

The Experts Teach: Training Skills

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The Experts Teach

Training Skills



The Experts Teach: Training Skills

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Preface

Introduction to “The Experts Teach: Training Skills”

In each of “The Experts Teach” series, we’ve gathered together some of the world’s best thinkers to share their ideas with you. Their ideas offer new, refreshing, and insightful ways to look at old themes, allowing you to discover new perspectives, develop your understanding, and change the way you think.

Profile of Editor Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

Profile of ManageTrainLearn

ManageTrainLearn is one of the top companies on the Internet for management training products, materials, and resources. Products range from training course plans to online courses, manuals to teambuilder exercises, mobile management apps to one-page skill summaries and a whole lot more. Whether you’re a manager, trainer, or learner, you’ll find just what you need at ManageTrainLearn to skyrocket your professional and personal success.

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1 When the Cat's Away: Getting Better Frontline Decisions – Without You by Jeff Mowatt

As a manager, you may assume that the guidance you give to your employees while you're on-site, will translate into them making better decisions when you're away. Unfortunately, the reverse may be true. Sometimes a manager's advice on customer care ends-up making bad service even worse. For example, a supervisor reprimands a teller for being too slow. In response, the teller starts being abrupt with customers. A store owner tells an employee that he is not up-selling enough, so he attempts to up-sell all the time – even when there is a long waiting line. Not good. Not for customers, employees, or profits.

The solution is not to avoid correcting employees; instead, it's to augment your feedback with another tool. If you're not using it yet, consider using prioritized service standards. Here's how it works.

Faster isn't always better

Imagine that you're a manager in a multinational oil company in charge of the help-desk call centre. The twenty employees who report to you are responsible for taking calls from co-workers all over the world with computer problems. Your department receives about five thousand calls a month. Your objective is to improve both your employees' customer service and their morale – on a limited budget. Incidentally, this is an actual case example based on one of my clients who asked me to assist in training their help-desk employees.

If the manager tried to boost productivity and customer satisfaction by pushing employees to work faster, the results would likely have been a mess. You'd have employees who felt like they were being rushed and customers who felt the service was abrupt. Mistakes would happen that would require more time to correct later. Compare this poor outcome to the results of using prioritized service standards.

Setting your standards

Let's say that your management team has established these five corporate values or standards: quality, courtesy, efficiency, innovation, and safety. You then take these standards and interpret them for each department. When we applied this strategy to the oil company help-desk, here's the ranking we determined:

1. Quality. In the case of the call centre, the 'quality' of the service is measured by the percentage of calls where the customer's problem is solved over the phone on the first call. It's why the department exists, so it's number one.
2. Courtesy. This relates to the customers' perception of the way they are being treated by call-centre employees.
3. Efficiency. This is where we measure call volume – how many calls the employee handles.
4. Innovation. This relates to ideas that help-desk employees generate to help reduce the overall number of calls.
5. Safety. In the case of a help-desk for a call centre, where co-workers are phoning with questions about using a computer, there is little physical danger involved. That's why it's listed last in the call-center's five values.

The shift in decision making

The next step is to train the help-desk staff on each of the five standards and their priority. Once this is done, the employees are held accountable for upholding them. For example, since quality comes before efficiency, they know that it's OK to take more time with a customer to fix the problem right the first time. In terms of courtesy, we equipped them with Influence with Ease® skills on how to handle upset callers who are having computer problems. Efficiency is still important, so they know they can't spend fifteen minutes on idle chatter with customers. Since innovation is also a standard, employees also know that they need to generate ideas to prevent future problems.

In other words these service standards help to clarify the priorities upon which decisions are based. Without these standards, employees may focus on the last thing they were criticized for; regardless of whether it makes sense in a particular situation. The bonus is that these same standards can be applied to the company's other departments by simply adjusting the priority.

Adapting with Ease

Let's move from the help-desk of this oil company to the retail service stations. Gas stations have the same service standards as the help-desk, but gas station employees would interpret or prioritize the corporate values differently. For service stations you end up with the same standards; but the priority is now: 1. Safety 2. Courtesy 3. Efficiency 4. Quality 5. Innovation

By having prioritized service standards for their department, gas station employees have a clearer idea of what's expected of them. Since safety is ranked higher than courtesy, kiosk cashiers know that it's OK to not turn on the gasoline pumps for a customer who's smoking near the fuel tank, even though the customer may not like it. Of course, since courtesy is the second priority, employees need to be equipped with communication tools that we provide on how to break bad news, without losing the customer.

Bottom line – supervisors can do less leaning over the shoulders of frontline workers. Prioritizing your service standards will make employees less stressed and customers more satisfied. As for managers – who knows – maybe for once the cat will have a chance to play.

About the author

Customer service strategist and professional speaker, Jeff Mowatt is an authority on The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®. For Jeff's other tips, self-study resources, and training services on establishing rapport, click <http://www.jeffmowatt.com/individual/greetingcustomers.html>

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Original article

<http://www.jeffmowatt.com/articles/catsaway.html>

2 If Developing Leaders is the Question, Training May Not Be the Answer by Kevin Eikenberry

That is a very strange title to read from a guy who has designed and delivered training for the last 25 years, and whose company provides a wide range of workshops, both inside organizations and in public settings.

But the title is accurate.

Training may not be the answer, and it most assuredly isn't the whole answer.

So if you are responsible for developing leaders in your organization (and if you are a leader, this is part of your responsibility), or if you are looking for ways to expand your personal leadership skill set, listen carefully.

You've got to think outside the (training) box.

While this idea deserves far more conversation than I will have room for here, today I want to get you thinking about ways to create learning opportunities beyond a workshop setting. Here are seven to get you started.

Peer coaching.

We know more than we realize, and when we sit down with a colleague, we can make progress on our challenges by talking them out in a non-threatening situation. Plus, the advice we give as a coach bolsters our confidence and solidifies what we already know. And of course, a coach, whoever they are, can provide an opportunity for accountability for application.

Mentoring.

Similar to peer coaching, mentoring typically involves someone more senior (or at least more experienced in a specific skill or situation) working with a protégé. This can be formally built in an organization or not, but the power of mentoring to drive learning and growth is significant.

Book clubs.

Many different formats fit here, and that is worthy of another post itself. A small or large group uses a book as the basis for learning and then conversation. Whether you read the full book, or go chapter by chapter, find what works in your organization and use books as a starting point for conversation, learning and application.

Learn and share.

One of the most powerful ways to learn is to teach. This fact is strung through nearly all of the ideas here, but it is the specific idea behind this activity. Someone in the organization goes to a workshop, conference or convention, and on their return they are asked to share key lessons with a larger group. This exercise holds attendees accountable, focuses their efforts and energies, and provides great learning to others back at work.

Remote learning.

There are more and more options for bite-sized learning that doesn't require lengthy time and travel from the office. Consider the value of targeted learning from teleseminars, webinars and other remote events. These can be time and cost effective and allow groups to meet a specific learning goal. (We offer these regularly – you can learn more here).

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Lunch and learn.

This can be the way (or time) to do some of the other items on this list, but it can also be a term to describe bringing in an expert (internal or external) on a topic and letting them share experiences and knowledge on a very specific topic or skill. Imagine having senior leaders do these on a scheduled basis for other leaders in the organization. The value is far greater than just what gets discussed in those sessions.

Team learning challenge.

Take a group interested in improving. Have them collectively decide on a specific skill or learning area, and let them loose to work on building their skills together. If the goal is clear, the approach here is self-directed learning, with a component of bringing people together to share what they are learning in the same arena. This could include any of the ideas above – or many others!

None of this means that training can't or shouldn't be a part of your process – it just isn't enough by itself to create the learning and application you are looking for. Think about how you can, formally or informally, apply one or more of the ideas above in your organization. You will be pleased with the results you will gain when pairing these activities with training, or while waiting for training in the future.

About the author

Kevin Eikenberry is a leadership expert and the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group, a learning consulting company that helps Clients reach their potential through a variety of training, consulting and speaking services. You can learn more about him and a special offer on his newest book, Remarkable Leadership: Unleashing Your Leadership Potential One Skill at <http://RemarkableLeadershipBook.com/bonuses.asp>.

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3 You Can Learn Any Skill With Training But You Can't Learn To Love It! by Lynda-Ross Vega

Most of us have to acquire skills that are not innate and with enough training we learn to do them just fine. But no amount of facility and training can help us learn to love them. You can build your life around acquired skills, but nothing can take the place of natural skills that allow for creativity and inventiveness.

The concept of natural and acquired skills can be a confusing one. When I talk about building a life around natural skills instead of acquired ones I am always challenged by someone. The challenges come in various forms, but they are always something along two different lines: "You can't just do the things you like to do and survive in this world." and "There are lots of things that I do that I am not naturally gifted at doing, but I do them just fine!"

My unequivocal response to both challenges is "You are absolutely right!" But it doesn't stop there of course. My counter challenge back to the first is "OK, but why not set a goal to have most of your activities based in your natural strengths?" To the second I say "Yeah, but do you enjoy doing them?"

There is something in the challenges that I have often pondered. It seems that there is something about the idea of enjoying what you do, of doing what comes easily, and building your life and/or career around it that feels wrong to many people. I could wax philosophically about where it comes from, but that doesn't really matter. I have encountered the phenomenon so often to know it to be true. To a great extent we embrace the idea that if something is fun and easy it can't have much value or that using it is some kind of cosmic "cheating." We believe that if it is not "hard work" then it isn't work at all.

The number of people I encounter daily that don't like what they do always amazes me. Remember the important difference between natural and acquired skills is not that you can do one but not the other because you can do both – most of us do. The truth is we all have to take on a few acquired skills to function in the world. The important difference is that the innate capacity we have for our natural skills makes them easier to develop, more enjoyable to perform, and in the long run they provide more opportunity for meaning in your life.

I repeat this so often because it is apparently so hard for us to really hear and get. The truth is a constant diet of acquired skills will wear you out emotionally, psychologically, and physically. The good news is, a life built around your natural skills will open new opportunities that you cannot yet imagine.

When you practice and use your natural skills they develop with a subtle complexity that an acquired skill just can't. When applying natural skills you perform with an unconscious ease that allows for creativity and inventiveness. On the other hand, facility with an acquired skill takes conscious effort that ultimately drains your creative energy.

So, yes, most of us have to acquire some skills that are not innate and with enough training we can learn to do them just fine. But no amount of facility and training will help us learn to love them. You can build your life around acquired skills, but why would you want to when you can build it around natural skills that are already an expression of who you are?

About the author

A partner at Vega Behavioral Consulting, Ltd., Lynda-Ross specializes in helping entrepreneurs and coaches build dynamite teams and systems that WORK. She is co-creator of a revolutionary psychological assessment system that teaches people how to unleash their deepest potentials for success. For free information on how to succeed as an entrepreneur or coach, create a thriving business and build your bottom line doing more of what you love Free Reprint Articles, visit www.ACIforCoaches.com

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4 The Easiest Way to Learn by Steve Goodier

A true story points to a universal truth about human beings: we learn best by watching how others behave.

President Calvin Coolidge once invited friends from his hometown to dine with him at the White House. Unsure of their table manners, the guests decided to imitate the president. They watched closely to see which utensils he used, what foods he ate and when.

