

# Training Skills

How to improve the skills and performance of your employees

Eric Garner



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Training Skills: How to improve the skills and performance of your employees

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# Preface

## Introduction to Training Skills

Not so long ago, you only got trained if you were in 3 situations at work. First, you had to be a new start. Although not universally true, most people got some kind of training during their first few days at work, if only to introduce you to your colleagues, familiarise you with your workplace, or tell you how to collect your pay. The second kind of training was for those who held a senior or professional position. In these cases, you were regarded as a key player in the business and so needed the occasional attendance at a seminar or conference or course. The third kind of training was for those whose performance was deemed to be lacking. In such cases, training was regarded as a form of correction, perhaps a solution to what would otherwise have been a disciplinary case. Now all that has changed.

Instead of seeing training as a reward or punishment, today's savvy businesses know that training is an absolutely vital function. Again, there are 3 reasons for this. First, it is expected. Today's employees won't work where they aren't developed. Whether for personal or professional reasons, people don't want to be in a business where they are not kept up-to-date, fully trained, and given opportunities to develop. The second reason is the speed of change. Whether in technology, in products, or in skills, training enables people to keep up to date with the market, the competition, and their own organisation's plans. And thirdly, businesses know that people are their most valuable asset. Making the most of this asset is what training is all about. That's why training skills are essential in the modern business organisation.

## Profile of Author Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

## Profile of ManageTrainLearn

ManageTrainLearn is one of the top companies on the Internet for management training products, materials, and resources. Products range from training course plans to online courses, manuals to teambuilder exercises, mobile management apps to one-page skill summaries and a whole lot more. Whether you're a manager, trainer, or learner, you'll find just what you need at ManageTrainLearn to skyrocket your professional and personal success.

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# 1 The Need for Training

All organisations today face rapid and often unexpected change. Giving employees the knowledge, skills and attitudes to cope with such change is a prerequisite to survival and success, both personal and business. This is the vital role of training in modern organisations.

## 1.1 Integration

The process of integrating employees into the organisation usually takes place at induction, either of new employees or promoted or transferred employees. Integration, however, continues in subtle ways throughout an employee's time in an organisation, only a few of which may appear as formal training. Integration is the closest organisations get to the original meaning of "training" in the sense of conforming to laid-down patterns of behaviour. It is training by the book.

### 1.1.1 Training by the Book

In the unchanging centuries of the Roman Empire, new governors leaving to take up far-flung posts would first receive training in Rome on the ways they had to rule. It was training "by the book". The same approach to training is evident in every successful large empire or organisation ever since: the British Empire, the Communist empire of the Soviet Union, IBM.

"The Roman Empire grew so large and survived so long because there was no car, no radio, no papers and no phone. You appointed your governor to run a province, fully trained him before he went and then sent him off to run it." (Antony Jay)

## 1.2 Added Value

The value of employees lies in the knowledge, skills, and motivation that they bring to the job. The more relevant knowledge and skills employees acquire, and the more motivation they have to apply them, the more successful the organisation will be. One of the key ways of increasing the mix of knowledge, skills, and motivation is through training.

### 1.2.1 Training Pays

Study after study demonstrates the link between training the workforce and organisational performance:

- a report from the National Economic and Development Office (for the Manpower Services Commission) showed that high-performance companies spent 8.9 days training per person per year against 2.8 days for low-performance companies
- a study by the Policy Studies Institute found that for individual employees one month of training was worth an additional 6% in pay
- Xerox, the digital printer and photocopier organisation, has one of the highest spends per head on training: £1600 per person per annum. They aim to have a £6 billion turnover worldwide by the year 2007.

### 1.3 Performance

We can plot people's performance at work in one of three ways: targets; standards; and competence.

- targets. Setting someone a target to reach and then measuring whether they reach it or not is one of the simplest ways to judge performance.
- standards. Standards are levels of performance. They allow us to compare different people's performance against pre-set levels, such as an average, a high and a low level.
- competence. Competence is the ability someone has to reach a standard and thereby a target. We can help someone to perform better by working on their skills or by getting them to meet standards and targets.

### 1.4 Updating

We live in times of rapid change. Business and work are now driven by dynamic and constantly changing external factors: global competition, new technology, evolving markets, demand for quality goods and services, changes in attitudes. Whereas, in the past, training of employees only took place now and again, - what was sometimes referred to as "sheep-dipping", - today it is a constant requirement for everyone.

### 1.5 Training as Practice

One of the most important aspects of training is that it allows us to get things right for when it really matters. This is, for example, the case with all forms of safety training. Humphrey Walters describes an incident on the BT Global Challenge round-the-world yacht race when one of his crew fell overboard in heavy seas. With only 4 minutes to save him, the crew put into action their pre-race training and brought him back on board.

### 1.6 Learning to Learn

There is an important difference between training and learning. "Training" is something that we do to people even if we use non-forcing methods to do it. "Learning", however, is something people do for themselves because they want to. In today's rapidly changing times, it is far more important to create a team of learners than a team of trainees. It is the shortest cut to creating the learning organisation.

### 1.7 Developing Potential

It used to be the case that people only brought to work a limited range of requirements, eg in a manual job just their skills. Today, they need to bring everything they can offer, including their talents, ideas, and strengths. The most successful companies do this by developing individuals to their full potential. Developing people's potential is not just an excellent form of training but good people management.

### 1.8 The Path to Excellence

None of us is born with talents and abilities any greater than anyone else. The one thing that distinguishes the so-called talented from the also-rans is not their talent, but their willingness to develop their talent. This is the only path to excellence.

This path is not always easy. It requires an ability to spot the talents you have, or to put yourself in the way of allowing others to spot them; to be determined and persistent that you will learn; to be dedicated to developing your talent; and to make whatever sacrifices are necessary.

“Luciano Pavarotti, arguably the greatest tenor in the world, was an average singer in the boys’ choir at his local school when he was young. But, by studying, practising and rigorous training, he became a peak performer of excellence.” (Charles Garfield)

Training was once the preserve of specialists and regarded as an optional add-on in a business. No longer. Today, it is a vital source of increasing the skills bank of the organisation. It is an organisational responsibility, shared by all those with an interest in making the most of the human resource.

## 1.9 Key Points

1. The key difference between training and other forms of learning is that training results in a change of behaviour.
- 2) The route to changes in performance lies in changes to knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- 3) Studies show that organisations that spend on training are more productive than those that don’t.
- 4) In times of change, it is more important to train people how to learn than in what they should know.
- 5) Individual potential is rarely achieved without some form of training.
- 6) Unlike “Roman Empire” training where people were trained once and left alone, in a changing world people need constant training and re-training.

## 2 Managing Training



Much of the learning we receive in life comes about by chance. We learn from experiences and these often occur randomly and without planning. Learning that is unmanaged brings us random and inconsistent results. It is also painful since we learn by trial and error, hit and miss, sink or swim. Managed training aims to make the process more efficient and more successful in what it achieves.

### 2.1 Managing Training

When training is managed, it becomes a process with clearly defined stages:

Stage 1: identifying needs and outcomes. In organisational terms, the first stage in the training process is to identify what you want to achieve through training. It could be anything from bridging a performance gap to overcoming a block in a team's abilities.

Stage 2: planning how to meet the defined need. The second stage of the process aims to match solutions to needs and is essentially a problem-solving stage.

Stage 3: carrying out the training as planned.

Stage 4: reviewing, evaluating and measuring results.

### 2.2 Analysing Training Needs

Identifying training needs is the first stage in managing the training process. It can be done in two ways: through an intuitive feel for what people need or through analysis. Intuitive assessment of training needs is having a feel for what kind of training will make a big difference to performance. It comes from a knowledge of what the business needs and what employees lack. A more measured analysis of training needs aims to identify where training will make a difference to performance. This can be carried out for individuals, teams or the whole organisation.



### 2.2.1 A Skills Survey

A skills survey is a list of all the main skills required in a job. These can be based on a mix of formal measurements, such as a job description or job analysis; observation of employees at work; and information from the employees themselves, (“What do you need to do a good job?”).

When a set of skills has been compiled, an individual’s performance can be assessed. An example could be a sales person’s ability to hold a conversation with a client. It might require three skills as follows:

1. Starting a conversation: talking to someone about light topics and moving on to more serious ones.
- 2) Carrying on a conversation: developing into the main topic, elaborating on it and responding to reactions.
- 3) Ending a conversation: letting the other person know you’ve been listening; skillfully closing.

