

Strength Training For Strategic Muscle

I. Heavy-Duty Training Regimen

Offering training in today's workplace presents the typical pressures of leaving office operating staffs short-handed with the associated costs of the learning sessions (the facilitators, the meeting rooms etc.) that many organizations are re-defining their criteria for staff development through a "raising of the bar" on what their staffs will learn and on what their staffs will retain *after* the training has been "bench-pressed" by their employees.

II. "Weigh" Training

Simply said, more than ever, organizations are in need of updating staff information through training. Companies are looking to invest in their employees' knowledge through every appropriate means available, possible and convenient. This includes on-site classroom instruction as well as interactive high-tech approaches that will meet and maintain a competitive edge in their industries. Best business practices dictate the their number one service rating motivator (across every ranked company) is having well-informed, well-trained staffs. Chief concerns circulating from this fact are that too often training is not associated enough or assessed enough to assure that it weighed-in to meet the initial demands for it.

III. Good Training Is A Good Workout

However, with that expanding need, is the most critical aspect, yet - that of using company time wisely and productively. Staff development is paid as "work", therefore the most productive organizations are making certain that training time is absolutely defined by its connection to the bottom-line. This is done very effectively where the organization, the trainers and their participants enter every session with both the mindset and the actions that the training information builds (muscle) on the company's strategy, that the training improves trainees' individual ability to perform job tasks (lift the weights) and that the training, by its very nature, acknowledges the organization's investment in them, as weight-lifters, in the company's success.

IV. Key Power Supplements

Insuring that "weighty" end products be lifted to new heights requires adding power supplements to the training routine:

The Management Power Supplement:

- Share Vision - communicate the company's vision and mission statement
- Link Strategy – tell the trainer how the training is seen to effect the strategy
- Prepare Participants – tell participants why *they* were selected for training

- Review Learning – discuss and reinforce learning *after* the training

The Training Power Supplement:

- Be Aware & Organized – learn about the company and share synopsis of course before hand with trainees
- Get & Keep Attention – capture the attention of the group as an “on-going” effort
- Chunk & Link Learning – keep reinforcing details of what is being learned to what is useful on-the-job
- Associate Skills – connect and share what skills are job-practical - repeatedly
- Use Imagination – let participants consider other job-related possibilities with their new learning

The Participant Power Supplement:

- Training is Work – their time in training is a job-related task
- Training is Important – without enhanced training, work quality will suffer
- Training is Fun – get involved and enjoy it
- Training is Value – a top strategy of their organization is to further learning

V. Measure What You Value

In the business of training employees, as in weight training, we always measure the results. Good professional trainers of all backgrounds engage, encourage and push their charges to achieve specific and planned outcomes. In the work-related scenario, good training draws participants to want to become better able to sustain that “something new on-the-job” and to be able to support the (added weight) business strategy *after* their training has been completed. Companies that fail to do this risk having training efforts viewed as a waste of company money and employee energy.

VI. Results-Based Training

Effective organizations are incorporating and communicating business strategy prior to training so as to prepare and reinforce critical messages that will strengthen the training mission. In addition, by continuously reflecting on the strength of participant skills through methods like association, chunking and repetition, organizations will be guaranteed that new learning skills will be stronger, company’s business needs will be firmer and they will get what they pay for – strengthened strategic effects through employees who retain what they are learning through training.

VII. The Weigh-In

Collaboration on the final outcome of learning is the beginning of all good training. Both the trainers and organizations are practicing how to know what it is that the training should produce and plan on its eventual accountability. A clear statement of

the company's strategy and training's role in delivering that strategy is essential to transferring staff development that is valued and in learning that is retained. Conversations with line managers and their expectations of training should be self-evident and encouraged before training is commenced. After all, who in the organization is better equipped to measure improvements in performance and weigh their value?

VIII. Muscle Memory

Last but not least, after the training class comments are collected, organizations have the following questions to review:

- How are employees retaining their training?
- Does the training show in measurable and improved performance?
- Are trainees better able to do their jobs than before the training?
- Do employees understand how the training was to affect their performance?
- Do line managers reinforce the learning of the recent training?
- Did the training support the company's overall strategy?

Organizations are influencing training strengths by providing on-going and creative reinforcement measures so as to secure trainee retention and improved expertise, after training. Well-run organizations are selecting trainers who will both encourage and engage organizations to continue their working relationships beyond the training event itself and who push for the opportunity to prove their worth through follow-up surveys and other means to bolster new skills.

As in all success stories, the proof is in the long-lasting relationship that is built and fueled through a strong and sustained partnership of knowledge management.