Their strategy seemed to succeed until coffee was served. Coolidge poured some coffee into his saucer. They did the same. He added sugar and cream. His guests did, too. Then the president bent over and put his saucer on the floor for the cat!

Like Coolidge's hometown guests, we, too, seem to learn best by imitation. Kids learn by observing parents when they are young, and by copying their peers as they grow older. In fact, parents should probably be less concerned about whether their children are paying attention to them and more worried about the fact that their kids are ALWAYS watching.



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They tell us that adults learn in much the same way. If you're struggling with your computer or want to learn to drive a car, you will be more successful if you have someone show you how to do it. You can always read the operator's manual and try to figure everything out yourself, but you will learn best by watching others and asking questions.

What if you want to become more self-confident, to organize your life, to be a better parent or to get along better with others? Again, we're told that the best way to learn these skills and attitudes is to find somebody who already is confident, or who is an effective parent or who has healthy attitudes and then mimic the traits you want to adopt. It is the easiest and quickest way to shape your life.

Just about ANY personality trait or skill can be learned: simply find it in someone you know and copy it. Then watch what happens.

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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5 The Bonk Approach to Testing by Eric Garner

I have 2 rules for assessing my trainees at the end of a course.

The first is: test them on what they already know. If they get the test right, which they should if I've taught them well, they'll feel good with themselves but not particularly motivated to learn any further.

The second is: test them on something they've still got to learn. That brings them back down to earth and reminds them that they don't know it all.

I call this the Bonk approach to testing and learnt about it from Harvey Mackay. Let me explain some more.

Professor Bonk is professor of Introductory Chemistry at Duke University in the United States. His course has been taught for years and is affectionately known as "Bonkistry".

One year, two male students were taking chemistry on Professor Bonk's course. They were doing very well as they came up to the final exams and both were predicted to earn "A" grades.

They were so confident that the two of them decided to escape for the weekend before the finals and party with friends at the University of Virginia.

The party was so good that they both had hangovers on the Sunday, slept all day and didn't make it back to Duke until early on the Monday morning.

Rather than taking the final then, they explained to Professor Bonk that they had driven up to the University of Virginia for the weekend and had planned to come back in time to study but they had a flat tyre on the way back and didn't have a spare, so they didn't get back to campus until late Sunday night.

Professor Bonk thought this over and then agreed that they could take the final exams the following day. The two friends were elated and relieved. They studied hard that night and went in the next day. Professor Bonk placed them in separate rooms, handed them each a test booklet, looked at his watch and told them to begin. They looked at the first problem, which was something simple about molarity and solutions and was worth 5 points.

"Cool," each of them thought. "This is going to be easy." They did that problem and then turned the page.

They were unprepared, however, for what they saw on the next page. It simply said: “Which tyre? (95 points)”

Happy training and happy testing!

About the author

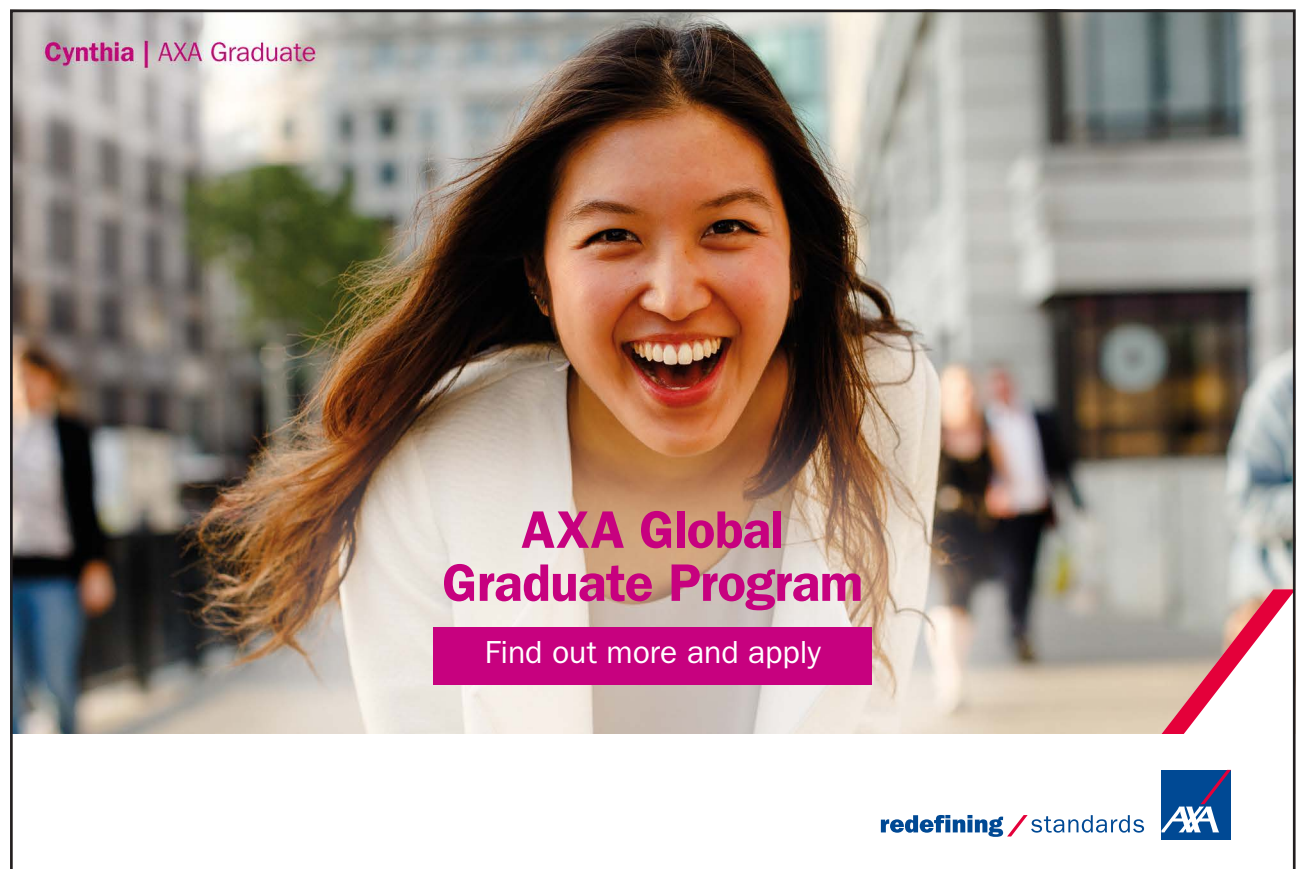
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6 Training to Fail by Ravinder Tulsiani

Why most training initiatives fail & what you can do to maximize return on your training investment.

Most companies want training programs that efficiently deliver the new knowledge in the least amount of time as possible to minimize disruption to their normal day-to-day operations.

Resulting from the need for efficiency, most trainers have focused almost exclusively on creating a training session or series of training sessions, in fact, trainers spend over 85% of their efforts on designing and developing the training event; this enables trainers to ensure that the material is delivered in the most compact way as possible and ensure the knowledge transfer occurs inside the classroom efficiently.

The problem with focusing on event almost exclusively is the long-term retention. Studies prove that less than half of the skills and information learned is transferred to the job immediately after the training session. Within 6 months, three-quarters of the information or skill is forgotten, and after one year employees retain as little as 10 to 15% of what they learned in the training session.

If you're looking for better return from your training investment dollars, then consider breaking the event mindset and start thinking about the entire learning process.

The training event is only a part of the learning process. You should allocated no more than 60% of your efforts in the event itself; to increase the effectiveness and return on training investment, focus your remaining 40% of your time in developing post-training re-enforcement and follow up.

Post-training re-enforcement and follow up strategy can include providing resources to answer questions, additional reinforcement training sessions / stand ups, job aids, online resource, follow up on actions learners indicated they would take; any effort taken to reinforce the skill. You can also give employees who have successfully implemented new skill the opportunity to provide training.

Engage the immediate managers prior to training and encourage them to hold learners accountable for the new skills learned and recommend that they put in place rewards and incentives to encourage the new behavior. Encourage them to measure and monitor performance, because "what gets measured gets done."

By having a solid post-training plan, you will exponentially increase the return on your training investment dollars. In fact, studies show that training combined with follow up and coaching increases effectiveness by over 80%.

About the author

Ravinder Tulsiani is a corporate leader, entrepreneur, and commanding public speaker. An author and highly effective business developer, Ravinder has written several self-help books and workplace training and development books.

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7 Successful Change Flows From Learning, Growth, and Development by Jim Clemmer

“Leaders in learning organizations are responsible for building organizations where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future – that is – leaders are responsible for learning” (his emphasis) – Peter Senge, *The Leaders New Work: Building Learning Organizations*

Change can't be managed. Change can be ignored, resisted, responded to, capitalized on, and created. But it can't be managed and made to march to some orderly step-by-step process. However, whether change is a threat or an opportunity depends on how prepared we are. Whether we become change victims or victors depends on our readiness for change.

One of the inspiring quotations I've used for my ongoing personal improvement quest came from Abraham Lincoln (his decades long string of failures in business and politics before becoming one of America's great presidents is inspiring in itself). He once said, “I will prepare myself and my time must come.” That's how change is managed.

We can't crash cram in a few days or weeks for a critical meeting or presentation that our key program, project, or even career depends upon. We can't quickly win back customers who've quietly slipped away because of neglect and poor service. We can't suddenly turn our organization into an innovative powerhouse in six months because the market shifted. We can't radically and quickly reengineer years of sloppy habits and convoluted processes when revolutionary new technology appears.

When cost pressures build, we can't dramatically flatten our organizations and suddenly empower everyone who's had years of traditional command and control conditioning. These are long-term culture, system, habit, and skill changes. They need to be improved before they're needed. In the words of an ancient Chinese proverb, “dig a well before you are thirsty.”

Problems that our team, our organization, or we may be having with change aren't going to be improved by some “change management” theory. To effectively deal with change we don't focus on change as some kind of manageable force. We need to deal with change by improving ourselves. Then our time must come. Successful change and continual improvement go hand in hand.

In his book, *The Age of Unreason*, London Business School professor and consultant, Charles Handy writes: “If changing is, as I have argued, only another word for learning, the theories of learning will also be the theories of changing. Those who are always learning are those who can ride the waves of change and who see a changing world as full of opportunities rather than of damage. They are the ones most likely to be the survivors in a time of discontinuity. They are also the enthusiasts and the architects of new ways and forms and ideas. If you want to change, try learning one might say, or more precisely, if you want to be in control of your change, take learning more seriously.”

Resistance to today’s change comes from failing to make yesterday’s preparations and improvements. When our teams, our organizations, and we fail to learn, grow, and develop at the speed of change (or faster), then change is a very real threat. If change finds us unprepared, it can be deadly.

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he’s written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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8 Training? Just ASK by George Torok

How do you know if the training you get is effective? The purpose of training is to create change. Change results from people doing things differently.

Effective training should provide changes in attitude, skills and knowledge. Like three sides to a triangle – all must be present to form the triangle. The greatest obstacle to change is individuals' perceptions based on what they think they know. Remember when everyone knew that the earth was flat?