### 2.3 Hard and Soft Data

Hard data and soft data are the pieces of information we need to tell us how well a group or individual is performing.

Hard data includes anything which is scientifically measurable, such as: output figures; sales figures for the group or individual; costs and waste levels; absences; number of complaints; staff turnover levels.

Soft data includes anything which is gathered as opinion, view, or motivational factor, such as: attitude towards the job; attitude towards the organisation; confidence in oneself or the company; new ideas; suggestions; loyalty.

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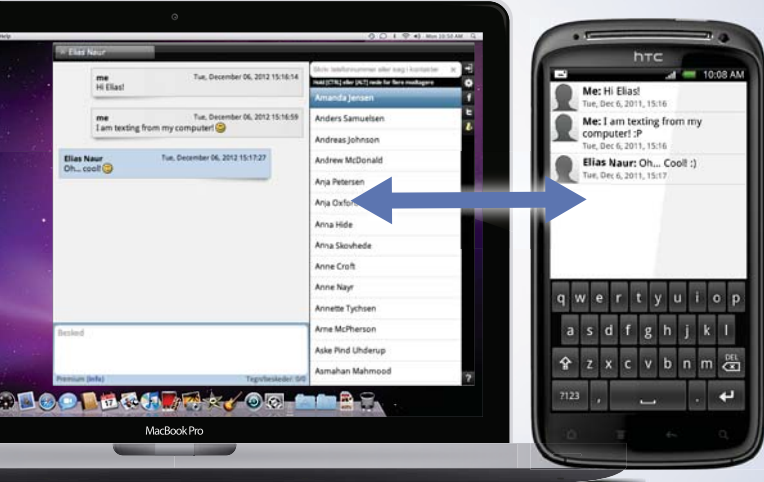
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### 2.3.1 Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisals are one of the best ways to identify needs which training might meet. Performance appraisals can be carried out on a regular periodic basis, for example, annually and bi-annually, or as feedback immediately after a critical incident or key performance of a skill (eg a negotiation with suppliers). Appraisals can be based on assessing skills, identifying whether an agreed target was met or deciding the level at which a standard is being performed. Appraisals can be carried out by manager, employee or both together. The aim of an appraisal is to identify where there are gaps in performance and to agree how the gap can be filled. Training must be regarded as one of the possible ways to fill these gaps.

### 2.3.2 Why Do Your Staff Fail?

In 1970, Rowland surveyed 4000 managers about the performance of the people in their teams. To the question “Why do your staff fail?”, he received the following answers:

1. they don't know what they're supposed to be doing
2. they don't know how to do it
3. they don't know why they should do it
4. there are obstacles beyond their control
5. they think their way is better
6. they lack motivation or skills or time
7. they have the wrong priorities
8. they think they are doing well
9. poor management
10. personal problems
11. they don't think it will work.

While training is a solution to some of these answers, others can only be addressed by the way people are managed.

## 2.4 Planning Training

A typical employee in a typical organisation is likely to undergo 5 kinds of training in the course of his or her employment. These are:

1. induction, usually on joining the organisation and on promotion and transfers;
2. on-the-job training to acquire knowledge of procedures and to practice skills;
3. personal development in which latent skills are encouraged so that performance moves from average to good or excellent;
4. personal learning, which is the learning that takes place around the present job and prepares the employee for the next job;
5. organisation-led training for all employees in the group based on the changing needs of the business.

## 2.5 Induction

When new recruits or transferred employees join an organisation or department, their motivation is usually very high. If this is then combined with an understanding of how the organisation operates and the skills to carry out the job, the potential exists for a powerful fusion of knowledge, skills and attitude: the trademark of the high performer. Induction programmes are often standardised throughout an organisation, combining perhaps a tour of different departments, meeting key people who will be colleagues, customers and suppliers, whilst all along being gently exposed to the job. Inductions can start with the manager outlining the training programme, followed up with informal chats during the induction and finishing with an end-of-induction review.

## 2.6 On-the-Job Training

It is sometimes assumed that, after an initial period on the job, people will pick things up, often from colleagues: a practice traditionally known as “sitting by Nellie”. The danger of this hit-and-miss approach is that people will learn incorrect habits. Hit-and-miss learning on the job can be overcome by planning and structuring the training into five steps:

1. keep an eye on new staff and give them a planned programme of targets to reach until they are up to standard
2. use laid-down standards that have been verified, eg NVQ's
3. if necessary, demonstrate skills on a one-to-one basis
4. put trainees with experienced and trained staff
5. give regular feedback on how trainees are doing.

## 2.7 Coaching, Mentoring, Facilitating

There are 3 unofficial training roles which people can perform, even to colleagues and workmates:

a. mentoring: a mentor is someone who assumes an advisory and helping role towards a trainee, often from a position of influence. It is like taking someone under their wing.

- coaching: a coach is someone who can identify the individual skills a person has and doesn't yet have. He or she will hone and improve the existing skills while finding ways to help the trainee develop new skills.
- facilitating: a facilitator is someone who helps a trainee help themselves. Through support and questioning, the facilitator guides trainees to work things out for themselves.

## 2.8 Attitude Training

When the block to performance lies in an individual or group's attitude, there may be a need to effect a change through attitude training. In the organization as a whole, this is sometimes the same as undergoing a change in culture. In attitude training, the problem is often regarded as a symptom of “the pike syndrome”.

If pike are placed in a fish tank and separated from their prey - the minnows - by a glass screen, they will attempt to reach the minnows by repeatedly banging their heads against the glass. Eventually, they will realise the futility of what they are doing and give up. If the glass screen is then removed, the pike will no longer swim near the minnows. They have become conditioned to the presence of a glass divide that stops them believing things can be different from the way they were.

The same may be true when people need to change their ways of seeing things as a result of cultural change. This kind of training has a large emphasis on attitude training.

## 2.9 Ongoing Training

In the continuous learning organisation, training is ubiquitous: it is everywhere. Part of the ongoing approach to learning means delivering both “run of play” training and “set piece” training. “Run of play” learning is ongoing learning which is the responsibility of team leaders and includes team-building work; problem-solving; project work; and development activities. Set pieces are the special events which are likely to be run by specialists with the support of managers and include seminars, workshops, and courses.

## 2.10 Evaluating Training

The final step in the cycle of managing training is to evaluate the whole process: aims, plans and delivery.

The evaluation of training has four faces:

Face 1: the evaluation by the trainer of how well the trainee is progressing, ie feedback on performance.

Face 2: the evaluation by the trainee and trainee’s manager of how good the training is, ie customer satisfaction.

Face 3: the evaluation of how well training off-the-job has transferred to performance on-the-job.

Face 4: the evaluation of how much training has contributed towards approaching the organisation’s efficiency and effectiveness goals.

It is tempting to run a training course for your staff in the latest theory or trend. But if it has no relevance to what people or the business need, then it is a waste of time. That’s why everything you do in training should be measured, quantified and determined by the training management cycle.

## 2.11 Key Points

1. Training is managed when training is given to meet an identified goal.
2. A training need arises when the difference between current performance and desired performance can be bridged by some form of training.
3. Not all problems of under-performance can be resolved through training.
4. In many organisations, training is an intermittent activity, done to people; in learning organisations it is a constant activity, done by people.
5. A manager performs a training role if he or she helps people learn how to work better.
6. Before people are able to learn new attitudes, they may have to unlearn old attitudes.

### 3 Models of Learning



The need for effective training in our organizations means that people at all levels and with all backgrounds need to be able to learn and train in a way that results in desired performance. That's why in the workplace, there is no simple shortcut to transferring learning. There is, however, a range of learning models that will point the way.

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### 3.1 Pedagogy

The Greeks called teacher-centred learning models “pedagogy” from their words “paidos” meaning “boy” and “agogos” meaning “to lead”, ie leading children. Much of child learning in our schools is pedagogic, being based on a dominant teacher and dependent learner. Any training that is one-way communication from an all-knowing coach to a receptive learner, such as induction training for a new start, is pedagogic.

### 3.2 Androgogy

In contrast to pedagogy, which means “leading children”, androgogy comes from the Greek “andro” meaning “men and women” and means “leading adults”. This model of learning is trainee, not trainer, centred. It assumes an equal relationship between trainer and trainee. Most soft skills training relies on this kind of approach to learning.

#### 3.2.1 Centres of Learning

There is an ongoing debate amongst educationalists as to the merits of teacher-centred and trainee-centred learning.

