

Merck KGaA Makes Training Stick For Commercial Sales Teams Using Qstream's Mobile Microlearning

Approaching Training Through A Sales Rep's Lens

Nish Prasad is ideally suited for her role as Global Technical Portfolio Training Specialist at Merck. As a former sales rep, she understands the challenges and priorities of the group she serves. Most importantly, she knows how precious their time is - and that they'd rather be selling in the field than completing training in the office. Her background in sales helps her be more strategic, always asking the question, what do reps need to know now to be successful in their roles and what can come later? She gives the example of pausing all learning initiatives at the end of the quarter, where reps are focused on closing business. This learner-first approach has led sales teams to see her as a partner that has their best interest in mind.

"Merck has over 300,000 products," Nish says. "Imagine being a salesperson having to sell the whole portfolio."

And she frequently does just that, putting herself back in their shoes. She acknowledges part of her function requires acting as a gatekeeper when people approach her with training ideas and topics. "I'm a visual person and I constantly imagine myself in front of the customer," she explains. "I've never forgotten that, and I immediately go back there anytime there's a priority brought to me."



[Nish Prasad](#) is a Global Technical Portfolio Training Specialist at Merck KGaA. While she earned an undergraduate degree in biotechnology, she started her career as a software engineer before moving into sales roles and finally transitioning into the training rockstar she is today. She currently supports the Merck commercial sales teams, working with the global network of SMEs to build training content that is aligned with business priorities. She says that her work with Qstream to boost training stickiness is one of her proudest achievements at Merck.

Headquartered in Darmstadt, Germany, [Merck KGaA](#), which operates as MilliporeSigma in the US and Canada, is a global science and technology company with more than 60,000 employees in 66 countries. They've developed over 300,000 best-in-class products for pharmaceutical development and manufacturing. According to the company website, their vision is a world where innovative products, services and digital offerings help create solutions for people globally and a sustainable future for generations to come.



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She says it’s all about balance. “What do they need today, what are the key commercial priorities for this year, but also in the grand scheme of things, what should training look like based on where the organization is headed?”

Unfortunately, that sometimes means saying no. “If it doesn’t necessarily align with the commercial priority, then we might not pursue it,” Nish says.

“It’s my team’s job to really figure out what the sales teams need, and how we can deliver it in a concise but effective format.”

She says that sales reps, like many of today’s workers, are being bombarded with information from all directions between email and other channels. It can be difficult to know what they should focus on. “Qstream allows us to communicate the organization’s priorities to learners in a clear, concise way,” she explains.

Making Learning Accessible In The Flow Of Work

Qstream was a perfect fit for what Nish and her team were trying to accomplish. Qstream is a microlearning software that pushes out quick, mobile challenges to learners to build knowledge retention and confirm mastery of job-critical skills. While the breadth of their portfolio might be covered in classroom training events or LMS modules, Qstream acts as a safety net post-training, ensuring reps are ready to put the most important concepts into practice in the field.

The platform makes learning more accessible and convenient. “It’s so important for us to offer a mobile microlearning platform, where learners have access to all the information they need in a digital format and it’s accessible and convenient,” explains Nish. “Qstream’s short bursts of questions, immediate feedback and explanations reinforce what their priorities should be, and how they can go after them.”

The in-the-flow-of-work nature of Qstream is not only ideal for busy field reps, but is in line with the organization’s priorities as a whole.



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The Three Cs Guiding Training Strategy

When program planning, Nish enlists the help of the three Cs: collaboration, curiosity and creativity.

“Collaboration is so important because we have such a huge network of SMEs and commercial stakeholders. Curiosity is the fuel for us to innovate the content and deliver what’s relevant to the sales teams,” says Nish. “And creativity is a huge aspect of it too in terms of delivering the content in a way that’s engaging and well-received.”

She says everybody is fighting for the sales reps’ attention. “That’s why it’s very, very important for us to understand what they need, when they need it, and how can we effectively provide it?”

Qstream has been instrumental in the collaboration piece of the equation, she explains. “We’ve been able to build a huge network of internal collaborators through these different learning ecosystems and I think Qstream plays a huge role in that.”

The Merck team, who is frequently juggling multiple priorities, bonds over their use of Qstream, regularly sharing best practices for using the platform.

Measuring Training ROI

Learning leaders have long struggled to measure the impact of training, especially when it comes time to tie it back to business goals such as increasing revenue or reducing customer churn.

Nish understands this challenge all too well. “I came from a background in sales, where success measurement is black and white and everything has metrics associated with it.”