Attitude

In a triangle how can one side be more important? When it is the base. You cannot pour information into a closed mind. It is easiest to train people who are begging for it. It is most difficult when they think, "We don't need this crap." When this happens it is even more important that the training address the change in attitude. When your child comes home with a bad mark they excuse it by saying, "I don't like the teacher." When you announce the training program to your staff – you must sell them on the need as much as you sell your customers on the need for your products. The trainer must reinforce that need during the program. You must follow-up after the training to further emphasize the value of the training.

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Skills

The success of training will be noticed by the change in skills. The skill doesn't end with the conclusion of the training session. Never be fooled and believe that training is a pill – it is a skill that needs practice. I was once proficient with my high school French but I let that skill rust by not using it. Training must be accompanied by exercises that retain and improve performance. Learning a new skill will cause mistakes. Don't obsess when your staff makes mistakes while practising their new skills. Acknowledge the error and find how to correct and prevent it. Remind them that they are moving in the right direction.

Knowledge

In the information age we are tempted to emphasize knowledge. Don't get me wrong; knowledge is important – but only in the application of that knowledge.

One error in training is to overload people with information. This only creates frustration – not the desire for growth. Acquiring knowledge is like eating an elephant – take it one bite at a time. It is always better to give people three key bits of knowledge that they will use rather than a list of 27 points that are quickly forgotten.

For your training to be effective insist on all three sides of the triangle – Attitude, Skills and Knowledge. To remember that formula – just ASK.

About the author

© George Torok offers training programs in Presentation skills, Creative Problem Solving and Personal Marketing. He delivers high-energy keynotes and practical seminars. You can reach him at 905-335-1995 or www.Torok.com

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9 Don't Take My Word For It by David Diamond

If you're a trainer like me, how often do you take a reality check on the theories you present to your trainees?

Some years ago, I read the case of George Turklebaum, a New York print worker who had died at his desk in Manhattan and because of his normal work habit of arriving early and leaving late, none of his colleagues had noticed for 5 days. Since George also lived alone, nobody else had noticed or reported his disappearance from home.

I remember using the story of George Turklebaum in my regular newsletter as evidence of the growing lack of humanity in our workplaces.

Needless to say, I was fairly red-faced when the emails started pouring in to tell me that the story of George Turklebaum was nothing but an urban myth, totally untrue in fact if true in other respects.

That's why I now run reality checks before every course I give just in case there are similar stories lurking there that I have come to accept as true.

Here are 3 that I now think twice about before using them.

1. The Communications Myth

This is ascribed to communications expert George Mehrabian who said that 7% of our communication comes from our words, 38% from how we say it, and 55% from our body language when we say it. I now have some concerns over the figures even if I accept the premise.

2. The Presentations Myth

This one comes from the Sunday Times Book of Lists and suggests that the greatest fear that people have is standing up to speak in front of an audience. It even outranks the fear of flying and the fear of death. Since only a tiny proportion of us ever have to give a presentation, while all of us face death, and many of us take air flights, this one just has to be an exaggeration.

3. The Change Management Myth

The third urban myth is the suggestion that I often use on Change Management courses to explain the complex nature of change. It's the theory that the beating of a butterfly's wings in Mexico can change the climate of New Zealand. Like most urban myths, this holds a grain of truth that can be both illuminating and instructive. But, when you consider the facts rather than the premise, it is palpably untrue.

Of course, like most trainers, I'm rather attached to my urban myths. Like a good and relevant anecdote, they can convey a truth in a way that theories can't. They're stories that coach, but still only stories.

So, how do I go about insuring myself against claims of false story-telling? Well, I have found a disclaimer that I'm thinking about getting everyone who comes on my courses to accept before they come. Here it is.

“Do not believe in what you have heard; do not believe in the traditions because they have been handed down for generations; do not believe in anything because it is rumoured or spoken by many; do not believe merely because a written statement of some old sage is produced; do not believe in conjectures; do not believe in that as truth to which you have become attached by habit; do not believe because of the authority of your teachers and elders. After observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and gain of one and all, then accept it, practice it and live up to it.”

This piece of advice is an excellent way of still putting out your theories while getting people to think about them carefully before using them.

The quote is ascribed to the Buddha who lived from 568 BC to 488 BC. But, like urban myths, don't take my word for it.

About the author

David Diamond is a contributing author for ManageTrainLearn, the site that will change the way you learn forever. Download free samples of the biggest range of management and personal development materials anywhere and experience learning like you always dreamed possible; <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

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10 Feedback is an Essential Element of Learning and Improvement by Jim Clemmer

“The major difference between the most and least successful executives is the latter’s lack of awareness. Successful executives are critical of their own performance. Unsuccessful executives are critical of the performance of others.” – Harry Levinson, *The Exceptional Executive*

At our youngest daughter’s sixth birthday party, five-year-old Ryan hit her on the head. As Vanessa cried hysterically, I asked him to apologize. He politely refused. When I asked him why, he replied, “Mr. Clemmer, I don’t apologize unless I see teeth marks or blood.”

Many managers don’t realize the pain and problems they’ve created unless they see teeth marks or blood on those they work with. The most insensitive managers are generally the ones who don’t have good personal feedback systems and refuse to seek input on how to improve their personal performance. Their “open door policy” is, “if you don’t like the way I do things, the (exit) door is always open.”



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We can't build an organization or team that's different from us. If my team or organization avoids or even resists performance measurement and feedback, I need to take a hard look at my own approach to personal feedback. If I don't have a continuous system and practice of actively soliciting feedback on my behavior, our organization is reflecting my measurement values. Feedback impaired managers are usually in favor of performance measurement and strong feedback loops – for everyone else.

We first noticed this connection when we were trying to understand why some teams or organizations had rich and powerful flows of performance data and rigorous measurements. But many other organizations that seemed equally determined to improve had very weak performance measurements. It didn't seem to be a knowledge issue. These low measurement organizations knew all about “360 degree” feedback systems, performance gap analysis, data-based tools and techniques, and the like.

But it was a lot of talk. There was little application. Then we noticed how people tiptoed around sensitive issues, especially problems that should have been raised with their immediate managers, or further up the hierarchy. We began to take note of the number of conversations we were having about how people try to gauge a senior manager's mood to see if today was a good day to raise a sensitive issue or flag a problem. We also noticed how many managers claimed that they wanted to build a learning organization, then did little to learn how people in their organization perceived their behavior.

Personal feedback – especially about problems or faulty signals we've sent – can be very painful. But our frequency, sensitivity, and action (or lack of it) on personal performance feedback sets the pace and tone for the rest of our team and organization. Many of the best measurement tools and techniques are severely curtailed in a feedback-adverse culture. As consultant H. James Harrington puts it in his book, *Business Process Improvement*, “Measurement is the lock, feedback is the key. Without their interaction, you cannot open the door to improvement.”

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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11 How Shiny Are Your Goldfish? by Bob Selden

Training often starts with a shiny, happy participant who is eager to learn – so why doesn't the shine last?

This article suggests that enlightened trainees that know how they learn best are empowered to continue fishing in the right places.

A colleague of mine, Dennis Pratt once described training as 'polishing goldfish'. He believes that as trainers, we take people out of their organisational context, train (polish) them, then drop them back into the murky waters of the organisation.

The newly-trained person is at first a bundle of shiny, excited energy about applying their new skills and knowledge. Of course, soon the murky waters of the organisation start to scuff their shininess. The person starts to become disheartened (for 'disheartened' read 'slime' and 'algae' that starts to form over their scales).

This is particularly the case for training in the people skills such as management and leadership. You might think this only applies to traditional classroom training. However, I believe it can even happen when the trainee is experiencing the best blended learning.

Why doesn't the shine last?

Unfortunately, too often as trainers we get hooked on teaching content over process. People can learn a lot about what to do and even how to do it through effective training. But do they learn, for example, how to identify and learn from experiences in the real world, as they happen? Do they find out what their own learning style is so that they can make the most of life's experiences?

How many of your training sessions, workshops, or blended learning programmes have major components on:

How to distinguish process from content, and how to manage each?

How to identify and make best use of one's learning style?

How to 'learn how to learn' from work and life experiences?

Many of us design our learning experiences to cater for the various participant learning styles (perhaps based on Kolb, Honey & Mumford, and so on). But have you ever asked participants: ‘Do you know how you learn best?’ or ‘How do you learn at work, from your successes and failures?’ or ‘What activities do you have in place to continually build your competence?’

I believe that one of the biggest payoffs participants can get from training is an understanding of how they ‘learn how to learn.’

Process or content?

In my earlier years as a management trainer, I fell into the trap of providing people with good content. Sure, there were plenty of ‘how to apply this’ activities. But it wasn’t until later that I realised I was not helping participants to:

Identify when they are applying the various skills, models and theories (ie the actual situations at work they were facing), so that they could apply them again and again

Assess their level of performance in terms of these skills, models and theories in current work issues

Learn the skills and processes that are transferable from one situation to another and those that weren’t

And most importantly, help them to ‘build their own model of leadership’ – something that is unique to each person.

In other words, I was not helping them to develop a set of expert skills they could apply across situations, contexts and functions – ie process skills. So my current training now errs on the side of process rather than content.

How can process skills be developed?

Every time a team meets to make decisions or move a project forward, at the end of their meeting they evaluate the effectiveness of their process management. We use a simple tool called the team process evaluation. Each participant scores the following five dimensions on a five point scale:

Direction and leadership

Participation

Disagreement and conflict

Decisions and commitment

Evaluating progress

The team then discusses the scores and how it can improve its process management skills for the next meeting. Finally, each team member makes a commitment to continue or change some of their own ways of participating.

Learning styles – why are they so important?

Some of you reading this article will have read every word (and be starting to question some of them). Others will have skipped over much of it, picking out just the main points. Some might be looking for the pictures, diagrams or models that are not here. Others will have not read this article but merely heard some of the points discussed by colleagues.

To cater for such differences, during the workshop component of a management development programme, we ask the participants just how they like to learn. This becomes extremely useful for the facilitators, but we've found that it is also great for the participants and their workshop teams. Team members now start to cater for one another's different styles and develop process skills that are transferable to the workplace.

Learning to learn – the real payoff

Once participants understand their own learning style, the next step is to apply this knowledge. We learn from our experiences. Unfortunately, it's often the bad work experiences that we learn most from. We miss many of the learning points that slip under the radar when everything is going well.

To help participants develop their own 'learn how I learn' model, they work with a partner at various times during the workshop. Through a structured process, the two participants help one another to understand what they have learnt (often content) and most importantly, how they learnt it (process).

For example, each participant will develop a 'learning log' during the workshop where they review their learning. They regularly discuss their log with their learning partner. The format for the learning process is:

Begin with the past – what did I learn and how?

Proceed to the present – what does this mean for me now? How is it impacting on my thoughts and feelings?

Consider the process, the subject matter and the future – what worked for me, what didn't?

How will I apply this?

Build in review – when and how will I review my learning?

Whilst there are many different outcomes, we've had some interesting follow-up stories from participants. Many say they now spend 15 minutes each morning at work going through 'three things that I learnt yesterday'. Some use the team process evaluation regularly. Others phone or email their old learning partner to discuss each other's current learning. The great thing about all these processes is that people are consciously learning where they learn best: in the real world.

About the author

Bob Selden is the author of the best-selling "What To Do When You Become The Boss" – a self-help book for new managers – see details at <http://www.whenyoubecometheboss.com/>. He's also coached at one of the world's premier business schools, the Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland and regularly advises managers around the globe on their current challenges.