David Warwick describes how he put the two theories to the test when he was a school-teacher in Bristol. One group of children were taught using the teacher-led approach which included whole group learning and learning by rote. Another group were taught using the trainee-led approach which included lots of experiential learning with the teacher as support. At the end of the course, both groups were tested. Those who were formally taught did better than the informally-taught group. However, when they were re-tested nine months later, the “taught” group had forgotten nearly everything, whereas the “experiential” learners remembered more than three quarters.

### 3.3 Experiential Learning

David Kolb has developed a model of learning based on learning consciously from experience. There are four stages in Kolb’s model:

1. doing, ie undergoing the experience itself.
2. thinking about the experience.
3. reflecting on the experience and devising a model that might work for us next time.
4. testing these conclusions to see if we are right.

### 3.4 Behaviour Modelling

Research has found that Behaviour Modelling is the most effective learning model for acquiring new skills. There are 4 steps in the process.

1. list the key behaviours in the task
2. find someone who already performs these tasks well as a role model
3. get trainees to do lots of practice using the role models as mentors
4. provide constructive feedback so that good skills are reinforced and not-so-good skills are corrected.



### 3.5 Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard Graduate School, has argued that, contrary to the idea that intelligence is comparative, ie some of us are more intelligent than others, people have in fact different intelligences from one another, each of which is equally valid as a means of learning about the world.

Gardner describes seven distinct intelligences:

- Visual
- Kinaesthetic or doing
- Intrapersonal or personal
- Interpersonal or working with others
- Mathematical or scientific
- Auditory or sounds
- Linguistic or step by step.

Each of these offers a different way to teach as well as learn.

### 3.6 Learning New Material

Research in California by Florence Desai, Deanna Sagar and Michael Miller has discovered that people fall into three categories when they come to learn new material.

- there are those who like to learn the concept first. These people are keen to discuss the thinking behind the material and get a model in their heads.
- there are those who like to understand the structure first. These people like to see where bits of learning fit in to the overall picture.
- there are those who like to work out what use can be made of the material first.

### 3.7 Instruction

The instructing model of learning is based on transferring skills from a person who possesses them (the instructor) to a person who doesn't (the learner). There are ten steps in the model:

1. Check what the learner already knows and can do.
2. Check the environment is suitable.
3. Define the purpose of the instruction session.
4. Break the session down into manageable bits.
5. Instruct in a suitable style.
6. Check they understand.
7. Get them to show they understand.
8. Give them time to practise.
9. Check if there are any problems.
10. Reinforce and praise.

### 3.8 Coaching

The word “coach” derives from university slang for a private tutor, having been borrowed from “stagecoach”, a means to get you somewhere quickly. Coaching skills are an essential add-on for managers who want to develop their staff. They are based on three important abilities:

1. being able to spot the potential in others
2. setting appropriate tasks that build on and develop people’s strengths and talents
3. offering tips, advice, suggestions, feedback and unwavering belief in others’ ability.

A key coaching technique is to encourage positive skills through praise and valuable feedback.

#### 3.8.1 The STEER Coaching Model

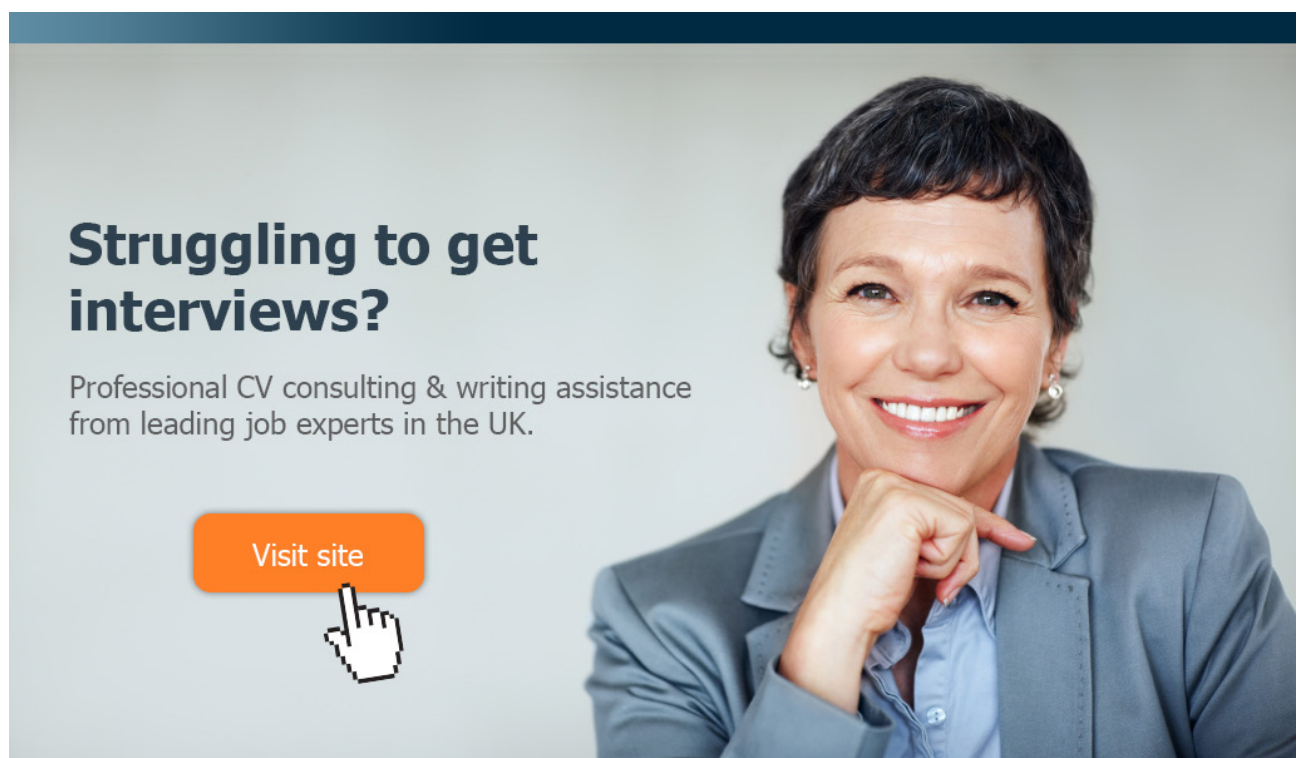
STEER is a mnemonic for coaching someone where you, as coach, take the lead role. It consists of the following 5 steps: S for Spot the need or opportunity. This may be because you see someone doing something they need help with or because they ask you for help.

T for Tailor the intervention to suit the coachee. This means knowing how to adjust your help so that the person will be interested, attentive and receptive. You can only do this by knowing their situation and needs.

E for Explain and demonstrate how the task can be done. Short sessions usually work better than long.

E for Encourage them while they practise. Give coachees plenty of time and space to work things out as they go.

R for Review if they haven’t grasped things yet or Reinforce if they have.



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### 3.8.2 The GROW Coaching Model

GROW is a mnemonic for coaching someone where you, as coach, work closely with the coachee's own needs and aspirations. It could be used as the structure for a coaching discussion. It consists of 4 steps:

G stands for Goals and answers the question, "What do you want to achieve?"

R stands for Reality and answers the questions, "Where are you now?", "Why are you stuck?", "What can't you do?"

O stands for Options and answers the questions, "What could you do next?", "What are the options?", "What might work?"

W stands for Wrap Up (or Way Forward) and answers the questions, "What would you like to try out?", "Where to next then?", and "What help do you need?"

Unlike STEER, GROW gets the coachee to do all the thinking and decision-making.

### 3.8.3 Puppy Dog Training

Praise and reinforcement are key elements in getting trainees to do what you want. It is also applicable to animal training.

"Next comes the vexed question as to what one should do when a puppy makes a puddle on the floor. Some people advise rubbing his nose in it. What a wicked idea!

Should the puppy make a puddle, catch him, show him what he has done, and scold him resoundingly by your tone of voice, then immediately take him to his usual spot. This usual spot is a vital link in the training chain. The puppy gets to connect that spot with his jobs and associations are made.

If, after puddling the floor, you put him out and he does it again outside, praise him fervently and with great love in your voice." (Barbara Woodhouse: "Dog Training, My Way")

## 3.9 Mentoring

In Homer's Iliad, Mentor was the appointed guardian of Telemachus, son of Ulysses, king of Troy. While Ulysses was away from Troy, seeking the Golden Fleece, Mentor was responsible for preparing the boy for his later role as king. In organisational terms, a mentor is someone who takes a less experienced person under their wing. They act as father, or mother, figure: listen; offer suggestions and alternatives; give learning nudges which they think might help; and open doors to valuable and stretching experiences. In studies in the United States, working with a mentor was found to be the most successful route to gaining promotion.

