TRAINING TODAY

June 2012

CONTENTS

CHICAGOLAND CHAPTER

ASTD
WORKPLACE LEARNING & PERFORMANCE

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello!

The month of June finds us enjoying warm sunny weather in Chicago. The transformation outside from gloomy and gray to colorful and vibrant has taken place. New transformations aren't limited to the outside landscape - have you looked at CCASTD.org lately? It has undergone an extensive transformation. Log in today to see the new changes, upcoming events, and manage your member profile.

There never seems to be a shortage of new ideas in the learning and performance arena. Similarly, our authors never disappoint when sharing their perspectives and expertise. Here are some highlights of the articles in this issue:

*   Corinne Miller shares insight into the needs of virtual workers and provides some learning solutions and suggestions for each of these needs. Join Corinne as she discusses this very topic, "The Eight Great Learning Needs of the Virtual Workforce" at the Chicagoland Learning Leaders Conference, McDonald's Hamburger University, on October 1, at 7:15am.
*   DISC, MBTI, and other tools have been used to describe and categorize behavioral styles – how about shapes? Cynthia Rogers gives new meaning to being a "square" in her article, "When Style Meets Trust."
*   Dana Schuster shares tips for consultants on ways they CAN be successful with learning projects and delight their clients in the process.
*   How will you meet the needs of clients who need learning content delivered on mobile devices (tablets and smart phones) as well as desktop devices? How does Flash fit into this scenario? Roy Strauss offers some proven strategies in his article, "Bridging the Gap."
*   Matt Hoff, new to the learning and performance space, shares his experience and research data in our regular column, The Learning Curve.

Join hosts CCASTD, CISPI, and STC Chicago at the fifth annual Chicago eLearning & Technology Showcase on August 16, 2012. The full day of presentations will explore all aspects of elearning—instructional design, development tools, media resources, virtual classrooms, social and interactive applications, mobile learning, rapid elearning, and more for a cutting-edge exploration of new media and interactive elearning tools For more information, go to www.chicagoelearningshowcase.com.

Have a wonderful summer!

Louann Swedberg
Editor, Training Today

UPCOMING
P R O G R A M S

CCASTD's July Dinner Meeting:
WOULD YOU LIKE PERFORMANCE WITH THAT?
MOVING MCDONALD'S WORLDWIDE FROM TRAINING TO PERFORMANCE

July 19, 2012 | 5:30 - 8:30 pm
The Hyatt Lodge | Oak Brook, IL

PRESENTERS: MICHELLE REID-POWELL AND DENISE LYNCH

Getting your business partners to shift from "placing an order" for a training program to striving for performance outcomes isn't as easy as asking, "Would you like performance with that?" Especially when you work for McDonald's. Over the past several years, Denise Lynch has been driving a significant culture change in McDonald's Worldwide Training - a change that has the potential to impact almost 2 million global employees and overall company performance. In this interactive session, Denise will share her experience and strategies for changing the way people perform under the Golden Arches. Presenting with Denise will be Michelle Reid-Powell, who has been working with senior leaders in the McDonald's Worldwide Training organization to create their Global Learning and Performance Vision.

WLPI is a certificate program providing formal instruction in learning and development competencies. Course content ranges from Human Performance Improvement (HPI), Designing Learning, Delivering Training, Measurement and Evaluation and more.

WLPI ANNOUNCES ACCELERATED SESSION OF THE WLPI PROGRAM
WLPI is happy to announce an accelerated session of the WLPI program. The accelerated session will cover all the same topics as our regular program but will be held Monday through Friday of a single week plus a one-day follow-up session to deliver final presentations. Those registering for the entire session will receive a certificate of completion after completing all requirements of the program including attendance to face-to-face sessions, writing a final paper and presenting a final presentation. Interested participants are able to register for a single topic if preferred. Dates of the accelerated session are August 20th through August 24th plus Friday September 7.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?
Subject matter experts, people breaking into the industry, trainers and instructional designers looking for continue education.

Sign up for the full institute or pick and choose from the available modules.