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12 6 Ways to Maximize Learning by Steve Kaye

Your time is valuable. Here's how to get the most for it when you attend a seminar or workshop. Here's how to gain the most from training events.

1. Know what you want

Before the workshop, set learning goals for yourself. What do you want to learn? How can this program help you? What would make you feel that your time was well spent?

2. Ask for what you want

As the program unfolds, ask questions that guide the presentation toward the information that you need. Also, seek out specific ideas that will help you.

3. Focus on your success

Rather than fight against new ideas, greet them as possibilities. If the ideas seem unworkable, seek out ways to modify them so that you can use them. Or find parts of them that you can use.

4. Encourage the speaker

Learning succeeds best when you become involved. Thus, ask questions, make comments, participate in the projects. Pay attention. Let the speaker know that you are interested. This encourages the speaker to do a better job.

5. Care for yourself

Keep your body comfortable so that your mind can absorb more. Take a brisk walk during breaks. This increases your heart rate, which pumps fresh blood through your brain. Avoid eating a largePsychology Articles, heavy meal. This sends blood to your stomach and away from your brain.

6. Be grateful

Thank the speaker after the program. Either write a note or stay to express your appreciation. Also thank the people who organized the event in your company. Seek them out to express your thanks.

About the author

Steve Kaye helps leaders hold effective meetings. He is an IAF Certified Professional Facilitator, author, and speaker. His meeting facilitation and leadership workshops create success for everyone. Call 714-528-1300 for details. Visit <http://www.stevkaye.com> for a free report.

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13 Keeping Customers When Things Go Wrong: Five keys to Turning Upset Customers into Fans by Jeff Mowatt

When it comes to dealing with dissatisfied customers, most business owners and managers believe that money back guarantees and/or exchange policies will fix the problem. Lousy strategy. Money back guarantees and exchanges may fix the problem, but they do nothing to fix the relationship. Policies don't fix relationships – people do.

When I speak at conventions and meetings on how to boost customer retention, I often find that there is little attention paid to how employees can fix the damaged relationship when the customer has been let down. The consequences of this are staggering.

Inadequately trained front line employees chase away repeat customers and referrals, spread damaging word-of-mouth advertising, and become frustrated and de-motivated because they're constantly dealing with upset customers.

On the other hand, by applying just a few critical people skills, front line employees can create such positive feelings – for both themselves and their customers, that an upset customer will become even more loyal. They'll be transformed from being a critic of your organization to becoming an advocate. Here are 5 key strategies:

1. Focus on concerns versus complaints.

No one likes to hear customers complain. Employees become impatient and defensive when faced with these “trouble-makers.” One of my seminar participants equated listening to customer complaints to undergoing amateur eyeball surgery. (That can't be good).

To prevent this defensive mindset, employees need to be trained to treat customer complaints as concerns. Employees should be made aware of the fact that customers who express concerns are helping you to stay sharp, competitive and successful. Focusing on a customer concerns vs complaints will immediately shift a potentially negative situation into one that is positive, helpful, and productive.

“Money back guarantees don't fix relationships – people do.”

2. Empower front-line employees.

For their 43rd wedding anniversary, my father called a florist to order 43 roses for my mother. When Dad asked for the price, the clerk quoted the single rose price times 43. She offered no quantity discount despite the fact that they're usually cheaper by the dozen. She admitted that this didn't make sense, adding that her boss wasn't in and the policy was to issue no discounts without the manager's approval. Result – a competitor got the order and Dad will never go back to the first florist.

The lesson is that you can often prevent customers from becoming upset if you empower your front line employees to make reasonable on-the-spot decisions. This type of delegation require two important factors: training and trust. The irony is that a lot of managers say they can't afford to train employees, when in fact they can't afford not to. You don't get customers for free. You earn customers by investing in front line training.

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3. Prove that you're listening.

When a customer is voicing their dissatisfaction, stop whatever you're doing, turn towards them and give them an expression of total concern. Listen without interrupting.

Then prove that you've heard them. That means repeating and paraphrasing. Important: make sure you tell them why you're repeating what they've said. For example, you might say, "I want to make sure I've got this straight..." (then you paraphrase and repeat). That ensures that the customer knows that you truly understand the problem.

4. Express sincere empathy.

Virtually every upset customer feels frustrated because they didn't get what they expected. It's that simple. Whether or not they have a valid reason for feeling frustrated is completely irrelevant. Upset customers need to know that you care – not just about their problem – but about their frustration. So, empathize. That's something that no refund or exchange will ever do. Use phrases like, "Gosh, that sounds frustrating." Or, "I'd feel the same way if I were you." Empathizing will diffuse an angry customer faster than any thing else you can do.

5. Apologize and provide extras.

Tell the customer, "I'm sorry." Even if it wasn't your fault, but your co-worker's, you represent your organization to that customer, so apologize on behalf of the entire company. Even when you suspect the customer may have erred, it's better to give the customer the benefit of the doubt, than to be "right" and lose a lifetime of repeat and spin-off business.

If your product or service really did fall short of the mark, then to retain the customer, of course you'd give them a refund or exchange. But that's not enough. On top of the exchange or refund, give them something for their inconvenience. Any small gesture or token of appreciation (that doesn't force them to spend more money) will be greatly appreciated and will transform that upset customer into one of your greatest advocates.

The Training Solution

Every business has occasions where things go wrong and customers are disappointed. When that happens, your customer base won't be preserved by money back guarantees or exchanges. Rather, your business will be saved by properly trained front line employees.

About the author

Customer service strategist and professional speaker, Jeff Mowatt is an authority on The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®. For Jeff's other tips, self-study resources, and training services on establishing rapport, click <http://www.jeffmowatt.com/individual/greetingcustomers.html>

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14 Trainers, Make Me Feel Wanted! by Erica Rowntree

Have you ever been on one of those courses where the trainer stood at the front, told you how fantastic they were, showed endless slides to prove it... and never mentioned your name once?

I have and I hated it. I don't know about you, but a day on a course like that turns me into a demoralized wreck. I know it shouldn't affect me... and it's probably got something to do with whether I was breast-fed or not (I was, by the way!)... but these kind of experiences pull my self-esteem down to zero.

So now I'm going to have my say. If you do any kind of training, coaching, or managing, listen up.

Whenever I go on a course, I want all of the following things to happen to me...

I want you to acknowledge me. Please, if you ask me for my name up front, use it at least once during the day, don't tell me you've forgotten it, and don't get it wrong.

I want to feel as important as anyone else on the course, even if my natural inclination is to say nothing until you've made the climate safe enough for me to do so. I don't want to feel that the only ones you care about are the ones that talk loudest and most.

I want you to excite me with possibilities not dampen my enthusiasm with silly rules. I don't want a string of "musts", "shoulds" and "oughts". I want to know all about the wonderful things that I can do when I've learnt what you're helping me to learn.

I want you to inspire me by telling me how fantastic the subject is and how much I'm going to enjoy learning it. By the way, you do that by telling me how much you enjoy it.

I want you to be my role model. OK, I know I shouldn't expect perfection, but on a time management course, is it too much to ask that you turn up on time and run the course to schedule? Or on an assertiveness course, that you sort out the mess over lunch in a confident manner? Remember, we're all watching you and learning from you.

I want you to have a bit of empathy with me and the uphill road I've got to climb, rather than not mentioning it at all.

Phew! I'm glad I got that off my chest.

In all seriousness, you should think carefully about your trainees' needs and put them ahead of your own. And, in short, their needs are: to feel needed, appreciated, and noticed; to learn something new, to enjoy themselves, and to feel safe; to feel empowered, at ease and valued.

If you can do all that, you'll be touching their very souls.

Now, go for it!

About the author

Erica Rowntree is a contributing author for ManageTrainLearn, the site with the biggest and most original range of management training materials on the Internet.

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15 A Parable of a Child by Steve Goodier

There is a difference between education and experience. Education is what you get from reading the small print. Experience is what you get from not reading it.

But isn't it true that great learning comes from both education and experience? Let me tell you a parable:

A young school teacher had a dream that an angel appeared to him and said, "You will be given a child who will grow up to become a world leader. How will you prepare her? How will you challenge her intelligence? How will you help her grow in confidence? How will you help her develop both her assertiveness as well as her sensitivity? How will you teach her to be open-minded and, at the same time, strong in character? In short, what kind of education will you provide that she can become one of the world's truly GREAT leaders?"



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The young teacher awoke in a cold sweat. It had never occurred to him before – any ONE of his present or future students could be the person described in his dream. Was he preparing them to rise to ANY POSITION to which they may aspire? He thought, ‘How might my teaching change if I KNEW that one of my students were this person?’ He gradually began to formulate a plan in his mind.

This student would need experience as well as instruction. She would need to know how to solve problems of all kinds. She would need to become knowledgeable, but more than that. She would also need to stand firmly on strong values and grow in character. She would need self-assurance as well as the ability to listen well and work with others. She would need to understand and appreciate the past, yet convey a realistic hope about the future. She would need to know the value of lifelong learning in order to keep a curious and active mind. She would need to grow in understanding of others and become a student of the spirit. She would need to set high standards for herself and learn self-discipline, yet she would also need love and encouragement, that she might know compassion.

His teaching changed. Every young person who walked through his classroom became, for him, a future world leader. He saw each one, not as they were, but as they could be. He expected the best from his students, yet tempered it with gentleness. He taught each one as if the future of the world depended on his instruction.

After many years, a woman he knew rose to a position of world prominence. He realized that she must surely have been the girl described in his dream. Only she was not one of his students – she was his daughter. For of all the various teachers in her life, her father was the best.

I’ve heard it said that “Children are living messages we send to a time and place we will never see.” But this isn’t simply a parable about an unnamed school teacher. It is a parable about you and me – whether or not we are parents or even teachers. And the story, OUR story, actually begins like this:

“You will be given a child who will grow up to become...” You finish the sentence. If not a world leader, then a superb father? An excellent teacher? A gifted healer? An innovative problem solver? An inspiring artist? A generous philanthropist?

Where and how you will encounter this child is a mystery. But believe that one child’s future may depend upon influence only you can provide, and something remarkable will happen. For no young person will ever be ordinary to you again. And you will never be the same.

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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16 Training is an Event, Learning is a Process by Kevin Eikenberry

There is more to learning than opening a book or attending a conference. There also is no guarantee that real learning will take place, unless you choose to learn.

I say that phrase often.

It's part of my personal philosophy, and it's part of my business philosophy.

Let me explain...

People around the world (you included) buy learning materials, books, audio programs, webinars, tele-seminars and attend lectures and workshops every day. These learning options exist whether you want to learn about leadership, leopards, or being a lifeguard.

Companies and organizations everywhere organize and fill workshops and classes continually, because they want to invest in their employees' and team members' education and learning.

All of these activities make sense; we want to be able to learn or do more, and our life experience says that a classroom (i.e. school) or reading (i.e. books, etc.) are the ways to learn something new.

Unfortunately a large percentage of these investments of time, money and effort in these courses, books and programs are wasted. Books don't get opened, tele-seminars aren't attended, workshops are forgotten and much more. It isn't really the fault of the author, instructional designer or trainer for these problems. While there are things that these people can do to improve the results gained from their products, in the end it isn't their responsibility.

It is the learner's responsibility.