Still, her team has managed to get creative when making these connections. “While it’s very difficult to have equal correlation, especially with the numbers, this is something that we actively look at,” she explains. “For example, are there certain training programs that have had an impact within the sales team, where they were able to close some of the larger opportunities?”

Anecdotal feedback from the reps also helps Nish’s team make connections to ROI. For instance, they might complete a training that was followed up with a Qstream campaign. “Sometimes they approach us with, ‘This was packaged very nicely, so I went through this whole program and now I have closed this particular deal.’”

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Nish says that Qstream is fool-proof when it comes to measuring stickiness, or knowledge retention. They train on certain topics on a yearly basis and have seen vast improvement in retention since implementing Qstream for knowledge reinforcement. “Initial proficiency on topics we train each year is already higher – they are remembering the information,” Nish explains. “Qstream helps answer the question, did they really retain what they learned?”

And while assigning numbers to training that encompasses 300K+ products is not feasible, feedback from the commercial leaders, managers and sales teams helps them gauge the success of their efforts. Nish says, “If you think about it from a holistic program standpoint, not just individual trainings, then we have seen a lot more impact. And that’s something that they keep coming back to.”

Promoting Learning Journeys & Enabling Scalability

Nish and her team are extremely thoughtful about packaging training and building a robust learning ecosystem. They currently use Microsoft 365, including MS Teams for communication and collaboration, as well as BlueJeans for broader training events, and Docebo and Yammer.

Specifically, they use Yammer to share Qstream leaderboard highlights to keep reps engaged and motivated. “We give informal shoutouts to the top three individuals on the leaderboards and the top team,” Nish explains. “We use their photos and tag all commercial leaders and their managers. This is me putting myself in the salesperson’s shoes again. I remember how important it is to get that type of visibility. It’s a simple way to recognize people for their hard work.”

They also use Yammer to announce the launch of new Qstream campaigns. “We send out the initial communication link back to the training it’s reinforcing.” She continues, “This gives them the tools that they need to be successful in that campaign, but also acts as a good reference for them throughout those six to eight weeks.”

Merck All-Time Qstream Results:

27%
increase in
proficiency

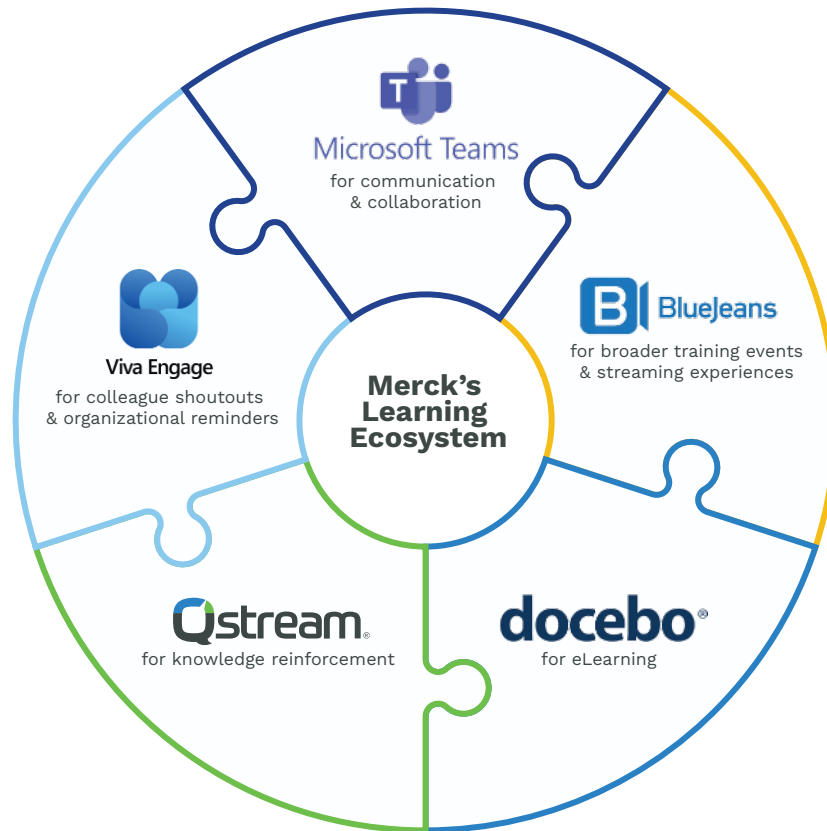
86%
participant
engagement

300+
Qstreams launched

50+
countries using
Qstream



Nish's Team's Tech Ecosystem At A Glance



While Nish and her team prioritize what reps need in the moment, they keep building scalable training programs top of mind. “There has to be this balance of just-in-time content but always thinking about what that evergreen version looks like.”