SUMMER 2012 WLPI SCHEDULE

Monday-Friday, August 20-24
PLUS Friday, September 7
9:00 am - 4:30 pm

DePaul University - Naperville Campus

Modules:

August 20:	Workplace Learning & Performance Profession; Human Performance Improvement
August 21:	Designing Learning
August 22:	Blended Learning & Materials Development
August 23:	Delivering Training
August 24:	Measurement & Evaluation
September 7:	Final Project Presentation

FALL 2012 WLPI SCHEDULE

Saturdays, September 29-November 17
(Nov. 10 is a bye week)
9:00 am - 4:30 pm

University of St. Francis - Joliet Campus

Modules:

September 29:	Workplace Learning & Performance Profession
October 6:	Human Performance Improvement
October 13:	Designing Learning
October 20:	Blended Learning & Materials Development
October 27:	Delivering Training
November 3:	Measurement & Evaluation
November 17:	Final Project Presentation

by Corinne Miller

THE EIGHT GREAT LEARNING NEEDS OF THE VIRTUAL WORKFORCE

With just over one billion mobile workers at present and 1.3 billion (one-third of the global workforce) expected by 2015 coupled with the constant need to do more with less across the 24-hour clock, there is much to be learned in order to be effective in this new world. Whether working in a company facility and interacting with those in other physical locations or working as an occasional, part-time or full-time telecommuter - practitioners, managers, and senior leaders must learn new ways to operate.

Consider the definition of "virtual" as separated by physical distance, united by a common goal, and enabled by technology. Every single piece of the organization is affected when a workforce has a virtual component. The list could easily include recruiting, learning and development, performance management, reward and recognition, business processes, product and service development processes, communication, legal, information technology, strategy and more.

Few changes have had such a pervasive and deep effect on how we run our businesses. Learning and development organizations have a significant role in ensuring that the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to be successful in this virtual evolution are known and relevant learning opportunities made available to learners. Let's look at the eight great learning needs (not in any order of priority) of the virtual workforce, and some suggested learning solutions to address these needs.

1. VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

Why: The goal of communication is to achieve a shared meaning among communicators. When face to face, a high percentage of meaning is derived from non-verbal cues including the surrounding physical context and feedback loops. When virtual, and especially asynchronous, these physical cues are missing. 94% of virtual worker respondents in a 2010 cultural firm survey of 30,000 internationally, stated that their top challenge was an inability to read verbal cues. As such, different techniques and and approaches that blow-up the rules we all learned for communicating in the physical world, are required to ensure a shared meaning among communicators in a virtual setting. Trying to force-fit the ways of the physical world into the virtual world will fail.

Learning Solutions: Virtual training that focuses on how to increase the amount of human senses in each communication opportunity training; "Keep us on the right track" coaches; periodic feedback.

2. VIRTUAL COLLABORATION

Why: The goal of collaboration is for the right group of people to achieve a shared goal in the required timeframe and at the required cost, better than had they done it without each other. A shared meaning of the collaboration goal, behaviors, and process is critical. When face to face, many times collaboration includes the spontaneous assembling of people in the local vicinity. When virtual, the "right" people are often left out due to the perceived burden of including virtual workers. Further compounding the issue, geographically dispersed workers typically have varied understandings of collaboration goals, behaviors, and processes leading to ineffective collaboration.

Learning Solutions: Virtual training that focuses on: methods for inclusion despite time zones; ways to garner everyone's input despite culture, and when to utilize asynchronous as well as synchronous tools training; effectiveness measures; "Keep us on the right track" coaches; periodic sharing of what's working and what's not.

3. VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION TOOLS

Why: There is usually one of two scenarios at play here. One, some organizations have a minimal set of tools to use in virtually communicating. Typically these are: email and sometimes a virtual platform such as Live Meeting or WebEx. Many times, only the very basic capability of these tools are being used, ignoring the robust features which can, without much training, take collaboration to a very effective level. The second typical scenario is when an organization has a plethora of virtual communication and collaboration tools. Many times, no one knows them all and everyone is using different ones, creating a complex infrastructure and confused participants. A common set of tools needs to be identified and workers trained on how to robustly use them.

Learning Solutions: Virtual training on what tools will be used, when they should be used, and how to use them.

4. VIRTUAL TEAMING

Why: Teams require a common vision and understanding, a collaborative process, mutual accountability, efficient work processes, complementary skill sets, and so forth. To sum it up…a lot of "common shared" stuff needs to be happening in order for a team to be effective. The techniques to

unite a group of people separated by physical distance and sometimes cultural distance do not just happen serendipitously or in a co-located environment. For example, it is more challenging to express opinions when on virtual teams than on conventional teams.

Learning Solutions: Classroom training when a major shift in behavior is required. Virtual training for reinforcement or skill honing. Periodic sharing of what's working and what's not. Virtual training on processes and workflows to ensure a common understanding and execution.

5. CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

Why: Every country's culture communicates differently. Without a basic understanding of this when teams are working with global partners, shared meaning is difficult to achieve. Cultural skills are different than virtual skills. Virtual skills should be learned first then coupled with cultural awareness as needed. Lack of cultural awareness exacerbates virtual challenges.

Learning Solutions: Virtual training and reference websites for the basics. If teams are working closely together, bringing some members, who will act as coaches or advocates, into a physical training session can be helpful.

6. MANAGING A VIRTUAL WORKFORCE

Why: Everything a manager does is affected when virtual workers are part of their organization: recruiting, on-boarding, aligning the team, setting processes, assigning work, monitoring work, providing feedback, coaching, rewarding and recognizing – to name more than a few. Managers must learn how to "see" in a new way when their eyes are no longer the primary tool. Setting expectations is critical and far beyond what is required in the physical workplace where physical cues and context "fill in the gaps," and understanding how to manage a "blended" organization of co-located and virtual workers may not be intuitive.

 Learning Solutions: Classroom training when a major shift in behavior is required. Virtual training for reinforcement or skill honing. Periodic sharing of what's working and what's not. There are two approaches: Stand-alone sessions on the virtual workforce or integrating the virtual management techniques into existing management or leadership training.

7. LEADING A VIRTUAL ORGANIZATION

Why: Senior leaders must set a business and talent strategy that leverages the virtual workplace, enable it with the appropriate technology and guidelines, and instill the trusting and collaborative behaviors required. Many senior leaders, especially those of the WWII or baby boomer generation, find it difficult to trust workers they cannot see on a regular basis.

Learning Solutions: Articles and studies that present a balanced view of the challenges and benefits of a virtual workforce. Meetings with leaders from other companies or industry experts to discuss the key issues, concerns, and best practices can also be helpful.

8. VIRTUAL TRAINING SKILLS FOR WORKERS

Why: It is a common and necessary part of everyone's job (not just professional instructional designers and trainers) to design and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and the development of skills across the dispersed workforce. Unfortunately, uninformed workers and managers believe that listening is learning, i.e., bulleted PowerPoint slides with a few animations and visuals delivered on a virtual platform is a cost and learning effective way to '"train."

Learning Solution: Do-it-yourself tools, templates, and basic accelerated training must be provided to move these training efforts from ineffective to "effective enough" admonishing that they will never be as good as when professional learning and development personnel are involved.

WHEN THESE EIGHT GREAT LEARNING NEEDS ARE IGNORED

Productivity will slow, errors will occur more often, trust among team members will wane, and costs will rise. Visible signs include lengthy emails chains, excessive CCing, continuous meetings, an increasing need for more structure or bureaucracy, excessive need for consensus, decision-making avoidance, poor decision making, and attrition. One of the biggest mistakes is trying to virtually mimic the way things are done in the physical setting. New ways of managing, leading, communicating, and collaborating are needed. These knowledge, skills, and behaviors are not generally intuitive for those accustomed to communicating in a physical setting, and as such, need to be learned.

ACTIONS FOR LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

What might you or your learning and development organization do to ensure your company's or your clients' businesses stay on course as they navigate this virtual evolution? Is the organization using optimal virtual communication and collaboration tools and methods to ensure results, productivity and quality? Are managers trained in managing those they do not see on a regular basis? Do senior leaders understand what is needed to enable and support a virtual workforce? Is the learning organization providing training and tools that enable the all aspects of the virtual organization? And one final question, if not now, when?

References:

2012 IDC survey, http://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=prUS23251912

22010 RW3 LLC, The Challenge of Working in Virtual Teams, Survey Report

Hastings, R. (July 1, 2010). Fostering Virtual Working Relationships Isn't Easy. SHRM Online.

Corinne Miller is Founder & Principal Consultant at Innovating Results! where she consults, trains, facilitates, and coaches on communication - specializing in virtual communications, managing a virtual workforce, and virtual teaming; and innovation - specializing in integrating innovation into an organization's culture, creating new ways of thinking, and applying innovation practices to everyday problem solving.

By leveraging a broad set of real world experiences over a 25+ year career in leadership positions at companies such as Motorola, Rockwell International, Northrop, and TRW across engineering, learning & development, program management, business operations, quality, and innovation - she delivers unparalleled training, consulting, and coaching services to both large and mid-size corporations.