### 3.10 Self-Programming

One of the important principles of modern approaches to adult training is that each of us has the resources within us to produce the states we want. We are each capable of being relaxed, outgoing, interesting and friendly - perhaps when we are with family and friends - so not being these things when, say, we are giving a presentation to a group of board members, is not a question of lack of resource, but a lack of self-programming. Self-programming means summoning up the required resources from within us and applying them to desired situations. It is a way of training, or conditioning, ourselves and can be managed by either going inside ourselves to produce the desired state, or adapting a desired state from external sources.

### 3.10.1 From Inside Out

June was having problems with her new boss. She found it hard to feel confident with him. She blushed, stammered and became confused. Using self-training, June was able to change her state and her behaviour.

- first, June sat down and thought about the state she wanted to be in which was calm and confident
- then, June thought of times when she was calm and confident: for example when meeting with her old boss
- June next summoned up the physiological state she was in when calm: how she sat, moved, spoke; the pace of her voice; the words she used, the thoughts in her head
- she then pictured the new situation and decided that meeting face to face with her boss would be a trigger for becoming calm and confident
- on the next few occasions, June consciously practised the technique until she had successfully re-programmed herself.

### 3.10.2 From Outside In

Programming from outside in means adopting the visible patterns of behaviour of people who already do what we want to do and making them our own.

Ronnie couldn't understand why some members of the team were less effective than others until he noticed the way the team reacted at the weekly work review meetings. When the more effective members were given a tough job to do, they said "Thanks", smiled and looked enthusiastic. When their less effective colleagues were given the same jobs, they muttered "I'll try" and looked downcast. From then on, Ronnie tried "Thanks", a smile and a look of enthusiasm and found that gradually his work became more effective.

In modern organizations, it is not enough to have one kind of training with one kind of learning. The need for different kinds of skills is too great. That's why the more resourceful you are in helping people learn, the more successful the person will be and so will their team and organization.

## 3.11 Key Points

1. In the current learning revolution, new models of learning are necessary.
2. In many forms of training, trainee-based learning is far more effective than trainer-based learning.
3. The experiential learning model is a way to understand how we learn in our everyday lives through trial and error.
4. People who learn by experience retain information and skills for a longer period than those who are spoon-fed.
5. Skill learning cannot be successful without lots of guided practice.
6. Every person has an intelligence of some sort but not everyone has the same kind.

## 4 Designing Training

Designing a training course requires the mixing of a large number of ingredients. We need to think about what inputs will bridge the performance gap; we need to find trainers who are both knowledgeable and able to deliver their knowledge well; we need to know what will interest the trainees; we need to know what results the organisation is looking for. And when we've designed our programme, we need to be ready to jettison it entirely if it is clear that we need to do something entirely different instead.

### 4.1 Matching

There can never be absolute certainty that the training needs you identify in a person or group will definitely be solved by the choice of training. Even if you could design a perfect match between needs and solutions a person may still be unwilling to learn, in which case the match would fail.

- if a person need leadership skills, is it better to send her on an outward-bound course to climb mountains or have a series of chats with the Managing Director?
- if a person needs confidence-building, is it better to send him on an Assertiveness course or coach him after each key encounter?
- if a person needs business skills, is it better to send her on a 3-week Management Development course or arrange for a secondment at one of the smaller units?



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## 4.2 Training Objectives

There is a difference between the direction of a course and targets. Direction is the way in which we want learning to go; eg “the aim of the course is to achieve a better understanding of the new telephone system.” Targets are the positive, specific, measurable outcomes which we would expect a person to achieve in a given time, say, at the end of the training; eg “at the end of the training, trainees will be able to use the three main recall functions of the telephone system.”

## 4.3 Planning a Course

When designing a training session, it is helpful to think of the different needs that trainees will have. These can be described according to the hierarchy of needs of psychologist Abraham Maslow’s model. They are:

1. basic needs: rooms, toilets, breaks, snacks, meals, expenses, pay, rewards, pens and paper
2. security needs: relaxed; open; confidential; low stress; healthy; safe; no surprises, no threats
3. social needs: the mix of people in the group; how well people are likely to get on; informal relationships; the relationship with the trainer
4. recognition needs: the opportunities for the group and individuals to do good work and be praised
5. actualisation needs: the deeper meaning the event has for the individual and his or her development.

## 4.4 Thinking about Trainees

The trainees on a course are your raw material as well as your customers. You need to get to know them well. Some of the things you need to think about are the size of the group, their background, experience, level of intelligence and current jobs; any differences in status, gender, and age; the reasons trainees believe they are present: to learn or to be punished or as a reward?; their motivation and level of anxiety; what they expect to get out of the course.

## 4.5 Planning the Content

Every person who gets involved in planning training knows that no matter how well a course is prepared, it rarely goes exactly to plan. A course should have its own momentum developing in response to the needs of trainees.

This is how to keep a plan alive:

- break the job down into manageable training chunks
- sequence them in the most logical order
- prioritise the content into what is essential, desirable and nice to learn; concentrate on what is essential
- constantly ask yourself how the content and what you are doing helps to achieve the objective
- leave room for intuition, improvisation, experimentation and spontaneous fun.

### 4.5.1 Breaking the Job Down

A job or skill can be broken down into the following component parts:

- steps in a sequence
- facts, information, procedures



- helpful knacks and shortcuts
- tips and tricks which others have found useful
- key points to look out for.

Knacks and tips are good ways to remember important information. When novice parachute jumpers take their first practice jumps, they are told to keep their knees together when they land. One way to ensure they do is to imagine a £1 coin wedged between their buttocks.

#### 4.5.2 Knacks and Tips

The following example of how to answer a written customer complaint shows the value of knacks and tips:

1. Read the letter  
Knack: avoid a defensive reaction.
2. Identify the issues  
Tip: take written notes.
3. Pinpoint the problem  
Trick: sift out the problem from the moans.
4. Check your procedures  
Tip: check with someone who knows.
5. Decide on your reply  
Knack: see it from their point of view.
6. Draft the reply  
Tip: use a tone of courtesy.
7. Proof-read the letter before sending it  
Tip: Be prompt.

#### 4.5.3 Sequencing

The order in which the material in a training course is presented depends on the choices you make about the following options:

- concept or experience? Some trainers prefer to outline theory first and then practise it; others prefer practise first and then theory.
- familiar or unfamiliar? A course can move from known to unknown territory or start with unknown material and seek connections.
- easy or difficult? A course can progress from what is easy to what is difficult, or throw trainees in at the deep end first.
- big picture or steps? A course can tantalisingly build up like a jigsaw puzzle bit by bit; or it can show the big picture first and then break it down.

## 4.6 A Good Exercise

There are many criteria for designing a good training exercise. First of all, it should have a learning objective that relates to the material given and can be transferred back to the job, for example a role play for a skill. Secondly, there should be one overt outcome that trainees recognise and one covert outcome that they are not aware of but which helps them learn. Thirdly, the exercise should stretch the trainees just beyond where they are now so that it provides the motivation to succeed.

## 4.7 The Best Environment

The right kind of environment for an effective training session is one which is open, relaxed and friendly. One way to do this when trainees first arrive in the training room is to play soft background music and place colourful wall posters, perhaps with energising quotes, in appropriate places around the room. Fresh-cut flowers can also be used.

Sometimes, there is little choice over your training venue. In this case, it is the arrangement of seating that creates the feel you want. In small groups of up to 12, horse-shoe shaped seating circles create more openness and interaction than desk seating. It also allows the trainer to sit with the group rather than apart from them.

## 4.8 Management Support

The support of management in running training sessions can be a valuable bonus or a serious constraint depending on which of the five levels you get:

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1. Bless this course. The manager allows the course to go ahead but doesn't attend, ("No need to. I know all that stuff.")
2. Ceremonial kick-off. The manager is there at the start but then goes away.
3. Encouragement from a distance. The manager gives apparent support to the course but keeps well away, perhaps citing pressure of work.
4. Welcome back. The manager recognises the changes in staff when they return, coaches them personally and reinforces the learning points from the course.
5. Lead by example. The manager attends the course, delivers some of the programmes and is available throughout the course for advice and support.