That means it is our responsibility.

And as long as we carry an "event" mindset, we won't get the results we hope for. Because learning is a process, but all of the programs, classes and books are just events; and we don't learn in a lasting way from an event.

In order for us to get value from the books, audios, classes, courses and workshops, we must take action. We must try what we learned, see what happened, tweak it, and try again. In other words we must do for learning anything new, what has always worked for us. Think about it – you didn't learn how to ride a bicycle until you put your butt in the seat and a foot on the peddle.

At first, when you got on the bike, you made mistakes and fell down (and scraped your knee and depending on who was watching wounded your pride). Yet you got back up, tried again and learned how to ride.

To learn the things you want to learn now, you must get a little dirty, expose yourself (and your image), and try it. Once you have those lessons, you can improve and adjust until you get the results you desire.

Here then is the magic pill that you have been looking for ever since you grew up and forgot about the lesson of the bicycle: Make your learning a process.

Consider books, courses, audio programs all a part of your grander learning process. Commit to finding ways to practice what you are learning, and to finding ways to receive feedback (from yourself and/or others) about your progress.

When you place all of these wonderful learning tools in perspective, they can have a tremendous positive impact for you and your results, but only when they are seen as a piece of your personal learning puzzle, rather than the moment in time where things will change for you.

This information is important for you as an individual, but it is important for you to remember as a leader as well. If you want to help develop those you lead, you must help them create a learning process, rather than simply signing them up for the next corporate course. Leaders can help create a process (holding them accountable, asking for their learning goals, giving them feedback, as examples) Health Fitness Articles, or invest in learning opportunities that include a process.

About the author

Kevin Eikenberry is a leadership expert and the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group, a learning consulting company that helps Clients reach their potential through a variety of training, consulting and speaking services. You can learn more about him and a special offer on his newest book, Remarkable Leadership: Unleashing Your Leadership Potential One Skill at <http://RemarkableLeadershipBook.com/bonuses.asp>.

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17 Why Most Training Fails by Jim Clemmer

Most organizations use their training investments about as strategically as they deploy their office supplies spending. And the impact on customer satisfaction, cost containment or quality improvement is just as useless.

One of the biggest causes of wasted training dollars is ineffective methods. Too often, companies rely on lectures (“spray and pray”), inspirational speeches or videos, discussion groups and simulation exercises.

While these methods may get high marks from participants, research (ignored by many training professionals) shows they rarely change behavior on the job. Knowing isn’t the same as doing; good intentions are too easily crushed by old habits. Theoretical or inspirational training approaches are where the rubber meets the sky.

Another way of wasting dollars is failing to link training with organizational strategies and day-to-day management behavior. What happens in the classroom and what happens back on the job are often worlds apart.

Trainees learn which hoops to jump through, pledge alliance to the current management fad, give their enthusiastic “commitment” to building “the new culture,” get their diploma – and then go back to work.

Here are a few steps to using training as a key strategic tool:

Use training technologies that build how-to skills that are highly relevant and immediately applicable. Research clearly shows far more people act themselves into a new way of thinking than think themselves into a new way of acting.

Training that produces tangible results starts by changing behavior – which ultimately changes attitudes. Most executives and many professional trainers (who should know better) get this backward.

Follow-up on training sessions with on-the-job coaching and support from managers. A Motorola Inc. study has found that those plants where quality improvement training was reinforced by senior management got a \$33 return on every dollar invested. Plants providing the same training with no top management follow-up produced a negative return on investment.

An earlier Xerox Inc. study showed a paltry 13 percent of skills were retained by trainees six months after training if managers failed to provide coaching and support as the skills were being applied.

And Western Gas Marketing Ltd. of Calgary uses its performance appraisal system to hold managers accountable for applying the principles that have been taught to them.

Build training around organizational objectives and strategies. Trainees should immediately see the connection between their new skills and where the organization is going. This makes training more relevant – and gets everyone focused on applying their new skills to the organization's key priorities and goals.

Another key principle is practiced by Vancouver-based Finning Ltd., the world's largest Caterpillar dealer. Chief executive James Shepard and his executives are not only first in line for service and quality training, but they are also the trainers delivering sessions to their people.

This trend to “cascade” training down from senior management snaps everyone to attention. Training attendance problems disappear. Results-oriented executives jettison all the nice-to-do, but irrelevant training. Trainees don't cross their arms and ask “Is the organization really serious about this stuff?”

In addition, managers achieve a deeper level of skill development when they teach others and are put on the spot to practice what they are now preaching.

Naturalist William Henry Hudson once observed: “You cannot fly like an eagle with the wings of a wren.” Most training efforts never get off the ground because the methods don't change behavior or the training is poorly delivered and integrated by the organization.

The waste of money is tragic for such a vital investment in competitiveness – and ultimately Canada's standard of living.

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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18 How to Get the Biggest Bang for Your Training Buck by George Torok

Discover what skills and knowledge are needed – then ensure that your staff want it. Many need training but they do not want it. If you know they need training but they think they don't – you lose. They lose too, but that's another story.

When deciding where to start, give highest training priorities to the areas of costliest mistakes – or biggest lost opportunities.

Before your people start the training help them focus on results. Tell them to look for the one thing that will help them make a significant difference. If they know what they are looking for they are more likely to find it. Then add that if they find this one good idea and implement it the training would be a success. It would be a bonus if they are able to implement even more than one new idea. Explain that the success of the training is up to them. They need to learn and do. Then follow-up after the program to learn what their one new thing is. Then ask them how you will know that they are doing that. Then follow-up again to guide or reward them.

Tell each person to be prepared to report on what they learned and/or to help train others in your company. Remember the best way to learn is to teach. Not everyone is a teacher. But if they think about how they have to teach someone else they will learn better. Even if you sent everyone on training you might hire new staff or arrange refresher sessions.

Training should never be a one shot. Schedule the follow-up sessions at the same time you schedule the training. You could bring the trainer back. Instead have your own people take turns facilitating these peer coaching sessions.

Never treat training as an expense – it is an investment. Make investments that keep growing.

About the author

© George Torok offers training programs in Presentation skills, Creative Problem Solving and Personal Marketing. He delivers high-energy keynotes and practical seminars. You can reach him at 905-335-1995 or www.Torok.com

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19 Learning Style – A Misnomer or Useful Business Strategy? by Bob Selden

Learning styles – A quick quiz...

- What do a German Shepherd dog's ears look like?
- Who has a deeper voice, your best friend or your boss?
- How do you tie your shoelaces each morning?

As you read these questions, there's a high probability that you accessed your memory in three different ways – visually (for the dog's ears), in an auditory manner (to compare your friend's voice with that of your boss) and kinaesthetically (you may have actually gone through the movement of tying your laces).

What is your learning style?

We all store memories in three formats...visual, auditory, kinaesthetic. Although every one of us uses all three every day, as individuals we tend to have better access to our memory for specific events, using one of these three modalities.

Many writers, particularly in the area of teacher development, have suggested that our preference for the use of one of these three memory modalities also helps us learn better. So, the concept of "learning style" developed.

This has been transferred to the workplace. Trainers have suggested that to cater for people and their individual learning style, we need to present information in a variety of ways. Think back for a moment to the last meeting you attended where a presentation did not impress you. What format did the presenter use? How interested and involved in the presentation were you? Why did it not hold your attention throughout? Now think back to one of the best presentations you have ever attended – what were the differences between the two?

Please stop for a moment before you read on. Think some more about the differences between the two meetings. We'll return to address your thoughts shortly. If you've been sitting for a while reading Business Executive, you may even want to take a break, or share your thoughts with a friend before continuing this article (I'm just taking my own advice and going for a cup of tea).

Welcome back (if only from your thoughts).

Many of you will have learnt a second language. If you learnt the second language as an adult, think back to the best lessons you experienced. Did you learn best by reading the text, listening to a tape (or the teacher), or perhaps taking slightly differing sentences and analysing these differences with a friend?

If you now review your thinking about how you accessed your memory in the two examples – the two business meetings and learning a language – you should start to get some idea of your own preferred style – visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic.

This has important implications for how we communicate, particularly within business and most importantly, when we are trying to influence the behaviour of a colleague, business partner or key stakeholder (perhaps our boss?). Whatever the topic you are discussing, no matter how simple or complex, you and your audience will be using a preferred style to access past memories in order to make sense of the current topic.

However, critics of learning style theory, such as Professor Daniel T. Willingham, of the University of Virginia, say that when used for example, by teachers in the classroom, it doesn't work. As a "learning style", he may well be right. What Willingham does agree with, is that:

90% of people believe intuitively in the theory.

Something close to the theory is right. People can learn in different ways and some people are specially good at learning certain types of information.

If you already believe it, you'll probably interpret ambiguous situations as consistent with the theory – for example using a visual analogy to help someone understand a complex subject may lead you to erroneously believe that they have a visual learning style.

Although it seems to make sense, numerous tests on learning and individual learning style have not proven the theory that people learn in different ways. These studies may have been testing for the wrong thing, i.e. for "learning" per se. In the classroom for example, the teacher has the need to help the students learn "meaning based" information – is that what we try to do in business?

So perhaps it's a concept of "communication style" (to assist people access past memories to help make sense of the present) rather than "learning style", that has particular implications for business communication. Generally, we are not trying to teach people, we are trying to influence them. And to do so we need to use strategies and tactics that will appeal to them. This is where style preferences play an important part. As a writer of this article for example, I'm in the process of trying to influence you on the merits of style preference as a communication tool. If you review what you've already read, you'll see that I have tried to get you to access the three modalities as often as possible (that word "see" just gave away my own preference).

Using memory and learning style preference in business to influence others, involves two stages:

Identifying the preferred learning style of the other person

Using differing forms of communication to cover all three modalities

How do you quickly identify others preferred learning style?

People who prefer... ..are more likely to use words and sentences such as...

Visual

(seeing and reading) “I see what you mean” “I’ll look into that” “The future looks bright” “The solution flashed before my eyes” “Show me”

Auditory

(listening and speaking) “I hear what you’re saying” “I hear you loud and clear” “He’s calling the tune” “Tell me” “Listen to me explain”

Kinaesthetic

(touching and doing) “I’ve got a handle on that” “I can’t seem to put my finger on it” “Hold on a second” “I know how you feel” “Can I try that out?”

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As you practise listening to how others are describing things (and perhaps picking up on how you too describe things), you'll start to get better at identifying preferred styles.

How do you use style preference to influence others?

The following ideas are suggestions only. They will apply in some situations and not others. However, they should start you seeing the importance of varying your communication; talking with colleagues about the use of preferred communication styles; and trying them out in a number of business situations such as, meetings, negotiations and formal presentations.

If you know that someone prefers a visual learning style... Avoid speaking with them over the phone – use face-to-face or a communication medium that includes voice and visual (such as Skype) – use graphics, visual models and lots of pictures to explain concepts – ask “if you'd like to take notes as we speak, please do so” – use white boards and flip charts to summarise key points – use colour to highlight key points and provide highlighter pens (if appropriate) – try using mind maps to develop themes – if you have reached agreement on a key point, suggest they write it down – ask them to describe how they might see the solution working in practice

For someone who appears to have a preference for a more auditory learning style... Ask more questions – have more discussion – also encourage them to discuss topics with colleagues – ask them to give verbal reports – have them participate on panels – if working with a large group, break them into smaller sub-groups frequently for discussion points – if appropriate, encourage them to tape your discussion for later replay – ask them to verbally summarise the points discussed so far so that you are both sure of what you have heard – ask them how they might tell others about how the solution will work in practice

For someone whose preference appears to be more like a kinaesthetic learning style... Keep them active – encourage them to get involved for example by making models – make sure they are able to move regularly – get them to demonstrate what they mean – encourage them to key the points into their laptop – ask them to demonstrate to you how they would show others how the solution will work in practice.