Corinne holds a BS from the University of Illinois at Chicago and an MS in Communication from Northwestern University. She was awarded 2011 Teaching Excellence and the 2009 Faculty of the Year at Lake Forest Corporate Education where she also teaches communication in Lake Forest Graduate School of Management's MBA program. She is a frequently invited speaker and author. Contact Corinne at 847-732-7061, or corinne@innovatingresults.com.

WHEN STYLE MEETS TRUST

by Cynthia Rogers

Why is it that some trust people they meet immediately while for others, it takes longer? How come some give their trust unconditionally while others give it more cautiously? It has to do with style.

Got Style?

Imagine being able to solve the mystery of human behavior – those actions that drive how others perceive and react to us. Imagine knowing what gets in the way of developing positive and productive relationships, aka "RelationSlips". Imagine doing this by using things that are very familiar to us. Hmmm, you say.

Stop reading for just a moment and grab a writing instrument. Look at the five shapes below and rank them from one (1) to five (5), 1 being the most appealing to you and 5 being the least.
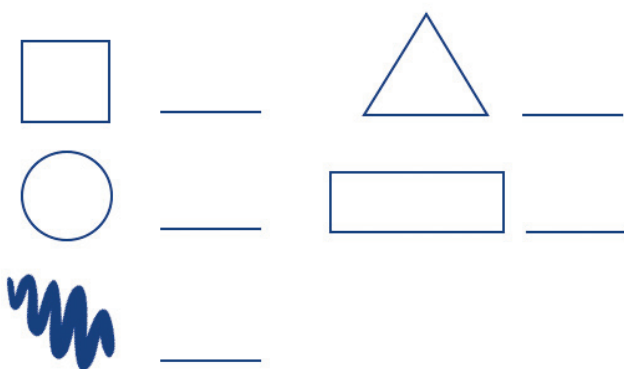
Believe it or not, you have just identified your behavioral style*; that is, how you think, feel, act, relate and come across to others! How, you ask?

The shapes you chose and the order in which you chose them are based on the premise that we are attracted to objects in our environment based on our brain function. For example, if your number one choice is the box, triangle or rectangle, you are left-brained, tend to be logical and sequential in your thinking, and are task-oriented. You make decisions based on information and data. So, what does each shape mean in terms of behavior?

Boxes Figure

Boxes are the organized, analytic, persevering, hard-working, play by the rules, "all the ducks in a row" kind of person who usually prefers working alone and generally dislikes surprises.

Triangles Take Charge

The Triangle is decisive, ambitious, goal-oriented, competitive, wants life to revolve around him/her and prefers to be in charge.

Rectangles Revolve

Rectangles are in transition and are experiencing growth.

If you chose the circle or squiggle as number one, you are right-brained, tend to be non-systematic in your thinking, prefer relationships over tasks and make decisions based on gut-feelings.

Circles Smile

The Circle is the friendly one, loves everyone, listens and communicates well, tends to avoid conflict and is always there to help.

Squiggles Wiggle

Squiggles tend to be creative, animated, expressive and are known to change their mind at the drop of a hat.

(For those of you who are *Sex in the City* fans, each behavioral style is brought to life by one of the characters: Carrie is the Triangle; Charlotte, the Circle; Amanda, the Box and Samantha, the Squiggle).

Keep in mind that we are a sum total of all of the above styles. Most of the time, we use the one(s) that are most comfortable and the most natural to us. So, what do I do with this information, you ask?

Once you are aware of your style and the styles of others, you can then "flex", that is, use your predominant style or one of your non-dominant styles, to:

• Complement and supplement the styles of others
• Be a more effective leader
• Help our teams be more successful
• Improve selling and customer service skills, and
• Prevent "RelationSlips"

What's Trust Got to Do With It?

Trust. Trust! Trust? That's a word that keeps popping up in ads, in the media and in more and more conversations. President Obama, in one of his State of the Union addresses, said we have a deficit of it. Ask 10 people what that word means, and you'll get 20 different responses. Look it up in your dictionary. Don't be surprised if you discover over 45 different definitions! However you define it, experts agree that trust is the critical ingredient in effective relationships.

Someone once said that Trust is like money – it takes hours to earn it but seconds to lose.

Take a moment to think about trust and answer the question:

What does trust mean to you?

•

•

•

You probably thought of words like dependable, truthful, reliable, or even caring. Those are Trustworthy behaviors, also know as "Trust Builders".

