INTRODUCTION
The declining popularity of COBOL, a computer programming language, created a training issue for programmers within the Information Technology Department at Nationwide. The language, once primarily used in business, finance, and administrative systems for companies and governments, was being replaced with Java, a modern, general purpose language. The phase out of COBOL at Nationwide required programmers to learn Java in order to maintain their current positions and/or advance within the organization.

Nationwide requested a series of courses to provide the current COBOL programmers foundational knowledge of Java that could be completed in less than two years. Nationwide could provide a minimum of eight to 10 individuals to run each course. Employees who complete the program would not only obtain the qualifications for the newly re-defined programmer positions, but would also be well-suited to advance at Nationwide.

NEED
The phase out of COBOL and introduction of Java required the re-training of existing programmers at Nationwide in order for individuals to retain their current positions and/or advance within the company.

SOLUTION
Nationwide Information Technology partnered with Franklin University to offer a series of four courses to serve employees onsite at several locations that would enable programmers to obtain working knowledge of Java within two years.

RESULTS
The initial course was deployed within one month of engagement with Nationwide. While participants are not required to complete every course, 11 individuals will receive a certificate of completion for the four-course series in May 2016. To date, more than 80 employees have taken at least one of the four courses.
IMPLEMENTATION
As part of the partnership with Nationwide, Franklin University developed a series of four courses that would equip the programmers with the Java knowledge necessary to achieve business and performance goals. Within one month of the original request from Nationwide, the first course was offered. The four courses are:
- Introduction to Computer Science and Object-Oriented Programming
- Object-Oriented Data Structures and Algorithms I
- Database Management Systems
- Application Server Programming

A Franklin faculty member simultaneously instructs employees onsite at Nationwide’s main location, as well as those at satellite locations through hybrid sessions using AdobeConnect. Session times are tailored to coincide with the end of a typical workday. Each Fall and Winter term, the first two courses are offered with the third and fourth courses offered on an as-needed basis.

As part of the partnership, Nationwide’s programmers participating in the Java training are classified as non-degree seeking students at Franklin University, but because they are earning college credit – in addition to satisfying their immediate training needs – they have the option to continue taking courses to meet long-term education goals as well.

BENEFITS TO THE CLIENT
The first course was offered in August 2014 and the first cohort of programmers is on track to complete the last of the four courses in May 2016. While participants are only required to take the first two courses to retain the programmer positions, 11 (of the initial cohort of 14) individuals will receive certificates of completion for the four-course series in May.

To date, about 80 employees have taken at least one class and one-third of the initial cohort has already transitioned to new positions that focus on Java programming. Several other individuals also advanced to new positions after completing the first two courses.

ABOUT THE CLIENT
Nationwide is one of the largest insurance and financial services companies in the world, focusing on domestic property and casualty insurance, life insurance and retirement savings, asset management and strategic investments.

ABOUT FRANKLINWORKS
FranklinWORKS provides partner organizations with a complete portfolio of educational options to recruit, train and retain the talent vital to moving organizations forward.

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