"I really appreciate the strategic focus of the course. It reminded me how all of our work in HR is interrelated, and that I should always step back and take more of a ‘big picture’ perspective.”

SHRM Learning System Course Participant
County of Orange

**SOLUTION**
Train a select group of highly motivated HR professionals that have their supervisor's buy-in

With O'Halloran as the course instructor, a group of 20 committed participants met for twelve 3-hour weekly sessions which were divided between company and personal time, a model that has worked well in the past.

They utilized the SHRM Learning System, which O'Halloran found to be very thorough and initiated quality discussions. She also brought in guest speakers on specific topics — an employment law, an employee relations and a benefits specialist each came in to discuss real-life examples and current industry trends.

As an instructor, she looks beyond the classroom for additional collaboration opportunities. “I encourage participants to seek out current HR issues and bring them to class so we can discuss relevant, real-life HR issues.” O'Halloran also encourages students to form study groups: “It takes more than reading the materials and attending class once a week to retain the information. Meeting with a study group to discuss topics, review concepts, review the tests in the book and talk about the material will greatly increase their retention rate.”

**RESULTS**
Certification, increased confidence in their abilities and pride in the HR profession

The majority of the group sat for the certification exam and passed. Above and beyond their certification goal, O'Halloran is proud that the course greatly increased the participants’ knowledge of HR as a broader discipline, as well as industry best practices.

Perhaps the best result has been the impact on each individual – O'Halloran captured some of their comments:

"Whether I pass the exam or not doesn’t matter. What I learned was invaluable and this course was well worth the time and effort. Thank you so much for a great learning experience."

"Participating in this class was the highlight of my time here at the County. Thank you so much for all you have done to help me advance my career.”

**CHALLENGE**
Prepare HR professionals for advancement while increasing credibility of the HR function

Making the move to centralize the HR function, the County of Orange was challenged with preparing their mostly early career HR professionals to advance into senior positions while increasing their credibility.

Kathleen O'Halloran, Manager of the Learning and Organizational Development Group, oversees professional skills training for the entire county workforce, in addition to HR professional development. She had experience with the SHRM Learning System and immediately turned to it and SHRM-CP/SHRM-SCP certification as a solution for this group.

“We have quite a number of early career people who don’t have the breadth to rise into more senior positions. SHRM certification is a good way to increase their knowledge and raise their interest level so they can see that the HR world is bigger than the discipline that they are currently in. Overall, I knew that SHRM certification would increase the credibility of the HR function throughout the organization.”

**ORGANIZATION PROFILE**
Orange County in Southern California is home to three million residents and employs almost 18,000. The County of Orange is a regional service provider and planning agency whose core businesses include public safety, public health, environmental protection, regional planning, public assistance, social services and aviation.