On the flip side, what words that come to mind that you feel make a person untrustworthy? What is it that causes you not to trust them?

How would you describe untrustworthiness?

•

•

•

You may have included words such as not keeping promises, lying or can't keep a secret. These untrustworthy behaviors are "Trust Busters".

To help us identify what makes someone trustworthy, let's go back to the basics, the ABCDs so to speak. People will trust you if they think you are one or more of the following:

A. **ABLE** to do your job, competent, and possess the skills to get things done, and consistently achieve goals.
B. **BELIEVABLE**, that is, act with integrity, are honest, and treat others fairly.
C. **CONNECTED** to them by showing that you care, build rapport with others, seek and utilize feedback, give credit where credit is due.
D. **DEPENDABLE** because you do what you say you will do, have an effective system to get things done, hold yourself and others accountable.

These four elements (Able, Believable, Connected and Dependable**) lay the foundation for trust. Trust is essential to all relationships, be they between boss and employee, peers, team members or one person to another. If one of these is lacking, even in the slightest, trust can be broken.

Go back to the few words that you wrote to associate with Trustworthy or Untrustworthy behaviors. Now take a few moments to write next to each behavior, which of the ABCDs you associate with that behavior.
For example:
•   If you wrote "Caring", then you might write "Connected".
•   If you wrote "Unreliable", then you might write "Dependable".

The Connection?

And now, you ask, what is the connection between Style and Trust? Let's consider which of the four elements would be the most important to each of the styles. This will be helpful in building a trusting relationship with each style you meet.

Triangles are known to be status-conscious and like to surround themselves with powerful people. They demand competence and set high standards. To be trusted by a Triangle means you better be the best at what you do. They are most likely to place the most value on ABLE.

Squiggles, when they trust, place value on BELIEVEABLE. They deal with concepts so values and integrity are important.

Circles find the best in everyone and often trust others immediately. To them, you are "innocent until proven guilty". Circles would most likely place value on CONNECTED; they have to feel that you care about them if you want to keep the trust that they so readily give.

Boxes take pride in doing things by following a system. Because they prefer to work alone and feel they can do things themselves, Boxes usually take the longest to trust others; but once they do, they trust for life! They will trust you if you show them that you also have a system and will help them deliver. To them, you must be DEPENDABLE.

Next time you meet someone whom you trust immediately, give some thought to the reasons why. It's a case of "when style meets trust" – your way. It is your behavioral style and the ABCDs at work!

Reference Notes:
*This system, which uses shapes to represent behavioral styles, is known as Psycho-Geometrics® and was developed by Dr. Susan Dellinger more than 30 years ago.

**The four-element model is based on the TrustWorks!® system developed by Cynthia Olmstead and has been used to build and maintain trust in organizations worldwide.

Cynthia Rogers is recognized for her energetic, enthusiastic and engaging presentation style. She has designed, developed and facilitated numerous Leadership and Professional Development workshops and Keynote addresses and is a recent facilitator for WLPI and presenter for CCASTD Corporate University PDN.

With over 30 years experience, Cynthia has successfully managed full-service training departments and demonstrated operational and managerial abilities in Fortune 500 corporations, nonprofit organizations, and consulting firms. She holds a BA and an MS in Education and is certified in AchieveGlobal Leadership Development; Sales and Customer Service Curriculums, Development Dimensions International (DDI), Myers Briggs Type Inventory MBTI, Psycho-Geometrics®, TrustWorks!® and is an Adjunct Faculty Member of the AMA. Contact her at CRogersAssoc@aol.com or (847) 223-5914.

by Roy Strauss

BRIDGING THE GAP: DEVELOPING CROSS-PLATFORM ELEARNING FOR TABLETS AND DESKTOPS

With the popularity of tablets (especially the iPad) many in the training field want to accommodate those users by running eLearning on these devices. However, since most existing eLearning courses are authored with Articulate Studio and Captivate, they use Flash technology and are not compatible with iPads. In addition, Microsoft will be removing Flash support from its next version of Internet Explorer (Version 10), and may even prevent it from being installed at all.[1] Clearly Flash has a limited shelf-life.

