A Better Future for Just $1 a Day
How the Live Better U Program Separated Walmart from the Pack

In 2017, Walmart set out to revamp their tuition discount program, with a goal of building an industry-leading benefit for their 1.4 million hourly associates. Facing an extremely competitive retail environment and the potential of disruptive technologies on the horizon, the company understood the value of providing associates with expanded education and training opportunities, but Walmart leaders saw that the program wasn’t having the desired impact.

Walmart engaged Guild to help design a best-in-class benefits program that would eliminate the barriers preventing associates from going back to school and graduating. To accomplish that goal, Walmart and Guild aligned on four key program elements:

1. **AFFORDABILITY** — As opposed to traditional tuition reimbursement programs and discounts, Walmart set out to design a program that eliminated the need for associates to take out student debt to go back to school. Making this affordable for Walmart also required working with public and nonprofit universities with affordable tuition rates.

2. **RELEVANCY** — Walmart knew they needed to partner with universities that understand and cater to the unique needs of working adults, and provide degree programs and certificates that support both Walmart and the associate — now and in the future.

3. **ACCESSIBILITY** — The academic programs also needed to provide options for students of all academic backgrounds, so that everyone who applies can find a pathway to their educational goals. This included programs like high school completion and college prep, as well as associate’s and bachelor’s degrees.

4. **SUPPORT** — Between completing the college app, obtaining transcripts, and figuring out how to balance the demands of work, family and school, Walmart understood how difficult it would be for some associates to go back to school, even if it was fully paid. The program needed to support these students long before they ever start class, and all the way through to graduation.
Launched in June of 2018, this ambitious program would eventually be known as Live Better U, offering full- and part-time associates in the U.S. access to select, fully-funded associate’s and bachelor’s degrees for just $1 per day from academic partners like the University of Florida, Brandman University and Bellevue University -- institutions chosen based on their proven success serving the unique needs of working adults. Each associate also has their own personal Guild education coach, ready to support them through their entire educational journey.

Today, more than 7,500 associates have been accepted into a wide range of programs. Walmart students boast a retention rate 20 points higher than other students in comparable programs, and hundreds of thousands of associates across the country have completed skills training equivalent to nearly $320 million in college credit. These successes have prompted Walmart to expand Live Better U this year to include an additional 14 degree programs in fields like cybersecurity and information technology, with three new universities for associates to select from: Southern New Hampshire University, Wilmington University and Purdue University.

By expanding Live Better U, Walmart is doubling down on their commitment to their associates, helping them prepare for the future of work by building the career they want. In doing so, they’re also helping create the highly-skilled, well-trained workforce that will help move the business forward, and showing that education benefits programs can be a win-win -- an opportunity for better economic mobility and improved career prospects for associates, and a strategic talent driver and competitive advantage for forward-thinking employers.

**FAST FACTS**

**LAUNCHED**
June 2018

**ELIGIBLE ASSOCIATES**
Approximately 1.4 million

**ASSOCIATE COST**
$1/day for college; fully covered for high school

**BENEFIT**
Fully covered for in-network schools, including books & fees

**PROGRAMS**
H.S. completion, college prep, associates + bachelor’s degrees

**SCHOOLS**
University of Florida, Brandman University & Bellevue University (2018); Southern New Hampshire University, Wilmington University and Purdue University (2019)

**DEGREE OPTIONS**
Business administration & supply chain management (2018); IT, cybersecurity & data engineering (2019)

“**The impact on associates, their tie to Walmart now that we have this benefit, and their belief in what they can achieve is probably the most exciting thing we see, and it inspires all of us within Walmart.”**

— ELLIE BERTANI
DIRECTOR OF HR, STRATEGY & INNOVATION
WALMART U.S.