## 4.9 Administration

Running a training event smoothly includes planning the out-of-course administrative work. This covers three areas:

1. Contact: Contact with trainees before a course can involve nomination and billing; sending out joining arrangements; and notifying trainees of pre-course work.
2. Materials: Materials for a course might run to: handouts; overheads; photocopies for each trainee; equipment; stationery.
3. Course administration: Course administration means checking on arrivals, late attenders, absentees; meal and refreshment arrangements; record of attendance or performance; and sending out certificates at the end.

All of the work you do on designing a training course is based on your assessment that the material, the exercises, and the group interactions will help bridge the gap between current and desired performance. But you can never be sure it will. That's why you should be ready to re-design what you do if a better approach arises as you go.

# 5 Running a Course

Running a training programme involves the trainer as organiser and programme deliverer. As organiser, you have to plan and control. As programme deliverer, you have to be presenter, expert and entertainer. When you plan, aim to cover each minute of the day but not so tightly that you squeeze out spontaneity. When you control, bear in mind that you are the person in charge with the power to give people the space they need to grow.

## 5.1 Pre-Course Contact

There are practical reasons for making pre-course contact with trainees, for example to let people know where and when the course is to take place.



There are also good training reasons:

- you may need to check that the course is right for the trainee
- you may want to find out more about the trainees themselves
- you may want to hand out pre-course work, such as a pre-course test, a self-assessment questionnaire or work related to the topic itself eg doing a time log before a Time Management course
- you may want to let the trainees know what they can gain from attending
- you may want to set a friendly, welcoming and positive tone as soon as possible.

### 5.1.1 Dear Trainee...

A pre-course letter or email, such as the following, puts course participants in the right frame of mind.

Dear Jill,

We look forward to seeing you on our forthcoming course on “Customer Care”.

Front-liners are often the forgotten troops in large organisations. They sometimes have to face difficult, unsure or even angry customers alone, knowing that they are the sole representatives of the Company and knowing that customer satisfaction depends entirely on them.

This is a demanding and vital role. Our course aims to help you deal with these challenges and remind you also of the many benefits. We are certain you will find it interesting, valuable and stimulating.

All the joining details are enclosed. Please let me know if you have any queries or concerns. I’m here to help.

I look forward to meeting you soon.

### 5.1.2 Before You Arrive...

A note such as the following can be included in pre-course handouts for each trainee. It sets a positive tone as well as dealing with practical issues.

- “Before you come to the course,
- check the details of the course such as date and location and make a note of them in your diary
- inform others who need to know about your absence
- check the joining instructions for pre-course work. Complete the work before you come.
- let us know about any special needs such as access to the building and dietary requirements



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- prepare for the course: discuss the aims with your manager; think about what you want to get out of it
- get a good night's sleep before you come.

And remember, there is no reason why you cannot enjoy yourself on training.”

### 5.1.3 Checking the Room

The following is a checklist of room items you need to look at before running a course:

- is there sufficient space for groups to work as a whole and also in sub-groups?
- is the seating comfortable?
- are the acoustics good?
- is there adequate heating, lighting and ventilation?
- are there any distracting external noises?
- where are the toilets?
- ...and the phones?
- does the building have access for everyone including those with disabilities?
- do you know the fire evacuation plans?
- is there somewhere safe for people to leave their belongings?

### 5.1.4 Checking Your Materials

The following is a checklist of materials you might need to run a training course:

- paper, pads, notebooks
- pens, pencils, markers
- handouts, overheads, flipcharts
- name cards or badges
- video recorder, TV, camera
- first-aid for presenters (eg spare bulbs for projectors; screwdrivers to change plugs; screws, nails, tape)
- blu-tack, scissors, glue, cellotape
- box of tricks containing spare material such as string, paper clips, post-it notes, lined paper, 3" x 5" cards, coloured card, felt pens, rubbers.

## 5.2 Introductions

The course introduction has both surface and sub-surface learning. On the surface, the Introduction introduces people to each other, breaks the ice, discusses expectations, outlines rules and roles, gives the course aims, offers an overview and deals with administrative matters. Under the surface of the Introduction, trainees should be learning that this is a safe environment in which to be, that people will be valued for who they are and that this is a course for the trainees and not for the trainer.



### 5.3 Dealing with Anxiety

While anxiety is high, trainees will find their potential to learn is blocked. Energy that should be channelled into learning is diverted into self-protection and self-preservation. The caring trainer needs to take steps to reduce the level of anxiety in the group. This could include making a contract that removes fears, eg no testing, no reports, no spying; building trainees' confidence through positive feedback; and helping trainees to identify, face and overcome the source of their anxiety as a learning experience.

### 5.4 Knowledge, Skills or Motivation?

The material you present on a course will be determined by what you need your trainees to learn. If there is factual information that they need to know, you may decide to present the material in lecture format. However, you can also find innovative and imaginative ways to present information that requires trainees to actively seek the information out. If your trainees are learning new skills, you will need to give them plenty of simulations and practise. If the training is about changing attitudes, such as a change programme, you will spend more of the course on group interaction and discussions.

#### 5.4.1 Presentations

At some point during a training session, people will usually expect to be on the receiving end of new information given in the form of a presentation. Since trainees are inevitably passive when listening to a presentation, it is important to observe the Golden Rules of presenting:

Rule 1: Keep it short and simple (KISS). Most people lose attention after about 15 minutes at one stretch.

Rule 2: Stick to one big idea and lots of supporting material in the form of anecdotes, stories and humour.

Rule 3: Work out in advance how people will be able to remember your points, for example, by using a mnemonic.

Rule 4: Vary your presentation with visual aids; make them fun, colourful and entertaining.

Rule 5: Develop a slick pace through thorough preparation and rehearsal.

### 5.5 Feedback

Groupwork provides an opportunity for experiential learning. For maximum benefit, it should consist of some doing by everyone; some conceptualising; some experimenting; some reflection; and some discussion. Reflection and discussion are aided by constructive feedback. You can give constructive feedback yourself but it is much better to train trainees to give their own feedback to themselves and their teammates.

### 5.6 Breaks

Breaks are an essential ingredient in the structure of effective training courses. They offer people the chance to relax, discuss what they have learnt in a less formal setting and have a change of pace. The value of an in-course break is increased if you offer people the chance to do something completely different from what they've just been doing: for example, physical exercise after a discussion or relaxation after demanding mental work.

## 5.7 Review

Regular review of learning material helps to summarise the key points and send it from short-term memory to long-term memory. Review can be most effective at the start of a new session, a new day or an afternoon. It can be carried out by the trainer with the whole group, by small groups or by pairs.

During the Second World War, Kurt Lewin was commissioned to find ways in which housewives could eat less meat. He studied two groups. Group one received a lecture on the benefits of meatless eating for the war effort. Group two received a lecture plus a discussion and a review. When Lewin followed up, he found that only 3% of group one were eating less meat, whereas 32% of group two were, a ten-fold increase in retention.

## 5.8 Endings

Just as the introduction phase leads people into a course, so the Ending phase leads people out. They are like bridges to and from the workplace. The Ending phase needs to be planned so that there is enough time for winding down mentally and emotionally. It can include a quiet time for personal review, a summary of material, tests and assessments of what has been learnt and action plans for implementing new behaviour back at work.

Running a training course requires the wearing of a number of hats. Before the course, you are a promoter, consultant, and designer. During the course, you are presenter, coach, and facilitator. And after the course, you are evaluator, assessor, and administrator.

## 5.9 Key Points

1. Making pre-course contact with trainees is courteous and deals with practical issues.
2. Before a course begins, you should check the room and your materials.
3. The welcome and introductions to a course send messages at a conscious and sub-conscious level.
4. In the early stages of a course, rapport is built when you move and speak at the pace of the group.
5. Discussing how to do something is no substitute for practising how to do it.
6. A useful combination is to practise first and then give the theory.

# 6 The Process of Training

Although each trainer brings his or her own individual style to the training room, there are areas which are common to the process of all learning. These include the creation of a relaxed climate; good communication with every trainee; checking that things are going as planned; confidence that everyone will learn; and a genuine caring for the learning process.

## 6.1 Climate

Studies show that as many as four-fifths of people lack confidence in their chances of being successful learners. The proportions are even higher for women. If the training climate is additionally hostile, stressful and emphasises passing and failing, then these levels of self-esteem will plummet even further. A successful training climate needs to be relaxed; alert; stress-free; supportive; and safe. You should reward success and make light of failure. Don't make the learning difficult; train as if your trainees already knew the information but had simply forgotten it.