The fix being touted by the computer industry is HTML 5, which will provide some Flash-like capabilities on tablets and desktops. However, it also raises some significant problems:

*   Most desktop users do not have HTML 5 compatible browsers, and won't for a long time. Half of current PC users are using Internet Explorer[2], and it takes an average of four years for 90% of users to upgrade to a new browser version.[3]
*   HTML 5 is not standardized (ratified) yet, and won't be officially until 2014. Until then it will only be available on new browsers, and may not run consistently from one to the next. This means that courses written in HTML 5 may malfunction, even in the newest browsers.
*   As of May, 2012 there are only a few eLearning development tools for HTML 5. (Articulate Storyline has just been released).

Clearly this poses problems for those developing eLearning, and forces a tough choice:

1. If you wait it out until HTML 5 browsers are widespread, and continue developing in Articulate Studio or Captivate, then iPad users will be unable to run your courses and you will gradually lose desktop users as they upgrade to non-Flash HTML 5 only browsers.
2. If you choose to take the plunge and start developing in HTML 5 now, your user base will be small (tablets, and less than half of existing desktop users), and they may have trouble running your courses because of inconsistent HTML 5 browsers. In addition, you will face a lack of HTML 5 development tools.
3. If you decide to develop for both (Flash and HTML 5) you will need to create and maintain two versions of each course.

A Solution
There is an alternative which has already proven successful: Develop/convert courses to HTML 4 with flexible video technology.

HTML 4 is the current web technology. By using HTML 4 (and associated technologies such as CSS and Javascript), you will be compatible with all existing desktop and tablet users (including iPad). To overcome the major drawback of HTML 4 (the lack of flexibility in handling motion and audio together in a cross platform way), we suggest using a flexible video server that delivers cross-platform compatible video.

By doing so, one can obtain the best of both worlds – a single eLearning course that is:
*   Compatible with all current platforms and browsers (iPads, Android, Mac, PC)
*   Compatible with future HTML 5 browsers

This method can be (and is being) used now, to deliver highly interactive, multimedia courses, that are SCORM compatible. Using this approach, all of your users will be able to access a single course, and you don't have to worry about the adoption rate of iPads or HTML 5 browsers in the future.

We believe that for those who would like to ensure their courses can be viewed on tablets and the desktop, both now and in the future, this is a viable, smart and safe path.

Reference Notes:
1. See news.cnet.com/8301-30685_3-20105870-264/microsoft-joins-the-anti-flash-crowd-with-ie10/
2. See www.statowl.com/web_browser_market_share.php
3. See www.netmagazine.com/features/developers-guide-browser-adoption-rates

Roy Strauss has been designing and developing technology-based training for over 20 years, and believes learners are entitled to engaging and energizing learning experiences that provide them with real skills they can immediately apply to their jobs. To realize this vision, he founded Cedar Interactive 12 years ago. Cedar Interactive works with organizations in Chicago and nationwide providing custom learning solutions, including instructional design and development, as well as technological solutions to improve personnel performance. Contact Roy at (847) 579-1701 or RStrauss@ cedarinteractive.com.

by Dana Schuster

THE CONSULTANT THAT CAN!

After spending many weeks with a wonderful team, we finally finished the project. I wish I could say I was happy, but I wasn't. Our Subject Matter Experts and the rest of the Senior Leaders were all so kind and personable that I wanted to continue working with them. Each conversation was more refreshing than the previous. The project was at times very creative and at other times, very nose-to-the-grindstone with exploring ideas and content. I wanted to understand why this project was in such a good "flow," so I asked the project lead. His response was that he felt we were in sync from the start – we all had the same purpose; "safety for the patients."

After reflecting on this, I agreed that we shared the same purpose, and a genuine respect for each other. Remember that childhood book, *The Little Engine that Could*? This project brought to mind that story of willingness to work together and the belief that the task could be accomplished. I believe that if project teams remember that we are all human, like to be treated kindly, feel safe in an open environment, and can share ideas without judgment, we all can reach that same goal – project success.

During the analysis stage, there are so many questions that we need to ask our clients. Sometimes it can weigh heavy on the team from both sides. We want answers fast yet the clients are very busy doing their full time work. How do we balance these needs? How do we create a positive environment with a can-do attitude? I came upon an acronym, CAN, which stands for Communicate, Awareness, Needs. Using these three steps will give you a great start in building a business relationship with your client.

Communicate

Create rapport and open communication first. Relationship Management is key to a truly successful project. From day one, set the stage with an introduction of yourself, describe your interest in the project, and show your excitement and appreciation for your client's time. Ask your clients what their expectations are. As you check in and follow up, ask the right questions at the right time. Be sure to ask, "How are things going?" in the beginning, halfway through the project, and towards the end.

