

Why Your Employees Fear Training (And How to Get Them to Stop)

It really *doesn't* get sadder – or more ironic -- for training professionals than this. Here you are *investing* in someone, spending time to develop *their* skills and increase *their* capacity, and there *they* are, playing hangman on the handouts, mentally crafting the opening lines of their next cover letter, and popping red-striped mints every 15 minutes to maintain a sugar sustained semi-wakeful state that will invariably lead to collapse by about 2:15pm.

So how do you actually create the most effective training experience? Here's how.

The 4 *Most Important* Factors in a Successful Training Experience

1. You must enable trainee buy-in.

Psychiatrists have been telling us for years (er...or they've been telling a good friend of ours...yeah...a friend...) that a patient has to *want* help before help can be provided. Fair enough. The same axiom holds true in the training world. You must provide your trainees with the right training framework. And what is the right training framework? Easy: *they must want to be trained.*

If it's going to help them increase sales, convince them of how wonderful this will be. If it's going to increase their capacity to earn more commission, tell them. Work with your outsourced trainer before the actual training event and promote these benefits.

Remember, please: negative expectations from trainees will pollute even the most well designed training, just as the world's best psychiatrist can't help our... friend...overcome his fear of circus clowns.

2. You must know what the problem is, and what the solution will be.

This one sounds too simple to be true. But you'd be amazed to see how often this factor is overlooked. Do you know what needs to be fixed? Is it deal-closing, or relationship building? Do you want to improve ROI? Motivate? Cut down on process redundancy? Align communication from different units, functions; heck, even cubicles and floors? If you don't know what's wrong, you won't know how to solve it.

Or worse (and yes, there is a worse here), you might actually *create* problems by trying to solve the wrong thing. Scary, yes, but it happens. If you're trying to solve a team-building problem by promoting individual accomplishment in your training, then you're actually making things worse. And on top of that: you're paying for it! AHHHHH!

3. Measure and monitor your sales metrics.

All of the training in our solar system is regrettably not going to improve your sales metrics if you don't know what those metrics are, what they should be, and whether or not you're moving in the right direction. You want to measure *before* and *after* the training to gauge effectiveness.

4. Who'll own post-training?

One of the greatest advancements in the language of business is that people are now told that they *own* certain tasks. So who in your company will *own* the essential task of *post-training*?

What?

Post-training. You may have successfully taken care of #1, #2, and #3 above, but what happens a week, a month, or a year after the training ends? Who will ensure that its legacy lives beyond the actual training experience? Memories fade, and enthusiasm wanes. You must elect someone *capable* of this ownership task, and *empower* her/him to do what is necessary to ensure that post-training gains are achieved over the long-term.

Training is not a 4-Letter Word

Please remember: as a decision-maker and training change agent, the problems that we're solving here *aren't* your fault. The perception of training has changed dramatically in the last decade; and it's something that more and more people – especially skilled/knowledge workers – are disliking; even resenting.

Yet what *hasn't* changed, and what will never change regardless of how dramatic things get, is that **training is an essential part of a successful enterprise**. The strategy is therefore not to fly the white flag of human resource surrender, but to approach training with *total success* in mind. Implementing the four steps noted above will **firmly** put you on the right track, and head you in the right long-term direction.

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