriculum development taskforce to create the Vets 2 Feds career development program to recruit and support the development of the nation’s student veterans in careers with the federal government. She also has created the Warrior 2 Workforce program for the Department of Veterans Affairs to hire wounded warriors returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and develop them into professionally certified contract specialists.

“With Lisa, it’s not about being certain you’ve trained somebody properly or simply done some good,” Garrison said. “It’s about making certain you’ve made somebody competent and made a difference for our veterans.” **CLO**

— Ladan Nikravan



## GOLD

### GARY WHITNEY

*Vice President, Global Hotel Learning,  
InterContinental Hotels Group*

Gary Whitney, vice president of global hotel learning for the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), is known among his peers as the operations guy thanks to his experience working with operators, his financial wizardry and the depth of his technical knowledge. In the past year, Whitney addressed a number of initiatives, including:

- Directing a training launch on the global brand service platform.
- Developing and launching the IHG Way of Sales.
- Leading installation of IHG's global learning management system (LMS).



Under Whitney's direction, the global Stay Real training program has improved guest satisfaction at select IHG hotels by 1.34 points, which translates into a potential \$82 million revenue increase.

Whitney also made the connection between learning and the business clear. Under his direction, the global Stay Real training program improved guest satisfaction at select IHG hotels by 1.34 points, which translates into a potential \$82 million revenue increase.

Through the LMS, IHG is able to track individual learning throughout the organization and allow managers to recommend training methods based on specific needs. As a result, the company is realizing cost savings through increased efficiency in its profit-sharing tools and improved training methods within its global divisions.

And while the IHG Way of Sales is still in its infancy, it already has gathered positive anecdotal feedback, and IHG is confident the

program will have a favorable, long-term impact.

Whitney was selected by IHG's senior management to lead these and other initiatives based on his leadership, strategic planning and experience in hotel learning and training. More important than the overall impact of each program may be his ability to mediate and act as a liaison between stakeholders on these initiatives' development.

## SILVER

### ALICE MUELLERWEISS

*Dean, VA Learning University,  
Department of Veterans Affairs*



The growing number of U.S. troops returning home from wars in Afghanistan and Iraq means that Veterans Affairs (VA) employees must care for more families in need of health services and benefits. Post-traumatic stress disorder and homelessness are significantly increasing, and with the VA's education and training initiatives spread across three administrations, it needed a streamlined approach to personal and professional enrichment.

The VA developed an organization-wide, multi-layered training program to raise employee standards in five key training areas: function-specifics, leadership and management, project and program management, transformation and customer service. To implement these changes, VA Learning University Dean Alice Muellerweiss enacted a plan to shift all VA learning functions to one organization, the Veterans Administration Learning University (VALU), and added professionals to her team to create a competency model to link training and development.

VALU trained more than 200,000 employees in the first year of the program, exceeding department goals by more than 50 percent. Muellerweiss' vision in directing VALU enriched learning for the employees who fulfill the VA mission — to provide care and support for members of the U.S. military and their families.

## BRONZE

### DIANA THOMAS

*Vice President of U.S. Training,  
Learning and Development, McDonald's Corp.*



Since the start of McDonald's Corp.'s "Plan to Win" initiative, the company has effectively improved communication of its corporate methodology, but still struggled with how best to impart these strategies and objectives to employees to deliver the best results.

Under the leadership of Diana Thomas, McDonald's president of U.S. training, learning and development (TLD), the strategic plan for training was simplified and streamlined, and engagement/commitment scores from both employees and franchises improved. TLD milestones are now being integrated into all new initiatives, allowing those successful standards to extend from the corporate to the restaurant level.