## 6.2 Communications

Communicating with your trainees is not about lecturing them. It is about making points of contact with them. Here are a few of these points of contact:

- Appearance: look the part; dress the part; be immaculately groomed; dress like the best of your trainees.
- Body language: your body language is the way you consistently communicate your interest in your trainees. Send them signals that you're at ease.
- Words: use words that are short, direct, active and concrete.
- Contact: learn their names quickly and use them.
- Assertiveness: being assertive means showing you like being who you are and where you are.
- Response-ability: take responsibility when trainees make points: listen, understand, respond.
- Risks: be prepared to show them that you're a learner too by taking a few risks.
- Sense of humour: this is always a point of contact.

## 6.3 Care

Jack Canfield carried out a study of "a day in the life" of 100 schoolchildren. He found that for every positive and caring word spoken to the children, 76, there were more than six times as many negative and discouraging ones, 470. Learning is not a comfortable process for any of us: it takes courage by the learners and caring by the learning providers. You will make a huge difference if you replace every critical and judgmental expression with a positive and caring one. "Your trainees won't care how much you know, unless they know how much you care."

## 6.4 Child-Like Environments

Until we reach school, our natural curiosity, unbounded enthusiasm and excitement to learn know no bounds. It results in a child of six having what educationalist Bobby de Porter says are: “more bits of learning in place than are needed to gain a medical degree.” Sadly, most of this stops when we are exposed to the restrictive approaches to learning of the traditional classroom with its “musts”, “don’ts” and “shoulds”. To re-discover our natural ability to learn freely, we need to make training environments more like our pre-school world: playful, uninhibited, curious, with no concept of “pass” or “fail”, wholly engaged, joyful, fun and low threat.

## 6.5 Choreography

Experienced trainers see a training event like a dance. There are slow parts and quick parts; parts for solos, parts for pairs and parts for ensembles. This is known as the choreography of the course or “spatial marking”. The choreography of a course is much more than just your body language. It is a subtle way of sending messages to your trainees and signals of how they should respond.

## 6.6 Confidence

Nobody ever learnt how to do anything by being shown what they were doing wrong. For people to learn they must be shown the right way and given confidence. If you are aware that you train by saying “that’s not right”, “don’t do this” and “don’t do that”, take the negatives out and replace them with positive models: “try it this way” or “that’s right!” or “Well done!”.

## 6.7 Congruence

Congruence is the state of being in alignment with what and how you are training. It means that when you state a point of view you also act in accordance with it. Trainers who run Assertiveness courses should be confident, act positively and talk with respect. Trainers who run Time Management courses should start on time, be well-organised and finish on time. Trainers who run Communication skills courses should know how to get on with people at all levels. This does not mean being perfect supermodels of your subject; rather being prepared to be a learner yourself.

Whether we like it or not, those we train learn as much from us in how we are as they do from what we tell them. They observe us, note how relaxed we are with the topic, and remember how we look and act. In the process of training, the trainer is the role model.

## 6.8 Key Points

1. You should teach people as if they already knew what you were telling them.
2. People bring both positive expectations and negative fears to learning.
3. You communicate best in learning situations when you use short, clear and direct language.
4. Stop yourself from using critical and judgmental language and use positive and constructive language instead.
5. Since the best learning environment took place when we were pre-school children, we need to re-create that environment in the training room.
6. You help people to learn by telling them what to do not what not to do.

# 7 Groupwork and Training

Groupwork is an essential feature of effective training courses. Groupwork enables people to learn from one another; it enables workplace situations to be simulated; and is the forum in which we test our views, gather new information and practise our skills.

## 7.1 The Potential in Groupwork

Every experience of groupwork has the potential to teach your trainees three things:

- a) How to successfully complete the set task
- b) how to work together with others
- c) how to learn something about themselves.

To achieve all three objectives, you will need to plan the task, the composition of the team, and how the exercise is run. This means giving the group a challenging, relevant, and motivating task; observing interactions in the group and reflecting your observations back; and allowing trainees time for reflection afterwards.



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## 7.2 Icebreakers

Icebreakers are group exercises which unfreeze hostile climates. They are short, easy to apply and can change the pace and energy level of the group. The following 3 icebreakers can serve as alternatives to personal “round-the-room” introductions:

- a) Snapshot: the whole group draws a group self-portrait on a flipchart, adding their names and comments
- b) Normally: each trainee describes what they would normally be doing if they weren't on the course
- c) Same, same: trainees jot down five things about themselves, and then go and find other people in the group who share the same characteristics.

### 7.2.1 Quickie Icebreakers

Quickies are icebreaker exercises which act as fill-ins, quick review sessions, or activities to change the pace of a course. Here are five Quickies:

1. Hot ball A to Z: trainees throw a hot-ball (woolly ball), from person to person. When someone catches the ball, they say a word connected with the course themes, moving from A to Z.
2. Spot running: run on the spot for a few minutes.
3. Seat change: everyone changes seats so that they are not next to anyone they've already sat beside.
4. Graffiti chart: the group put any comments about how they feel right now on a graffiti flipchart.
5. Mountain call: the group split into four and stand in the four corners of the room. From here they take turns to call out a course theme as if they were calling from a mountain top.

### 7.2.2 Relaxing Icebreakers

Relaxers are group exercises that slow the pace and allow people to relax. They can be combined with visualisation exercises to carry out quiet reviews of course material. Here are 2 good relaxing exercises.

**Feathers.** Sit quietly, close your eyes and imagine that you can see a white feather falling gently in front of you against a clear blue sky. As the feather descends, you unwind and your muscles gradually lose their rigidity. When the feather eventually touches the ground, you are completely relaxed.

**The Classical Rose.** Sit quietly, close your eyes and imagine a red rose in your mind's eye. At the start it is a closed bud, but gradually each petal opens. As the petals open, you unwind and your muscles relax. Eventually, the rose is fully open and you are completely at ease.

## 7.3 The Group Exercise

The Group Exercise is the basic format for all groupwork. It consists of the following steps:

1. Set the whole group as individuals a task eg “How can the company improve customer service?”
2. Now split the group into teams of 4 or 5.
3. Instruct the teams to go into their own space and discuss their ideas. At the end of, say, 25 minutes, they must record their views on a flipchart.

4. Before they return to present their views, the teams must also agree a team name, and decide how they will present their views using everyone in the team.
5. Teams return and present their views.
6. The whole group discusses both the team's views and how each team worked as a team.

## 7.4 Role Play

Group role play exercises offer the chance to practise skills and responses in situations which imitate those in the workplace. Only use role plays if there is a high level of trust in the group. Take turns in selecting roles and always use an observer with a list of key skills to look out for. In groups that feel confident, you can video the role play and use this as the basis for feedback. "Ghost-cards" can also be slipped to participants in a role play, such as "stop listening" or "get angry" or "make it difficult", to change the situation.

## 7.5 Building the Team

Every time you run a group exercise, you have the opportunity to build the team as a unit. For example, if the group energy is slow and sluggish, you might want to devise a teambuilding game in which members of the group have to complete a task by working together. A simple way to do this is by taking any item such as a relevant piece of writing or object, breaking it down into its component parts, each of which you give to a member of the group and then getting the group to put things back together again. Other teambuilding games include competitions, problem-solving exercises, and outdoor adventure exercises such as abseiling and climbing.

## 7.6 Team Games

Team games are sometimes used as set-pieces or grand finales to courses. They work best when teams have become established, have high levels of openness and trust and people are ready to mix work and fun. Classic team games include conveying an object across the training room without touching the floor or building an object from limited materials without dropping anything. The role of the trainer during a team game is to explain the task clearly; act as observer and recorder of how the teams work; and lead de-briefing sessions to bring out key skills such as teamwork, organisation, and leadership.

### 7.6.1 The Sigma Ray Emitter

The following are instructions for an Outdoor training exercise in a location close to the training centre:

Your team are members of an emergency bomb disposal unit. Two boys have just discovered a brown box nearby which has been identified as a highly dangerous sigma ray emitter. One of the boys touched it and is now critically ill in hospital. Your task is to find the device and bring it back to this base before it goes critical in 40 minutes.

You cannot touch the device without having to immediately retire for medical treatment. Nor can you approach within a metre of the emitter or drop it to the ground during recovery.

Metal, wood and rope may be used without fear of conducting the dangerous rays.

