

Leveraging Human Capital: "Developing" vs. "Training"

By Chuck A. Reynolds



Global change is driving the need to improve performance, in order to compete. With respect to the rate of change, former GE CEO, Jack Welch, once said *"If the rate of change outside of an organization (or individual) is greater than the rate of change within it, the end is in sight for that organization."* The question is: **"How do companies and managers improve the performance of their people?"**

Nobody gets in good physical shape with only one visit to the gym. Nobody becomes an excellent golfer with only one golf lesson. Similarly, with respect to improving sales results, or management effectiveness, a single "training" session will not have sustainable impact on performance.

Are you aware that North American organizations spend an estimated \$50 billion annually on performance-related improvement without much measurable job-related results? People development should be an investment vs. an unnecessary expense.

Think about it. Development should cost your organization nothing. It should result in "saving" or "earning" your company revenues or productivity, otherwise why consider it at all? Your objective is to improve performance results, not to spend budgets on the activity of "training". Development is part of the route to taking you there, not the end result.

Some "training" companies or trainers will treat you as if the "training" is the end result. (It made them money but failed to enhance your results) A distinction must be made between "training" and "development". Some companies want to improve results and they turn to a "trainer" to get them.

The trainer then proposes a seminar that lasts a day or two and promises to cure all ills. People enjoy the seminars, the trainer gets paid, however, a year later the ROI (Return on Investment) is not there. This happens often. The company blames the trainer and says "next time we'll bring in a different trainer to attain results." They then go through and repeat the same mistake with no change in results.

The question is "Will a one or three day seminar, by itself, change habits that have been formed over several years?" By contrast, "development" takes the approach that in order to achieve results we must help to change behavior.

To do this we must:

- Create the desire
- Equip them with new skills
- Overcome old habit patterns
- Allow them to practice and apply the skills
- Reinforce and coach them
- Celebrate achievement

This process takes more than a day, but it does get results. First, organizations must strive for a continuous learning process to achieve results that are sustainable. Secondly, organizations must equip leaders at all levels with effective Coaching skills.

In order for learning to produce results, organizations require a "coaching culture" to facilitate on-going development. To improve performance, your people need continuous coaching before, during, and after learning sessions.

Instead of using a short-term training band-aid that produces no results, partner with your organizational development people or outside experts for a reasonable period (six to twelve months) to design a solution process that achieves results.

Whether it is learning to golf, play tennis, raise children, develop superior sales or management skills, the most productive way to change behaviors for improved results is through commitment to a strategic development process that combines the elements mentioned above. Successful leaders are strategically linking continuous learning with their business objectives to improve performance.

On a scale of 1-10, how equipped are your managers, in terms of ability to coach for continuous performance improvement?

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