To combine all three modalities and particularly when presenting information, ensure you use analogies or metaphors that include seeing, hearing and doing... “I found her easy to communicate with. It was like looking in a mirror. She actually touched a nerve with me. I could really hear the rhythm of her message.”

A special note on the use of Power Point in presentations... Try to avoid repeating on the screen what you are going to say. This does not address those with a visual preference. Rather, it reinforces the auditory message – use graphics and pictures – intersperse these with audience interaction and movement.

This article started with the question “Learning style – misnomer, or useful business strategy?”

Despite the tremendous amount of research into different types of learning style, the jury seems to be still out as to their validity. However, the evidence is very clear that we all have three modes of accessing memory – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. We also know that people use past experiences and learning style to try to make sense of current data and information coming to them.

So, if you are in the business of influencing people:

develop an understanding of people's preferred styles,
learn how to identify them in yourself and others and
employ communication strategies that will best suit your influence targets.

Such skills can undoubtedly improve your influencing ability.

About the author

Bob Selden is the author of the best-selling "What To Do When You Become The Boss" – a self-help book for new managers – see details at <http://www.whenyoubecometheboss.com/>. He's also coached at one of the world's premier business schools, the Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland and regularly advises managers around the globe on their current challenges.

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20 Why Leaders Can't Avoid Learning by Kevin Eikenberry

If you want your people to be learning and growing (and you all do), then they must see you growing and learning too. It's time to start learning.

You can run, but you can't hide.

Actually, it is not (quite) true. There are leaders everywhere that are trying their best to hide every day, like ostriches burying their heads in the sand, when their team isn't achieving what they could. Leaders who want to blame others, the economy or the market for their team's lack of success. Or "leaders" that have a title, and shouldn't have it – because they aren't leading anyway. These leaders are trying to avoid learning, changing and growing.

What is true is that you can't hide if you want your team to succeed, if you are willing to recognize your role in your team's success, and if you care enough to work.

If you are in the second group, you can't avoid learning.

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I know, you may be reading this article on my blog titled Leadership and Learning, so this would seem to be a pretty obvious thing for me to write about – and yes, I have written about it a lot in the past, (spend some time on my blog and it won't take you long to find the linkage).

I 100% believe that to become the leader you are capable of becoming you must be a learner – the work of leadership is too complex to learn in one workshop or by reading one (or even a few) books.

While all of that is true, I sometimes wonder if that misses the point. After all, the leader who wants to learn will do what they need to do, invest time, effort and money in learning, and more. But those people aren't avoiding learning, they are seeking it out.

While I believe leaders “should” want to learn for their own purposes and reasons (and when this is true it will likely be most effective), there is another, perhaps even more pragmatic reason why leaders can't avoid learning...

Because they don't have perfect teams or team members.

I've met leaders who were proud of their team, leaders of by any measure, high performing teams, but I have never met a leader who thought their team had reached their potential.

Every leader wants their team members to grow, develop and get better in their current job, or be preparing for a future job. Even ostrich leaders want this.

You can't get that growth, development, and change without learning – it is part of the package.

So we've established that all leaders want their teams and team members to improve, which means they want their teams to be learning, right?

So what is the best way for leaders to encourage, coach and influence others to be learners?

I'll answer that question in a second.

As a parent, if you want your kids to eat vegetables, what is the best way to do that? Have them see you eating veggies. You can tell them, implore them, beg them, even bribe them, but if no broccoli ever enters your mouth, how likely will the other tactics work?

Not so well.

Of course even if you love that broccoli, there is no guarantee the kid will eat it (that choice in the end is theirs), but your example is the most powerful influencer there is.

If you want your kids to be readers, you turn off the TV and pick up a book.

If you want people to walk on your sidewalk and not in your grass, but they see your size 10's in the grass, your influence is weakened – drastically.

I could give you ten more examples, but the message is already clear. If you want your people to be learning and growing (and you all do), then they must see you growing and learning too.

Every leader wants their people to improve.

Every follower wants a leader who leads by example.

It's time to take your head out of the sand. It is time to start leading...by example.

It's time to start learning.

About the author

Kevin Eikenberry is a leadership expert and the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group, a learning consulting company that helps Clients reach their potential through a variety of training, consulting and speaking services. You can learn more about him and a special offer on his newest book, Remarkable Leadership: Unleashing Your Leadership Potential One Skill at <http://RemarkableLeadershipBook.com/bonuses.asp>.

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21 Management Training – Myth, Magic or Mayhem? by Bob Selden

The difficulty with learning how to be a manager is probably not to do with “management” per se, but the way the learning is presented and the different ways in which we all like to learn.

Training courses! The most recent had been termed “Management for Senior Officers” and had been a minor disaster – all psychology and how to be nice to junior officers. How to involve them, how to motivate them, how to relate to them.

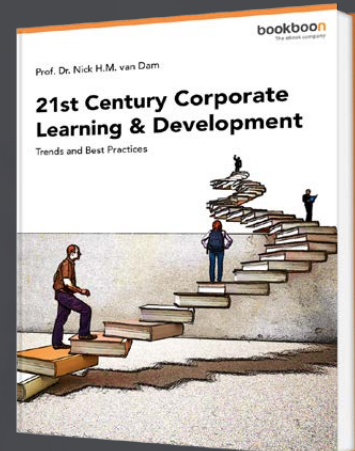
Rebus had returned to his station and tried it for one day, a day of involving, of motivating, of relating. At the end of the day, a Detective Constable had slapped a hand on Rebus’ back, smiling.

“Bloody hard work today, John. But I’ve enjoyed it.”

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The difficulty with learning how to be a manager is probably not to do with “management” per se, but the way the learning is presented and the different ways in which we all like to learn.

“Take your hand off my f...ng back.” Rebus had snarled. “And don’t call me John.”

The DC’s mouth fell open. “But you said...” he began, but didn’t bother finishing. The brief holiday was over. Rebus had tried being a manager. Tried it and loathed it.

If you are like Ian Rankin’s Inspector John Rebus (“Tooth and Nail”, by Ian Rankin, St. Martin’s Paperbacks, 1996, New York) who finds learning to be a manager difficult and in fact loathes being a manager, or you love being a manager, or you merely languish in being a manager, but in any of these cases still find learning how to manage difficult, then there’s some good news! Our difficulty with learning how to be a manager is probably not to do with “management” per se, but the way the learning is presented to us and the different ways in which we all like to learn. (Mind you, managing – being responsible for the performance of others – is probably the second most challenging task one can undertake, if you’ll agree with me that “parenting” is probably the most challenging.)

If you’d like to make learning to be a manager a little easier, then read on.

Each of us learns in a different way and at a different pace, but researchers have found that in general terms, we have a preference for learning through seeing, learning through listening, or learning through moving, doing and touching. To make it easy for us, Peter Honey and Alan Mumford have identified four main learning style preferences –

Activists, who like to be involved in new experiences. They are open minded and enthusiastic about new ideas but get bored with implementation. They enjoy doing things and tend to act first and consider the implications afterwards. They like working with others but tend to hog the limelight.

Reflectors, who like to stand back and look at a situation from different perspectives. They like to collect data and think about it carefully before coming to any conclusions. They enjoy observing others and will listen to others’ views before offering their own.

Theorists, who adapt and integrate observations into complex and logically sound theories. They think problems through in a step by step way. They tend to be perfectionists who like to fit things into a rational scheme. They tend to be detached and analytical rather than subjective or emotive in their thinking.

Pragmatists, who are keen to try things out. They want concepts that can be applied to their job. They tend to be impatient with lengthy discussions and are practical and down to earth.

Which is your preferred style of learning? Read the descriptions over again, then make a mental note of the description that best suits the way you prefer to learn. You may find, that there are two styles that you can relate to – that’s ok, you can take a bit of both (in my own case for instance, I prefer the pragmatic approach, but at times I also need to reflect to learn best).

Following are some tips on how to learn best about being a manager, depending on your style.

Activists:

Talk with your colleagues about how they have managed difficult situations – invite them to lunch for a discussion!

Get involved in project teams – particularly at the start of the project. Volunteer for the brainstorming or idea generation segments, but not for implementation issues or activities. It’s a good idea to take on the Chair’s role so that you can direct others!

Visit other organisations to see how they do things (short visits only)

Take part in business games

If someone gives you a management book to read or suggests you read a particular book, get someone else to précis it for you and tell you about the “good parts”. If it includes activities, go straight to these.

Avoid conferences or training courses where you know there will be a lot of theory presentations. If you have to attend, make sure you ask a lot of questions to keep yourself from being bored. Try taking a lot of notes or drawing pictures during the “boring” presentation parts and think about how the issues being raised could be used back at work.

Reflectors:

Take the time to watch people as they work – particularly in groups and how they respond to one another.

When you have just been through a difficult experience, take some time off (an hour or two) to think about it. Write down what went right, what went wrong and what you would do differently next time.

Keep a log of the management activities you undertake over a one week period. Classify these activities under “Leading” (setting the direction, giving the big picture to your people) “Managing” (setting performance objectives for people, following up on performance issues, and implementing development initiatives for your team) and “Operating” (doing the administrative tasks such as budgeting, reporting). At the end of the week, spend a couple of hours reviewing your log and decide where you need to change your emphasis to improve your management.

At least once a year, take a day or so off work and spend your time reflecting on what has gone and what you need to do over the coming 12 months to improve. Try to split your reflection time between 20% reflecting on the past and 80% focusing on what you are going to do in the coming 12 months.

Theorists:

Undertake training courses and activities that are highly structured. You will need to make sure that the training is based on sound logic and reasoning and contains interesting concepts. Because you are less likely to attend courses of an “emotive” or “feeling” nature, go out of your way to do so, keeping in mind the above point so that it won’t be too painful for you!

Seek out colleagues who have a similar learning style to yours. Arrange to meet with them regularly. Make sure that the meetings are well structured, have clear aims and are based around a particular management challenge, concept or theory. If there is an article or book on the topic, ensure that both of you have read it first.

Look for management development articles (The Harvard Business Review is an excellent source). Send a copy of an article to colleagues who think similarly to yourself – ask them to read it and attach three or four questions that you think are relevant to your workplace. Ask for their feedback. If you really want to get into a management topic in depth, the publication “Organizational Dynamics” is very good.

Seek out interesting projects where the issues are complex.

Set yourself up as an “expert” in a particular field of your work and encourage others to ask for your advice. Be careful to see how the issue they raise relates to how you might also improve your own management style.

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Pragmatists:

Find another manager whom you respect and who is recognised as a good manager. Take a particular management challenge or issue to him/her and ask them how they would handle it. Look for training courses that have a particular relevance to your industry and job. Make sure they include plenty of feedback (such as 360 degree profiles, role plays and active coaching from the trainer).

