

MEDIA REVIEWS

Online

ExperienceChange

Reviewed by Dawn Williams for *Training Media Review*

The training community is paying more attention to simulations as an effective way for learners to practice new knowledge and skills in a safe environment. Most people associate online simulations with high cost, but ExperienceChange provides a COTS (commercial, off-the-self) product that combines a traditional Web-based course with an online simulation to present an organizational change management model. The fact that the product is COTS makes it more affordable, but organizations will still have to weigh the advantages of the offering relative to cost.

The online components:

- Explore: a presentation about the change management model, incorporating graphics and text
- Experience: simulation in which a user implements a change initiative at a fictional company
- Reflect: detailed feedback about a participant's performance in the simulation after its completion (or abandonment)
- Apply: decision-support templates (for example, a job aid) to help a user in a "real life" change initiative
- Share: an asynchronous discussion forum on change management ideas and challenges.

The simulation is the most innovative and engaging part of the course. It involves a company, Global Tech, in need of change because for the past two years it has lost money. The user is cast in the role of a consultant whose objective is to achieve a critical mass of support for the change. The effort requires integrating several departments so that Global Tech can respond better to market needs for its core product, global positioning systems.

The objective is to increase key stakeholders' support for the change. A conversion map keeps track of success or failure. Your goal is 60 percent buy-in. You gain conversion points by using the appropriate tactics at the right time. You're given more than 40 tactics to choose from; each has a particular cost and time. Some tactics require only the click of the mouse, whereas others require you

to supply additional information. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that I'd actually have to spend time thinking about the case and making some decisions!

I played the simulation until I finally converted enough stakeholders. It's much more engaging than traditional online offerings. Now, whether playing the simulation makes me better able to implement change at my organization remains to be seen. But I did have more practice with the content than if I'd just read information online and answered a series of multiple-choice questions, as is the case with most self-paced e-learning courses.

The feedback given in the Reflect section is thorough.

It taught me which tactics to apply and where sequencing was important. That might have been working backwards a bit, but, hey, you do what you have to do when the competitive juices start to flow.

The Apply section has materials for helping implement a change initiative, though they didn't always relate specifically to the model presented. The Share section lets participants interact via threaded discussions, although that function didn't appear to be used fully.

Recommendation

ExperienceChange identifies its market as large organizations and business schools, and those audiences probably support the cost per learner. It's a high-quality

niche product with commercial content about change management.

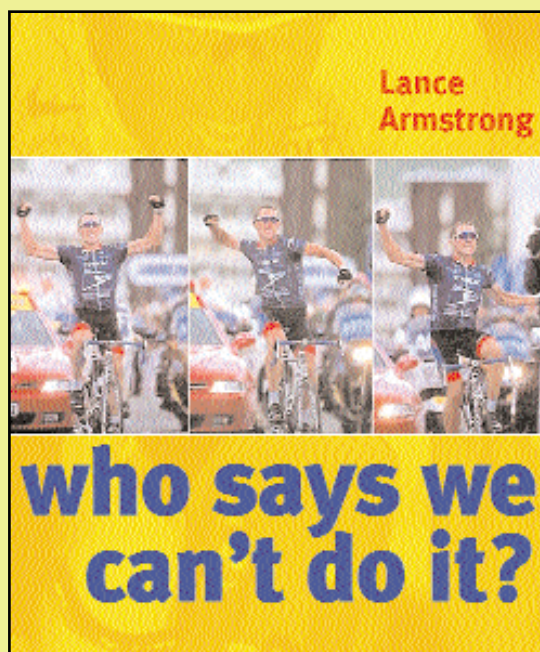
Video

Who Says We Can't Do It?

Reviewed by Cindy Huggett for *Training Media Review*

This inspirational video portrays the determination and dedication of cyclist Lance Armstrong, a four-time winner of the Tour de France. It's a moving story that many people may already know from his bestselling book or sports pages. The intimate details of this man's courage, determination, and passion for life are amazing.

What I discovered from this video training program—it's more than just a high-quality video—is that learning



can be found anywhere—in the news, in sports stories, in our daily lives. And we should question whether we learn from our experiences and those around us. Armstrong's personal story encourages viewers to reflect on their own passions and goals and to think about the strategies they should use to attain them.

The leadership principles emphasize integrity, compassion, teamwork, and leading by example. Personal interviews with Armstrong's teammates, medical team, coach, and others corroborate and support his own words. There are many learning points to extract from this story that can be applied to almost any business environment. For example, it's a common misconception that cycling is an individual sport. Organizations and cycling teams alike are successful through the combined efforts of their individual contributors.

The workbook and leader guide include an overview, notes for the trainer, a summary of the key learning points, discussion questions, and a sample training session outline. The summary of each learning point is basic, but the real value of this program is in the discussion questions and action items.

Though the focus is more on motivation and personal introspection, a team or work group might use the program for a motivation and goal-setting session. I can see it as a kickoff. In the workbook's own words: "This video is designed to be used as a springboard for organizational motivation."

An extra bonus is a wallet-sized reminder card attached to the workbook, which participants can keep as a reminder of the lessons.

Recommendation

The principles are obvious and not new, yet they're presented in a format that makes users think about them in a new way. This program could also be used for self-study, with participants going through the questions and action steps on their own. I did and found it refreshing to revisit my goals and strategies.

Course Details

ExperienceChange, online, 2001, ExperiencePoint: 866.369.9888, www.experiencepoint.com. Purchase: US\$300 per user per year. Other material: facilitator guide.

Who Says We Can't Do It? video, 2002, 20 minutes, Enterprise Media: 800.423.6021, www.enterprisemedia.com. Purchase: US\$695. Other material: workbook and leader guide.

Experience Change

★★★★1/2	Holds user interest
★★★★1/2	Production quality
★★★★	Ease of navigation
★★★★1/2	Interactivity
★★★★1/2	Value of content
★★★★	Instructional value
★★★★	Value for the money
★★★★	Overall rating

Who Says We Can't Do It?


★★★★★	Holds user interest
★★★★★	Acting/Presenting
★★★★★	Production quality
★★★★	Value of content
★★★1/2	Instructional value
★★★1/2	Value for the money
★★★★	Overall rating

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RATINGS KEY

★★★★★	Outstanding
★★★★1/2	Very good
★★★★	Good
★★★1/2	Above average
★★★	Average
★★1/2	Below average
★	Poor