Hurry! There is no time to lose. (Thanks to BACIE)



## 7.7 Team Performance

A “Team Performance” exercise is one that is decided wholly by the group themselves. It may be the climax of a training course in which the team have reached high levels of groupworking. Examples of team performances include the group’s summary of the course “in a fun and memorable” way and the group using a miming, sound, or visual representation of the course topic. If they are well-timed and well-judged, team performance exercises can be the most empowering exercises of training courses.

When you have the chance to use groupwork on a training course, you free people to become involved in their learning that is not possible when you stand in front of them and lecture them. Groupwork creates a course that is more relaxing and enjoyable, with the added bonus of strengthening the bonds in a workplace team.

## 7.8 Key Points

1. While some group exercises can be planned, the best course exercises arise from awareness of what the group needs now.
2. The value of icebreakers is that they are quick, active and change the mood.
3. Working in a small group can often be less stressful than working in the large group.
4. Role plays are ways of rehearsing for the real thing.
5. A good team exercise forces people to work together in order to get a result.
6. The learning experience is enhanced if the group is given responsibility for how the exercise is to be run.

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# 8 Learning Styles



Educationalists such as Howard Gardner agree that, to maximise the learning that everyone is capable of, more recognition needs to be given to the different styles in which people prefer to receive information. To train in one or two styles only is the overriding reason why many people dislike learning: it does not suit their learning style. Here are 9 learning styles based on the Enneagram personality typology.

## 8.1 The Linguistic Learner

The linguistic style of learning is the learning style favoured by our schools and colleges: the written word. In individuals, it is the style of the Organiser. The Organiser likes to learn in a reasoned, logical and linear pattern. Words enable the Organiser to do this. When an Organiser is trainer, courses have clear aims, plans, and inputs. Organisers tend to speak fluently often as if the material were taken from the pages of a book. Their inputs are neatly structured with beginnings, middles and ends, and hold together well using sequences, steps, diagrams, models and word-games. This is recipe-learning, by the book.

## 8.2 The Interpersonal Learner

The Interpersonal style of learning is based on learning with others and is best represented by Interactors. Interactors learn best when they are with others and invariably check with others on what they are learning. Trainers who are Interactors usually hit it off with their groups straightaway. They find it easy to communicate with any group. They quickly detect the right idiom to use. Feelings flow quickly between an Interactor trainer and their group.

### 8.3 The Modelling Learner

Modelling means learning from others. It is what we do when we learn from our parents as babies and infants. It is also the way we learn when we join a new organisation or group. Adapters prefer to learn by this method. They like to merge into any situation, tune in to what is important to know and do and then adapt this for their own benefit. As trainers, Adapters will often present themselves as the role model that others should follow. They love the attention and admiration this brings.

### 8.4 The Intrapersonal Learner

Intrapersonal learning is reflective and deeply-felt learning. It involves thinking things through to come up with meanings that make sense to you personally. Intrapersonal learners like to discover things that nobody has thought of before: making new connections, finding new ways of seeing, being creative. Intrapersonal trainers never run the same course twice. For them, each session and the people in it present new opportunities for unique experiences.

### 8.5 The Visual Learner

Visual learners are great hoarders of information. Of all the learning types they are the most curious and inquisitive. This is because without a piece of information, the picture of what they are learning may be incomplete. Picturers are endlessly curious both of abstract and actual information. They like to know what's going on and are equally attracted to theory and facts. They are frequent attenders on training courses which they like to attend in case there is some piece of information they haven't yet acquired.

### 8.6 The Mathematical Learner

Those who like mathematical information as a way of learning information are seekers of certainty and authority. On training courses, Mathematical learners like to have the rules spelled out and will always defer to the trainer as authority figure. They are more comfortable with facts and policies than with open-ended subjects and may feel threatened in a facilitative, trainee-centred style of learning. Mathematical trainers are usually more comfortable with hard skills that can be verified than soft skills that can't.

### 8.7 The Kinaesthetic Learner

The kinaesthetic style of learning is learning by doing. It is the starting point on the experiential learning cycle. Kinaesthetic learners are active learners. They touch others to get their attention; stand or sit close to people; are fidgets and doodlers; and need to visit places at first hand to remember them. They like to move through a course at a fast pace, acquiring information and practice as they go. They invariably have a wide range of skills.

### 8.8 The Auditory Learner

Sounds play an important role in learning. Sounds were probably the earliest way we learnt about the world from inside our mother's womb, hearing her heartbeat and the muffled sounds of the world outside. Auditory learners learn by responding to stimuli around them, sounds being the most pervasive of stimuli in our environment. The phone is an important means of connecting. They also enjoy the excitement of discussion and debate, especially if it is loud and argumentative. Auditory learners often like to study with music playing in the background.

## 8.9 The Intuitive Learner

Intuitive learning is learning that is based on an instinctive awareness of what works best in any situation. It is the kind of awareness we describe when we have a gut feeling about something and know that something is right without necessarily having the evidence to prove it. Intuitive learners learn at their own pace, in their own way, in their own time. Much of their learning is the wisdom of the plain-speaker, the commonsense person who sees things as they are without the need for a text-book or theory.

Our preferences for one of the learning styles means that we always like this style when others train or teach us in it. In a mixed group of learners, with different learning styles, the resourceful trainer needs to adapt his or her natural style so that the learning appeals to everyone.

## 8.10 Key Points

1. We train best when we are aware of the different ways in which people learn.
2. A resourceful course is one which uses different styles to meet the different ways in which people learn.
3. Although it is frowned on in children, copying others is an excellent way for adults to learn.
4. One of the best ways to learn is to study the best performers and adapt what they do.
5. When training doesn't work, it's often because the teaching style of the trainer is unmatched with the learning style of the trainees.
6. Imagining yourself performing well gives your brain a blueprint of what you're trying to achieve.

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# 9 The Resourceful Trainer

Trainers, and managers who perform training roles, are often given no more than Cinderella status in organisations. Their tasks are seen as nice add-ons but not essentials. In resourceful organisations with resourceful trainers, the value of these tasks is never under-stated. Their trainers are like gold-dust. For, if you can increase the value of your costliest resource, not only will you reap the business rewards in effectiveness and productivity, but you will have given yourself a vastly-increased capital asset as well.

## 9.1 Barriers to Learning

If you train for any length of time, then it is certain that at some point you will come across problem trainees with barriers to learning. Putting obstacles in the way of learning often arises because people don't want to admit they lack knowledge or skill. They may fear the injury to their self-esteem, particularly in front of others. Such resistance may appear as hostility to the course or trainer, avoidance by claiming that they are too busy to attend, and convincing themselves that they already know "all this stuff". Only by working with others in the organisation, such as line managers, can the resourceful manager break down such barriers.

### 9.1.1 Ignorance, Error and Awkwardness

For learning to occur, a person must admit that they are in one of the following 3 states or conditions: ignorance, error or awkwardness. In other words they are unable to do something smoothly. Most people see these as undesirable states. The first act of successful learning, therefore, is to foster a climate where these states are acceptable and desirable.

"Every act of conscious learning requires the willingness to suffer an injury to one's self-esteem. That is why young children, before they are aware of their own self-importance, learn so easily; and why older persons, especially if vain or self-important, cannot learn at all. Pride and vanity can thus be greater obstacles to learning than stupidity." (Thomas Stasz)

## 9.2 Adapting Your Style

The resourceful trainer is always open to adapting the way they help people learn. For example, if a trainee fails to understand the difference between assertive and aggressive styles of managing others, the resourceful trainer might have the choice to:

- demonstrate
- ask others to demonstrate
- model the behaviours
- use a case study known to the group
- show a video
- speak to the person aggressively then assertively and compare the two styles
- ask the trainee to explain herself further
- sit quietly and see what happens.

### 9.3 Accelerated Learning

Accelerated Learning (AL) was developed in the 1970's by Dr Georgi Lozanov, a professor of psychiatry in Austria who demonstrated that, with certain classroom techniques, students could learn and retain more in less time. Some key Accelerated Learning principles include the following:

- we learn best through all our senses and all our brains (ie the conscious and sub-conscious)
- we learn best when we are motivated and interested
- we learn best when the atmosphere is can-do, successful, and fun
- we learn best when information is put in context.

### 9.4 Triple Vision

Triple vision is the ability of the trainer to move effortlessly into any one of three positions when working with trainees:

Position 1: your position. For example, if you are asked a simple question, you say what you think.

Position 2: their position. In the second position, you step into their shoes and try to understand the question from their point of view: why they want an answer; what they are trying to find out; what difficulty they are having; and so on.