Look for “management techniques” – e.g. principles, concepts, techniques that will save you time.

Look for management models. Ask some of your colleagues (such as the Theorists) to show you how the “best management concepts they know” work in practise.

Avoid theory type training sessions, meetings and books. If you buy a management book, make sure it has very short chapters (one page is ideal!) with lots of “How to”. You will probably enjoy books such as *The One Minute Manager*.

Look for training videos that show you “How to”, but do not dwell on theory.

Get a trusted colleague to sit in on some of your management meetings and give you some feedback on their effectiveness. Make sure to ask him/her how they would run them if they were you.

Does management training have to be painful? My own belief is that the old saying of “no pain, no gain” should not apply to learning about how to be a better manager. Management training should be interesting, fun and exciting and it can only be that way for you if it is designed to suit your particular learning style.

I hope that some of the above tips on learning about management have been useful – mix and match to suit your own preferred style of learning. I would hate to think that we might all end up like John Rebus, loathing being a manager simply because we do not have the right opportunities to learn!

About the author

Bob Selden is the author of the best-selling “What To Do When You Become The Boss” – a self-help book for new managers – see details at <http://www.whenyoubecometheboss.com/>. He’s also coached at one of the world’s premier business schools, the Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland and regularly advises managers around the globe on their current challenges.

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22 Tea and the Secrets of Staff Retention by Jeff Mowatt

Staff retention a concern? Consider this scenario. Imagine you're a front-line employee working at a mundane job. It's so boring you simply go through the motions. You're on autopilot, counting the hours and minutes until your shift is over and you can go home and do something you enjoy. Or you stick with the job only until something that's more interesting or pays more comes along. Then you're gone. In that dismal scenario, managers resign themselves to the belief that there's always going to be high front-line turnover. They don't bother training employees because they're just going to quit anyway. Continuing with that line of thinking, these managers and supervisors assume that the only thing that's going to motivate employees to stick around is to pay them more. Unfortunately, customers dealing with bored employees feel absolutely no loyalty to the company. Consequently, revenues are down and wages keep costs high. Not exactly a formula for success.

The cup that satisfies

Today's employees do indeed want something more – and it isn't just money. According to the landmark studies in employee motivation spearheaded by Dr. Kenneth Kovach at George Mason University, the number one motivator for employees is interesting work. The question is how to turn a potentially boring job into something interesting. I think the answer lies in the tea ceremony. Serving tea becomes an art when served with an attitude of quality, mindfulness, and service. Practitioners of the tea ceremony don't just read a manual and then get certified; they train for years under the guidance of a master. They immerse themselves in the art, so much so that it becomes a form of moving meditation or Do-Zen. Like a good martial artist, they have the attitude of humility. They know that no matter how advanced they may become, they can always improve. What it all boils down to (bad pun) is that the most effective way to motivate employees is through on-going training.

Interesting tidbit: Fortune magazine did a survey of the "100 Best Companies to Work For." The number-one factor that people considered when choosing a company? Professional training.

Change it to spice tea

The kind of front-line training I'm referring to is not the standard approach where managers dictate policies: list the things employees can't do, and then teach them the technical aspects of the job: how to do the paperwork, run the cash register, make the deliveries, etc. Oh, yeah, and be nice to people (which often, by the way, means that employees address customers as Sir or Ma'am, a practice that's guaranteed to offend rather than flatter some customers). That's not the kind of training that motivates employees. I'm talking instead about providing training with spice – equipping them with communication skills that lead to stronger customer loyalty and increased spending per customer. It makes the job of interacting with customers a craft, requiring focus, quality, and attention to detail. In other words, the right kind of training makes even the most mundane work interesting.

The consistency of tea time

One workout in a lifetime is going to do more harm than good because there is a high risk of injury and the overall improvement in performance will be negligible. Similarly, a one-time training session for employees is likely to just raise their expectations and eventually annoy them-especially when, without reinforcement and support, everything reverts back to the way it was before the one-time training. We need to convert training from being an event into an ongoing process.

That's why I recommend that managers look at customer service training as a two phased approach. Phase one is professional training that equips employees with the subtleties of service that make work more interesting. Once that new foundation of knowledge is established, then in phase two managers conduct their own monthly 90 Minute CAST™ (Customer Service Team) Meetings. The learning, therefore, shifts from being a one-time event to an ongoing process. The fascinating and sometimes frustrating art of enhancing customer perception is that there's always room for improvement. That makes even the most seemingly mundane jobs much more interesting. From the moment our clients conduct their first CAST™ Meeting, they notice the emergence of a much more motivated and engaged workforce. So do their customers!

The irony when it comes to training employees is that a lot of managers believe they can't afford to train employees because they have high turnover. The truth is they have high turnover because they aren't providing ongoing education or growth for their employees. Employees don't quit jobs when they're overworked. They quit jobs when they're bored – or worse; when they are being paid enough to physically show up but have mentally moved on. Everyone loses. As a business leader, you have the opportunity to elevate your enterprise from merely being a place where employees go to earn a living, to a place where employees satisfy their innate need to learn and grow. That's a learning organization where the flavour of work is like well brewed tea...richer and more satisfying for everyone.

About the author

Customer service strategist and professional speaker, Jeff Mowatt is an authority on The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®. For Jeff's other tips, self-study resources, and training services on establishing rapport, click <http://www.jeffmowatt.com/individual/greetingcustomers.html>

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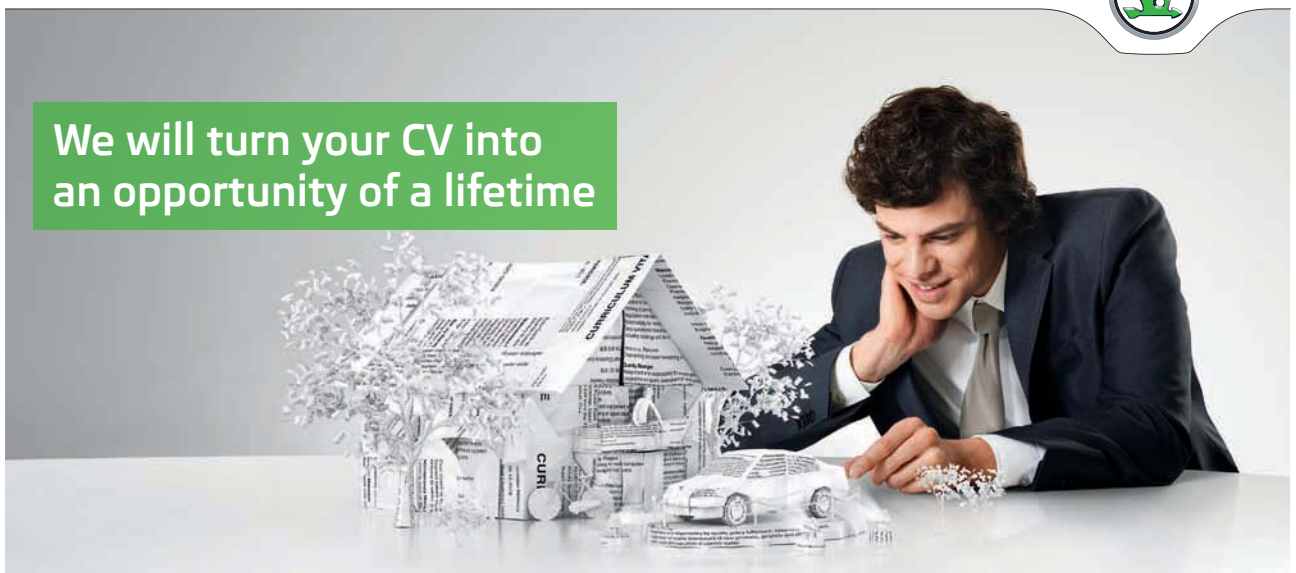
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23 What's Your Moment of Learning Need? by Bob Selden

Just as some organisations manage their way through a crisis better than others, so do some people. Studies suggest that a protein Neuropeptide Y helps people stay focused in an emergency or stress event. What's this got to do with training and learning you might ask?

Well, in the current economic crisis, people are looking for support – not everyone has the same amount of Neuropeptide Y protein that enables them to cope easily. Trainers need to look at what people need, how they access that need, and importantly, when support is needed.

What does your training currently provide?

According to Dr. Conrad Gottfredson (<http://www.xyleme.com/podcasts/archives/7>) there are five “Moments of Learning Need” which should be addressed throughout the learning process.

Five Moments of Learning Need:

1. When Learning for the First Time
2. When Wanting to Learn More
3. When Trying to Remember
4. When Things Change
5. When Something Goes Wrong

The first two, are areas that formal training has been addressing for years.

When someone learns something for the first time they have little or no background in the topic they are about to learn. They are often highly dependent learners and can find classroom instruction quite effective in meeting their needs. E-learning and blended learning have also started to find an application here as well.

When a learner moves into the second area of wanting to learn more, they are still attempting to learn new information, but they now have a base of understanding to work from. They may still prefer classroom instruction if they can find it, but again, e-Learning has done a good job here.

Are your training programs and learning initiatives addressing the final three areas as effectively as you may think, or would like? i.e. When trying to remember; when things change; when something goes wrong. The last two moments of learning need are those that our people are most likely to face in today's climate.

However, first let's start with "trying to remember". As Gottfredson points out, "Trying to remember is not a learning moment as we've traditionally viewed it. It's a time when a learner simply needs some form of support, which specifically targets the process or task being attempted or applied.

One defining difference here from formal instruction is immediacy and context. Many traditional programs don't address these areas as well as they should. The design of many of these programs, including e-Learning, attempts to train, not support. They are often difficult to navigate, and take learners out of the business context and problem they are trying to solve."

Now, similar moments of need occur when things change, or when things go wrong. They fall on the support side of learning, and not on the training side. That's not to say that there isn't some training involved or needed. It simply points to a different level of access and relevance when it comes to how we need to access and design the content. In all three of these cases an organisation should consider a support framework which effectively addresses these very different forms of support.



The advertisement features a central image of a smiling teacher leaning over a laptop to assist two young students, a boy and a girl. To the right, there are two smaller circular images: one showing three children looking at a tablet, and another showing children working at computers in a classroom. The background is a vibrant yellow and orange swirl design. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'e-learning for kids' consisting of a grid of colored squares. In the bottom right, a green oval contains a list of achievements. At the bottom left, there is a paragraph of text about the organization's history and mission.

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About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFK! An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.



Will the learning solution you have implemented support all five areas?

Many probably contain the information needed for the first two, which are often associated with formal instruction. However, do they engage the learner at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way to meet the needs of the final three?

A recent study by KPMG suggests that 75% of learning now occurs as informal training. That may be no surprise. How often for instance do you access the internet when faced with a new skill or knowledge deficit? What may surprise you, are the results of a further study by Carnegie Mellon University. Their study suggests that the knowledge we need stored in our mind to do our work, has changed dramatically over the last three decades:

1986 – we stored 75% of knowledge needed to do our job in our mind

1997 – this dropped to between 15% and 20%

2006 – amazingly, we now only store 8% to 10% of knowledge needed

If these figures are right, then they suggest a major need for changing the way we approach training and learning. And this is particularly so when people are in panic mode or simply feel that they are having difficulty coping with the increased pressure brought about by today's economic crisis. Because people have less stored knowledge, the skills they need now are "access" skills and support to help them through the difficult period.

