

TRAINING THAT STICKS

ENSURING LONG-TERM IMPACT



WHY DOES TRAINING FALL SHORT?

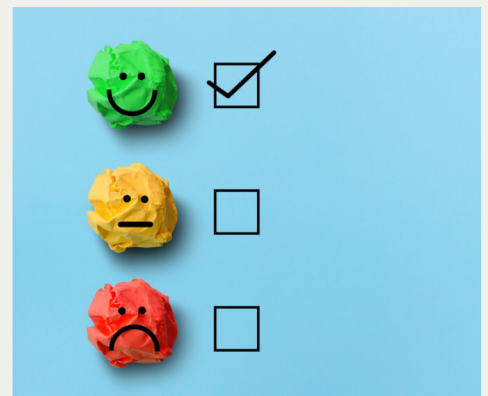
As a performance improvement intervention, training requires organizations to expend considerable resources. Organizations must invest significant people, financial, and time resources to design, deliver, evaluate, and support training events for their employees. Given the substantial investment, training managers must use those resources effectively, and demonstrate a satisfactory return on investment (ROI). Unfortunately, several common pitfalls set training up to fail from the start.

- Organizations frequently view training as a one-size-fits-all solution to performance problems.
- Organizations view training as a one-and-done intervention that isn't supported after the training event ends.
- Organizations poorly design and/or deliver their training events.

HOW CAN WE ENSURE TRAINING SUCCEEDS?

To maximize training effectiveness and secure a strong ROI, organizations must revise their approach to when and how to use training as a performance improvement intervention. Specifically,

- Only use training when appropriate. There are often better interventions (i.e., more likely to succeed) for common performance improvement problems.
- Support and reinforce the training. Organizations that think their job is finished when the training event ends are wasting their resource investment.
- Design and deliver better training.



WHEN IS TRAINING THE APPROPRIATE SOLUTION?

Before deciding to initiate training, assess whether training is the right solution for the performance issue at hand. Training is most effective when there is a clear gap in knowledge or skills that can be addressed through learning interventions. The table below may help. Ask yourself questions in column 1. If your answer to any of them is "yes," then training might not be the most appropriate intervention to pursue. Instead you might want to consider interventions suggested in column 3 which are designed to address the core issue in column 2.

Performance Question	"Yes" response suggests the core issue may be...	...so a more effective performance improvement intervention might be.
Are employees showing signs of stress or burnout?	Stress or Burnout	Implement wellness programs; adjust workload; introduce flexible work hours
Do employees lack a clear understanding of company's policies and regulations?	Knowledge of Policies	Improve communication of policies through memos or meetings; simplify policy documents

Are there misunderstandings or conflicts among employees, teams, or departments?	Communication and Conflict	Implement mediation sessions by HR; enhance internal communication platforms
Are employees' roles misaligned with their skills or interests?	Job Fit and Satisfaction	Conduct job redesign; reassess job roles and responsibilities; offer career development opportunities
Do employees lack the necessary resources (e.g., equipment, time, support) to perform their tasks effectively?	Resource Availability	Provide necessary tools and technology; optimize resource allocation
Are there inefficiencies or bottlenecks in team, department, or organizational workflows?	Process Efficiency	Streamline processes through workflow analysis; implement new technologies to improve efficiency

WHY DOES TRAINING NEED TO BE MONITORED, SUPPORTED, AND REINFORCED?

Training doesn't end when the training event concludes. Research shows without monitoring, support, and reinforcement, only a fraction (i.e., 10%-34%) of what is taught during training events is applied when learners return to their jobs (Brinkerhoff, 2006; Lally, Van Jaarsveld, Potts, & Ardle, 2010; Saks & Belacourt, 2006). One reason why so little training is applied back on the job might be explained by forgetting curve theory, which suggests up to nearly half of what someone learns in training can be forgotten in as little as an hour later.

Consider incorporating the tactics below into a comprehensive training intervention. The additional investment increases the likelihood that the training will translate into observable results for individuals, teams, departments, and organizations.

POST-TRAINING MONITORING

- **Assessment Tools:** Utilize online quizzes and tests to regularly assess knowledge retention and skill application.
- **Direct Observation:** Observe employees on-the-job to see how well they apply new skills and knowledge directly in their work environment.
- **Performance Metrics:** Track key performance indicators (KPIs) that are expected to change as a result of the training.
- **Training Portfolios:** Have employees maintain a portfolio of work that demonstrates the application of training over time.



POST-TRAINING SUPPORT

- **Coaching Sessions:** Provide one-on-one coaching to help employees apply training concepts to their specific roles.
- **Peer Learning Groups:** Establish regular meetings where employees can share experiences and learn from each other.
- **Resource Libraries:** Develop a resource library with materials that can help employees revisit and reinforce training concepts.
- **Support Hotlines:** Set up a hotline or chat service where employees can quickly get help when applying new skills or knowledge.