They are able to repurpose a lot of their programs due to the quality of content provided by Merck’s global network of SMEs. “The time saving aspect of this is huge,” Nish says. Efficiency is key for training teams, who are always trying to do more with less, especially when creating programs for a global audience. One way that Nish’s team has been able to achieve this is by creating the content for North America and Western Europe groups in tandem. “The live training and follow-up Qstream are developed at the same time, so we have everything ready to go.”

Nish also uses the LMS as a repository for Qstream content, where learners can reference past material at any time.

What Teams Across The Organization Love About Qstream

“We have a really good rhythm and cadence going with Qstream in terms of acceptance and adoption,” she says.

Qstream is a crowd-pleaser for groups across the Merck organization. “For the sales reps, it’s the mobile, learning on the go aspect,” says Nish. “The short format is something they really appreciate.”

When it comes to the sales reps’ frontline managers, they cite the platform’s robust metrics as a key selling point. “They have insights into the gaps that their team might have, and where they need to request additional training,” she explains.

The ability to tag questions with topics provides real-time insight into what people know and don’t know. “So when our managers see somebody lagging on a particular topic, they can go into the LMS and look for additional training,” Nish says. “Or if they see their entire team needs help in an area, they can do additional group training. So Qstream helps them take a more tailored approach to developing their team.”

Leadership also has access to a holistic view of training program performance. “They can see how things are going from a global standpoint,” she says. “At the end of the year, we show them a dashboard that compares all the different countries at the highest level. This allows us to do some investigating into what worked well where and how the other regions can capitalize on that.”

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What Learners Love About Qstream

“Extremely interactive! Definitely helps to retain the different virus treatment and removal technologies!”

“This was an excellent way to review the key topics from the roadshow and to keep the ideas fresh in our minds. This has helped me to focus my daily SFDC tasks through the lens of the official business rules.”

“This Qstream was very helpful! I love that it covered a product line -- and especially one we are pushing now.”



What Nish Loves About Her Role & Her Proudest Achievement At Merck

Although Nish is passionate about so many areas of her job, she says the ability to work on large projects with a diverse group tops the list. “Ultimately, it’s the number of people that I get to collaborate extensively across the globe to create and deliver training and then see the impact,” Nish explains. “I love when we get positive feedback from the sales team - that they found all the different elements engaging and were able to walk away with a better understanding of something.”

When asked about her proudest achievement, she says: “Every time that we’ve tied what we’re doing to a key global initiative or commercial priority - most recently, sustainability. It’s seeing that program come to life and then having Qstream as that closure piece; it’s just wrapping the whole thing in a nice bow.”

She believes her team’s strategic approach to creating engaging, valuable learning journeys is why other commercial leaders have shown interest in using the platform. “We are constantly rethinking how we approach training, how we deliver, how we execute, how we strategize and how we plan. That’s why my team is considered a successful and impactful team within the organization.”

Next, they will be launching Qstream to their Latin America teams, which she says will likely become her new career highlight. “This will be the first time we will be offering Qstream in two languages and I am so proud because diversity, equity and inclusion is one of the organization’s key priorities.”

Qstream offers translations in every language to help organizations engage and develop a diverse set of learners.



Qstream Benefits All Organizations Where Knowledge Matters

When asked to explain how Qstream works, Nish says, “It breaks training into pieces that are delivered over a six- to eight- week period of time and questions are accessible in their day-to-day. I’d say the stickiness factor that we’ve experienced within our organization is one of the most valuable things.”

When it comes to Qstream’s analytics: “There aren’t many ways to measure retention of knowledge or how the organization is progressing on a particular topic, tool or even initiative. Qstream helps you understand the gaps to help support learners and make data-driven decisions.”

“Overall, we love working with Qstream,” she explains.

Interested in learning more about Qstream?

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“Qstream would benefit any department within the organization. Short bursts of questions are delivered to learners in the flow of work to reinforce the businesses’ priorities and metrics give managers insight into the gaps that their teams might have.”

NISH PRASAD



Qstream is the leading enterprise microlearning and knowledge reinforcement solution proven by science and in practice to boost learner performance. Hundreds of organizations rely on Qstream to build high-performance teams by delivering a personalized and agile learning experience that delivers the highest levels of retention, engagement and efficiency along with analytics that provide precision insights and expose a real-time view of performance readiness.

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