Little wonder then that there is more and more pressure on trainers and learning departments today to provide solutions that allow people to continue doing their work while they learn. There's also the immediate learning need people have as they meet a challenge. Many people automatically now turn to the internet or social networks to satisfy this immediate need. If we are to remain relevant, we need to not only provide "on the spot" learning, but also devise ways that show people how they can use available technology and processes to their best advantage.

In terms of addressing the final three moments of learning need – remembering, change and things going wrong – there are some simple diagnostic tools that can help you identify what to include. For example, you might ask people doing the work:

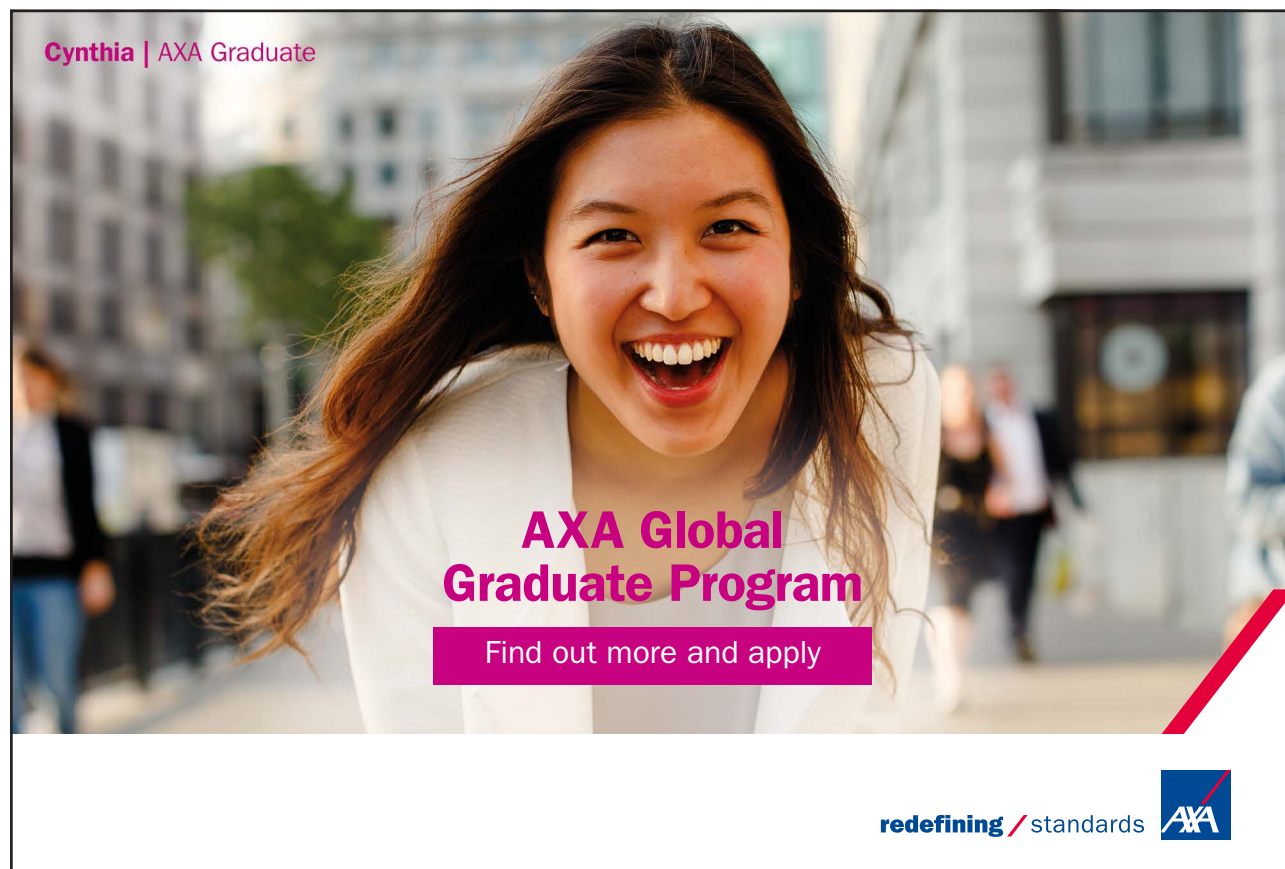
What are the two or three things that you have difficulty remembering? Or, What do you need to constantly look-up when you are faced with a challenging situation?

Who or where do you first go when you encounter a situation you have not faced before?

What are the top three or four areas of customer complaints? Or, What are the regular questions your help desk or support areas are asked?

To me, the Carnegie Mellon study also suggests there may be a missing element to people's learning – basic principles underpinning the various technical processes they apply. For example, in banking and finance, how many new starters would understand the principles of double-entry bookkeeping or the motivational force equity plays in lending? (absence of the latter could well have been a major contributor to the sub-prime fiasco in the US which started the economic whirlpool we now find ourselves in) So, when people face new challenges or when things go wrong, they may not understand the principles upon which their work is based. How do we meet this challenge?

Perhaps there's also a mindset change we need to make as trainers. For instance, we've moved from being called "trainers" (which describes inputs) to "learning specialist" (which describes process). Why not go one step further and describe our role in output terms such as "Performer Support" as Gottfredson and his colleague Bob Mosher suggest? (<http://performancesupport.blogspot.com/>) "The learning professional's new role is becoming one of guide and facilitator. The days of owning and disseminating the knowledge within an organization are gone. The 'new normal' we live in today challenges every learning department to become a knowledge broker instead. Performer Support is the perfect approach to help make this all important change."



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I've penned this article in the hope that we can generate a robust discussion about the three issues I see that are major challenges for trainers and learning professionals today:

What content should our learning and development programs contain?

What support processes can we provide so that performers can access the knowledge they need to perform at their best when faced with a challenge or when things go wrong?

How do we train people in the underpinning principles that support the day-to-day decisions they need to make in their chosen career field?

About the author

Bob Selden is the author of the best-selling "What To Do When You Become The Boss" – a self-help book for new managers – see details at <http://www.whenyoubecometheboss.com/>. He's also coached at one of the world's premier business schools, the Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland and regularly advises managers around the globe on their current challenges.

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24 Growing Others into What They Could Be by Jim Clemmer

“A true Master is not the one with the most students, but one who creates the most Masters. A true leader is not the one with the most followers, but one who creates the most leaders.” – Neale Donald Walsch, *Conversations With God: An Uncommon Dialogue*

I was doing fairly well in grades one to three – especially in reading. Then I hit a terrible teacher in grade four. She made school so unhappy and unappealing, she almost caused me to drop out – of course I would have waited another few years to make it official. However, in grades five and six I came under the nurturing of Mrs. Westman. I vividly remember her saying after I’d read a composition to the class; “Someday I won’t be surprised to see your name on a book.” Her encouraging words simmered in my subconscious for years and helped me to see new possibilities for myself. Twenty years later my first book, *The VIP Strategy: Leadership Skills for Exceptional Performance*, was published. It was a real pleasure to present her with one of the very first copies – inscribed with a warm thank you message. Her family and the local paper ensured that she got the recognition she so richly deserved.

Most people see others as they are, a leader sees them as they could be. Leaders like Mrs. Westman see beyond the current problems and limitations to help others see their own possibilities. It’s a key part of our own growth and development. We continue to grow when we help others grow and develop. That’s the second half of the two-part growing and developing circle. The first part is our own growth and development. We can’t develop others if our own growth is stunted. The two parts of the growing and developing circle depend upon and support each other. We develop ourselves while we’re developing others. By developing others, we develop ourselves further. This allows us to develop others still further – the growth circle spirals ever upward. The reverse is also true. By failing to develop myself and others, my growth and development circle spins downward.

The art of developing others is the art of assisting their self-discovery. The 15th century Italian physicist and astronomer, Galileo put it this way, “You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him to find it within himself.” This leads us to the developing-without-teaching paradox. The ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao-Tzu, described it like this; “Superior leaders get things done with very little motion. They impart instruction not through many words, but through a few deeds. They keep informed about everything but interfere hardly at all. They are catalysts, and though things would not get done as well if they weren’t there, when they succeed they take no credit. And because they take no credit, credit never leaves them.”

Growing and developing others is one of management's key responsibilities. The traditional view of management is getting work done through people, but strong leaders develop people through work. As managers, team leaders, or team members, we can't be much help in developing others if we don't really know where they're trying to go. Once we understand that, we can work to align their development goals with those of the team or organization. They don't always match, but generally it's not too difficult to bring them together.

A similar approach applies to our parental leadership role with teenagers. The deepest love we can show our sons and daughters is to help them discover their unique purpose and uncover their special talents. That can be especially tough if it doesn't match the dreams we may have for them. Our leadership task is to help them be all that they can be, not what we would like to be if we were in their place.

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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25 Great Teachers by Steve Goodier

Did you know that ninety percent of the world's ice covers Antarctica? This ice also represents most of the fresh water in the world. Yet Antarctica is the driest place on the planet, with an absolute humidity lower than the Gobi desert.

If you're into biology, you may know this about the Mayfly – after hatching, it takes up to three years to grow up, and then spends only one day as an adult. During that day it mates, lays eggs and expires. That last day must be absolutely spectacular.

Next time you dust your house, you may be interested to know that most of the dust particles you are removing are actually tiny bits of dead skin. Don't even ask how much dead skin has made its way into your favorite pillow.

Did you know that the Mona Lisa has no eyebrows?

Or that that 80% of your brain is water? Well, mine anyway.



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You've heard the expression "having a lark." Those who are interested in language might want to know that a group of larks is called an exaltation. A group of owls is called a parliament. A group of crows is called a murder. A group of rhinos is called a crash, which seems to make some sense. But here's the best of all: a group of Unicorns is called a blessing.

As interesting as all of these facts are, I doubt any of them is bound to significantly change your life. The stuff we need to know in order to live happier, healthier and more meaningful lives does not usually come from tidbits of knowledge. More often it comes from people; and especially, people who mean something to us. Let me explain.

For Ross Perot, the kind of knowledge that made the greatest difference in his life was actually gleaned from his mother. The American businessman and one-time presidential candidate made billions of dollars from the technology industry. But his mother, who raised him before the phrase "computer age" was ever coined, taught him how to live. She taught him one of the greatest lessons of all: she taught him about compassion for the less fortunate.

Perot remembers the days of America's Great Depression. "Hoboes" regularly knocked on their door asking for a little food. It puzzled young Ross that his house seemed to be singled out on their street. One day he learned why. On the curb in front of their house someone had etched a white mark, indicating to fellow travelers that this house was an "easy mark." This fact disturbed the boy and he asked his mother if she wanted him to erase the signal. She told him to leave it there. It was a lesson in compassion he never forgot.

Some of the most essential life lessons and wisdom young Ross acquired did not come from a book or a classroom. They were lessons that came from those people closest to him. Many concerned themselves with the heart and spirit. They taught him about the world and the best way to live in it.

Our greatest teachers are usually those who did not volunteer for the job. They are parents and friends, spouses and children. Much great wisdom is learned best from the example of those closest to us.

And the remarkable fact is this: you are a great teacher. You teach powerful lessons every day of your life. You teach them simply by the way you live; by the way you respond to the world; and, by the little decisions you make. I wonder – who's watching and learning?

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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