The relationship and communication building will carry throughout the entire project. Stay in touch with all of the people on this project. Let them know that they are each an important component of the project. Be sure to find out how each person prefers to communicate: phone, email, Skype, or on-site. Compromise and be sure to offer alternatives. Adults just love choices!

Awareness

Always be aware of what is going on around you. Stay updated on the project management aspect and the crucial milestones and deadlines. Are there any roadblocks? If so, collaborate to find a solution. Include the Subject Matter Experts on the project as much as their time will allow. Make them feel as included as you would like to be. Pay attention to the words you choose and listen to what they are saying to you. It's okay to take notes. Not everyone has a wonderful memory and is able to keep straight all of the things we must manage.

Needs

Once you understand your clients' needs and expectations, they may change. Ask questions often regarding scope. Staying on track is your goal, but realize that there is always a reason for a change. If you are prepared (by keeping the communication open and being aware of the project status), you can come up with a solution much quicker.

Everyone's personality and needs are different and the way they see things will be diverse. Establish a connection with your team to keep the communication going. It's important to know everyone's strengths and opportunities to grow. Always share your knowledge about the process with your team and client. Share an article or data that they can relate to. After all, we don't know their businesses as well as they do. So how can they know ours?

While it's necessary to be a team player and treat others with respect, the goal of consultants who CAN is that and more. The goal is to give our clients the best results possible by communicating well and constantly being aware of their needs. If you were a client, who would you want – the consultant that could or the consultant that CAN?

Dana Schuster is a training professional with over 8 years of business experience designing, developing, and managing highly interactive blended e-learning projects. Her areas of expertise include: e-learning, content development, creative writing, training delivery, coaching, and employee development. She values community, diversity, teamwork, and considers leadership a critical component of organizational success. Dana holds a graduate degree from Roosevelt University in Training & Development and an undergraduate degree in Organizational Leadership. Contact Dana at dana.schuster@yahoo.com.

the LEARNING CURVE

by Matt Hoff

WHAT DO PARTICIPANTS IN MANDATORY TRAINING FIND MOST INFLUENTIAL IN THEIR MOTIVATION TO LEARN?

My time as a student in DePaul's Master's of Arts in Educating Adults (MAEA) program was instrumental in building my professional identity and confidence as a facilitator and adult educator. I had been an Information Technology Consultant for over seven years, and as a result of MAEA, my goal to transition into the Learning and Development practice at work became a reality. My first project in the new practice inspired my research project and continued my interest in this field.

Project Inspiration

I stood in the front of the room, with my palms sweating and nerves revved up as high as they've ever been. Trickling into the room were all different types of people, young and old, shy and talkative. I nervously announced, "There's coffee and bagels in room 310." A few people got up and walked down the hall to what we call "an incentive." It was my first day as an official trainer. Sure, I had been enrolled in DePaul's Master's of Arts in Educating Adults program for almost a year now, and I had a lot of tools at my disposal. But, I wasn't told it would feel like this! Thoughts like, "They're going to trip you up. You shouldn't be telling them how to do things. They don't want to be here" were rattling around in my mind. The time flew by, and the end of the session arrived with all the breaks, exercises, group work, flip charts, and evaluations delivered as planned.

After surviving the first day, I realized that I could be a professional trainer, educator, and facilitator. I quickly found that each training session becomes a mini database of sorts – a collection of experiences that I can pull from to aid the following experience. After a while, it was apparent that a lot of learners had the same questions, and I was getting better at answering them.

As I continued with my education at DePaul and professional development, another important theme came to light: developing and delivering sessions collaboratively in a learner-centered manner. In other words, "It's not about me." Over those nine months training teachers and principals in New York, in the back of my mind, I wondered what else I could do: were there ways I could make mandatory technical trainings like these more interesting and effective?

When I moved on to another project, I had not moved on from my question of: "How can I make mandatory technical training more interesting and effective?" That's when my research project was born, and I titled it: "Discovering factors related to motivation, when learners participate in mandatory, work-related, technology training."

Project Overview

Many studies have looked at motivation and how it relates to adult education and training in general. My study looked at a specific scenario, often found in the workplace: mandatory technology training. Based on training research in overlapping areas (Technical Training, Workplace Learning, Motivation, and Mandatory Professional Development), I developed a survey to capture perceptions regarding mandatory, technical training in the workplace. Forty-eight professionals from a variety of industries (Information Technology, Manufacturing, Scientific, and Banking) provided insights based on personal training experiences. Using open-ended questions and fixed responses, the data provided a more focused look into motivation factors within the specified context.

