



Five Tips for Maximizing Training and Creating Sustainable Learning

Here are five suggestions for you and your company to improve learning and retention.

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How much time, energy and money have you invested in Cheese, Fish or other “flavor of the month” training initiatives and had little to show for it after just a few weeks? Try these tips sustainability that I’ve learned from years of developing and delivering training.

1. Form “think tanks”. Use mastermind groups, brainstorming sessions and creative teams to foster ideas and input. Use them for specific projects as well as overall organizational improvement. You’ll find the best ideas often come from unexpected sources. Your clients can be a rich source of inspiration and ideas, for example. When was the last time you asked them for feedback? Did you listen?

2. Create a learning environment. Train your managers to be coaches. They can support your training initiatives with individual and group coaching. Training combined with coaching reinforces new concepts and allows you to integrate them, while increasing retention. When your employees integrate new concepts in their daily activities, and their achievements are recognized, this leads to sustainable progress. It really works!

3. Keep improving communications. Poor results can usually be traced to communication failure. Learn to listen carefully. Give people the freedom to be honest, to ask questions and to give feedback (without negative repercussions for doing so.) Learn to make requests that include a call to action, a concrete, agreed upon timeline and specifics about the task.

4. Make choices that reflect what is important. To create a learning environment that is effective, decide beforehand what you want to accomplish. As you implement new practices for sustained learning and lasting retention, you will gain an increased sense of competence and comfort with them, especially once you have results.

5. Have an outstanding team with a good plan rather than a good team with an outstanding plan. Allow your employees to take ownership of their learning processes. Give them all the support they need to be top performers. When you set clear expectations and invite honest feedback, you are building a foundation for strong leadership, and strong leadership brings results!