POST-TRAINING REINFORCEMENT

- **Incentive Programs:** Create incentive programs to reward employees for effectively applying training in their work.
- **Microlearning Sessions:** Provide short, focused sessions to reinforce specific training topics.
- **Performance Reviews:** Include training application as an evaluation factor in employees' performance reviews.
- **Recognition Events:** Host events to recognize and reward employees who effectively apply training in innovative ways.

HOW DO WE DESIGN AND DELIVER BETTER TRAINING?

Effective training design and delivery are crucial for maximizing training effectiveness and ensuring a satisfactory ROI. If your organization has access to an instructional designer, then use them to craft a training program (i.e., needs assessment, design, delivery, monitoring, support, and reinforcement). If your organization does not have access to an instructional design professional, then use the following advice to increase the likelihood that your training is optimally designed.

- **Be crystal clear on what you want learners to be able to do after the training.** Instead of focusing first on what you want learners to know, clarify what you want them to be able to do after the training. Then design your training with the minimum effective dose of content needed for learners to
 - Learn what they must do and why it’s important;
 - Develop a clear picture of what actions they need to be able to perform after the training and at what level of proficiency; and
 - Practice those actions during the training and receive feedback on their performance.

- **Design and deliver your training as if your learners are grown adults.** Many trainings treat adult learners like children or machines. As a result, many adults don’t learn what is taught in trainings. Consider incorporating the five assumptions of andragogy into your training event (see table below). Andragogy is an approach to teaching that takes into account the self-directed and practical-oriented nature of adult learners. *How do we design and deliver better training?*

Andragogy Assumption	Explanation	Workplace Training Examples
Self-Concept	Adults prefer to be responsible for their own decisions and to be treated as capable of self-direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing learners to set their own learning goals. • Offering elective modules within training programs. • Encouraging self-assessment and reflection.
Experience	Adults bring a wealth of experience to the learning environment, which can be a rich resource for learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate case studies that reflect real-world scenarios learners might encounter. • Facilitate group discussions where learners share and analyze their experiences. • Encourage mentorship roles among more experienced learners.
Readiness to Learn	Adults are ready to learn when they experience a need to know or do something to cope effectively with real-life situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time training to align with immediate needs, such as before a new software rollout. • Tailor content to current job roles or career advancements • Offer "just-in-time" training that provides specific skills when needed.
Orientation to Learning	Adults are problem-centered rather than content-oriented. They focus on learning that facilitates tasks or resolves problems they face.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design training that focus on solving specific workplace issues. • Providing simulations and role-playing activities that mimic job-specific challenges. • Using practical demonstrations instead of abstract presentations.
Motivation	Adults are mostly motivated by internal factors such as self-esteem, curiosity, and desire for achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize achievements with certificates or rewards • Create competitive scenarios that challenge learners to solve problems. • Encourage goal setting and track progress in training sessions. • Offer opportunities for personal and professional growth through training.

- Use an effective instructional design template.** There are multiple “right” ways to design a training event. At Break the Norm Leadership, we find Gagné’s 9 Events of Instruction is the “Swiss army knife” of instructional design templates; it works very well in a surprisingly large number of situations. It is okay if you have never heard of Gagné, the table below provides an overview, with examples, of the 9 parts of a Gagné-based training. The table also suggests how much time you might want to spend on each of the 9 components, assuming your overall training event is 90 minutes long.

Training Component	Focus/Purpose	Workplace Training Examples	Suggested Time
Gaining Attention	Capture the learner's interest and prepare them for learning.	Start with a striking statistic related to the training topic; show a brief, engaging video clip; pose a provocative question.	5 minutes
Informing Learners of Objectives	Let learners know what they will learn and what is expected of them.	Review the learning objectives at the beginning, outlining what skills or knowledge they will gain and how they can apply them.	5 minutes
Stimulating Recall of Prior Learning	Connect new information to existing knowledge to enhance learning.	Ask participants to share their experiences related to the topic	10 minutes
Presenting the Content	Deliver the new content effectively.	Use a mix of lectures, multimedia presentations, and readings	20 minutes
Providing Learning Guidance	Help learners understand and retain new information.	Offer real-life examples, step-by-step guides (e.g., job aids), and mnemonic devices; Provide handouts or visual aids that summarize complex processes.	15 minutes
Eliciting Performance (Practice)	Engage learners in active practice of the new skills or knowledge.	Conduct role-playing exercises, simulations, or hands-on tasks that require learners to use the new skills in a controlled setting.	15 minutes
Providing Feedback	Give specific feedback on learners' practice to guide and enhance learning.	Offer immediate, constructive feedback during practice sessions; Use quizzes that provide explanations for right and wrong answers.	10 minutes
Assessing Performance	Test to ensure learners have achieved the learning objectives.	Administer a practical test or a project that requires learners to apply the new skills or knowledge in a real-world scenario.	5 minutes
Enhancing Retention and Transfer	Help learners remember and apply the information after the training ends.	Discuss how to apply the skills on the job, encourage the setting up of peer support groups, or provide follow-up sessions to refresh knowledge.	5 minutes