After all the data were collected and analyzed, the following factors were ranked in order of importance: relevance, interest, and extrinsic rewards, which generally aligned with the referenced studies in my literature review. Additionally, delivery method effects (instructor versus web-based training) and a surprising lack of technological issues were noticed in the results (these include fear of learning technology and the technology failures, etc). Other data related to management involvement, technology self-efficacy, and perceived importance were collected and analyzed.

Conclusions

Following are the original research questions, with my associated conclusions, based on the data analysis.

1. What factors do participants in mandatory training perceive as most influential regarding their motivation to learn?
▶ What factors enhance their motivation?

- Relevance and "real life" is appreciated most greatly by participants. This means the training should directly and concretely affect their work. The exercises should be based on real life / work-related situations.
- Interest in the topic and / or interest in learning technology generally increases the desire to participate in the training.
- "Being mandatory" actually seemed to motivate all those to complete the training, even though the learners weren't aware of consequences nor accountable for not completing the training.
- Extrinsic rewards, like promotion (or even food) were listed as "general" factors, although not specifically related to the training(s) these learners were asked to chronicle. These sorts of extrinsic factors came out as a higher factor when asked about training in general.
- As an instructional designer or trainer, it's important to consider how some of the more polarized factors could be manipulated. For example, being mandatory was high on the motivational factor list, but it was also heavy on the "low" end, which means there wasn't a lot of in-between. While this isn't a factor you can change as a designer or instructor, it is possible to focus on the positives and minimize the cost by adjusting factors like time, presentation creativity, responsiveness, relevancy, and external incentives (adding food, highlighting promotions), etc.

▶ What factors impede their motivation?
- Although this survey group rated themselves highly in technology self-efficacy, it was apparent throughout the literature review and some of the open-ended responses that "fear" and/or confidence levels with technology do affect training experiences. For example, one comment from a user discussed their technology comfort level, "We had someone come in and train in groups. Since I'm not that technically literate (computers)....I could have used more one-on-one training."
- Surprisingly, these respondents mentioned little or no issues with technology. But, based on personal experience, technology issues during training, like connectivity (mentioned only once in survey results) and problems with software will affect motivation greatly. This variable would need to be explored in detail, however, before making any real conclusions.

2. What advice can participants offer trainers doing mandatory training to help inspire participants' motivation?

▶ Approximately 70% of the training represented in this survey was classroom-based, and several responses suggested the instructor and attributes the learners desire:
- Real life experience – An instructor with real life, practical experience (or the ability to demonstrate the topic's applicability realistically to the trainees) was one of the top factors.

- Pacing – Ensure the class time is long enough but not too long. The learners want an instructor who can pace the course according to the needs (dynamically).
- Support – An instructor with resources to answer questions and the ability to follow up after the training is complete was desired.
- Attributes – Several respondents requested an instructor with personality traits like "animation" and "patience." "Preparedness" was also high on the list.

3. What advice can participants offer management [or whomever is requiring the training] about communicating the need/purpose of the mandatory training?

▶ Involving management is important, because the potential to build in and be aware of certain factors like rationale, incentives, and consequences will affect the design and delivery of training.

▶ The learners recommended providing comprehensive introductions that explain why they are required to take the training, how to proceed if they are not successful, and its relevance to their day-to-day work.

Implications Moving Forward

As a result of the study, it was clear that learning developers and facilitators need to prepare appropriately and try their best to include elements which stimulate relevance, interest, and highlight any extrinsic rewards. A couple of other important factors related to these circumstances include the delivery method and technology itself.

Because of constraints in this study, I suggested including learner interviews and critical incident journaling as employees progress through a mandatory training program. This sort of data capture would provide a richer set of qualitative analysis. Doing so could really enhance the ability to uncover previously "unnamed factors", looking for any other trends in these sorts of training sessions.

Several other questions were raised throughout the data analysis, which require more research. For example, most of the respondents did not feel that management communicated or established consequences for completion of the mandatory training. Creating a study which captures management's perceptions regarding a mandatory training and its consequences (in addition to participants') could help fill this potential gap in communication.

The hope is that this project's specific data analysis and conclusions can serve as jumping off points for continued study and conversation starters, with the intent to develop better practices.

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