Position 3: neutral. The neutral position is the objective observer. When, for example, you have answered a trainee's question, you can step outside the relationship and observe the reaction.

### 9.5 Planes of Awareness

The resourceful trainer is at ease on all planes of human awareness: the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. There are four physical blocks to learning: tiredness, the need for natural breaks, hunger and discomfort. Build these into your structure and go at the physical pace that most people are comfortable with. The mental plane includes all thinking processes. A good course stimulates people and introduces new ideas. To address people's emotional needs, unblock processes that make people feel bad about themselves, and encourage processes where they feel worthy, wanted, valued, special, important, safe, happy and strong. To foster awareness on the spiritual level, you should encourage the group to develop their own team spirit by encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning and growth.

### 9.6 Surface & Sub-Surface

The training process operates on more than just the surface level. Underneath the programme of lectures, presentations, inputs and exercises, there is a sub-surface level about how people are valued and how resourceful they can be as learners. Resourceful trainers are intuitively aware of these levels. Trainees may forget what you taught but they will remember how you taught.



## 9.7 Empowering Beliefs

The most resourceful trainers are those who are guided by their own empowering beliefs about their role as trainers, the value of the learning process, and the unlimited learning potential of their trainees. Some of these beliefs are that...

- learning is natural not forced, easy not hard
- everyone has all the resources they ever need to learn
- learning is more about what they do than what I do
- drawing their learning out is more important than pouring my learning in
- there are no difficult trainees, only unresourceful trainers.

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.”  
(William Ward)

## 9.8 Key Points

1. A trainer needs to move into a range of roles in response to the needs of a training session.
2. A trainer needs to see things from the point of view of the trainee as well as their own.
3. A group training event operates on different planes of awareness including a physical plane and a spiritual plane.
4. A resourceful trainer knows that there are always different ways to make a learning point.
5. The clever trainer is flexible in their way of handling awkward trainees.
6. The resourceful trainer believes in resourceful trainees.



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# 10 Evaluating Training

It is often easy to forget that the main purpose of training is to change behaviour and performance. We tend to judge a training event on its own merits: did the trainees enjoy the course; did they mix well as a team; were the exercises appropriate and fun; did we spend a good time together; did we get on with the trainer. While these contribute to the learning process, they are not enough by themselves. They are the means to an end. And that end needs to be scrutinised by evaluation.

## 10.1 Assessment

It is important at the end of a course or training event to carry out some kind of assessment. Assessments may be based on people's perceptions or on measured results. If you want to assess how much someone has learnt, compare what they know or can do after the event against what they knew or could do before it. If you want to assess what people thought of their training, ask them their views in a questionnaire. If you want to assess the value of your training to the organisation, use a measured efficiency or effectiveness ratio, for example:  $\text{return on investment} = \text{payback/costs} \times 100\%$ .

## 10.2 Evaluating Performance

There are three ways to evaluate a course: by evaluating the three ingredients of performance: knowledge, skills and attitudes.

1. to evaluate knowledge, test people. Testing knowledge results in a simple "know or doesn't know", pass or fail mark.
2. to evaluate skills, observe people doing the skill, if necessary by breaking it down into sub-skills. This may have to wait until people are back at work.
3. to evaluate attitudes, ask people their views. This can result in a picture of motivation and interest, enthusiasm and self-esteem.

### 10.2.1 Evaluation Techniques

The ultimate measure of success in training is the extent to which people's behaviour changes and with it their performance. In learning organisations, where change is continuous, it may be difficult to measure one change before a new one begins. This is why learning and its evaluation are not just the responsibility of managers and trainers but also of learners themselves.

There are 8 common evaluation techniques:

1. questionnaires to trainees and/or their managers
2. attitude surveys
3. written tests
4. performance tests
5. interviews
6. focus groups
7. observation of critical incidents
8. performance records.

## 10.3 Future Pacing

The transfer of learning to the workplace is often the most difficult step for trainees to accomplish. They need the backing of their management and the opportunity to practise. One of the ways to prepare trainees for transferring skills is Future Pacing. Future pacing means making the link between skills in the training room and skills in the workplace. Up to 10% of a training course should consist of future pacing.

### 10.3.1 Future Pacing Techniques

The following techniques of future pacing can be introduced towards the end of a training programme:

1. Subconscious links. Make a mental link between a skill and the job, eg “Now that you have learned how to listen actively, there are opportunities every day to practise.
2. Embedding. Assume one action takes place, while talking about another, eg “When you are actively listening to the customer, lean slightly forward.”
3. Success stories. Instil the certainty of success, eg “Most people find themselves doing it automatically within a week.”
4. Associating and habit. “Go into active listening mode whenever you meet a new customer.”
5. Owned action plans. Get trainees to identify how they will implement the skills.

## 10.4 Action Planning

A valuable exercise in the latter phase of a training programme is for trainees to identify opportunities when they might be able to use their new skills back in the job. These can form part of their Action Plans.

Action planning does a number of things:

- it forces trainees to make mental transfers of skills from the training room to the workplace
- it helps trainees identify situations where they can practise their new skills
- it helps trainees come out of training mode and return to workplace mode.

“To look is one thing; to see what you look at is another; to understand what you see is a third; to learn from what you understand is still something else; but to act on what you learn is all that really matters.” (Anon)

## 10.5 Measuring Skills

There are three useful techniques to measure how well someone has learnt a new skill:

- evaluating sub-skills: Rackham and Morgan devised a simple evaluation sheet for interpersonal skills. This lists each key skill, eg “proposing ideas” and “building on ideas” and scores the trainee against each one. Any skill can be broken down in this way.
- critical incident report: a critical incident report analyses how trainees perform in an important workplace situation and enables trainers or managers to compare post-training performance with that of pre-training.
- repertory grid analysis: George Kelly devised the repertory grid technique to allow trainees to compare themselves before and after training. The extreme ends of each skill are listed and trainees or their managers rate their performance along the scale.

## 10.6 The Conscious-Competence Ladder

One way to measure the skill learning process is with the “conscious-competence ladder”:

- before training, trainees are blissfully ignorant of their lack of skills: they are “unconsciously incompetent”
- as they learn, they become aware of their incompetence: they become “consciously incompetent”
- with training, they learn the skills but carry them out consciously: they are “consciously competent”
- only when they can perform the skills without thinking does the skill become part of them: they have reached “unconscious competence”.

## 10.7 Practice

Practising a skill is essential in making the learning stick. When we learn new information, our brains set up new connections called “dendrites”. On the first occasion that a new piece of information is learnt, the brain releases a fatty acid called myelin along the connection. Each time the same connection is made after this, more myelin is released until the learning branch is thickly coated. With repeated practice of the learning, the connection becomes easier and easier. This process is known as “myelination” and is the physiological basis for the saying that “practice makes perfect”.

“The beginning of a habit is like an invisible thread, but every time we repeat the act, we strengthen the strand, add to it another filament, until it becomes a great cable and binds us irrevocably thought and act.” (Orison Swett Marden)

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## 10.8 Management Backing

No matter how good the skills of the trainer, no matter how successful the trainee is in the training room, the chances of using new skills in the workplace are low without management support. Studies at the Xerox Corporation show that 87% of any skill change can be lost within two months of a course without any active coaching and motivational support from management. Some of the ways to gain this support include encouraging managers to get involved in the actual training programme; sharing the inputs and discussion forums; and maintaining ongoing relationships after the course is over.

The ultimate measure of success in training is the extent to which people's behaviour changes and with it their performance and that of the team and organisation. By using the key indicators of performance, such as achieving sales, targets, and standards, training can become one of the most important routes to business success.

## 10.9 Key Points

1. Evaluation is essential to close the training cycle and meet the performance needs of individuals and teams.
2. To evaluate knowledge, test people; to evaluate skills, watch them; to evaluate attitudes, talk to them.
3. Up to 10% of a training course should be devoted to transferring skills to the workplace.
4. Every person should commit themselves to some form of action planning at the end of a course.
5. No successful transfer of new skills is possible without the active support of trainees' managers.
6. One way to describe the accomplishment of a skill is when a person reaches unconscious competence in it.

# Web Resources on Training Skills

The following instantly-accessible website resources provide more in-depth information on some of the tips, techniques, and features in this book.

Take the free e-course on Training Skills from ManageTrainLearn here:

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com/products-info/trainingskills-ecourse/>

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Browse through our top 40 Teambuilders and download exactly the teambuilding game that's right for your course here:

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com/product-list/teambuilders>

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