



Fix the Future Now

THE TIME SPAN from the moment I take my seat on an airliner to the moment the plane leaves the runway has always been stressful for me. Time stands still. I have logged too many miles by air to have any great fear of flying, but I always find myself eager to get the show on the road. My mind wanders.

On a recent trip, I looked out the window and caught sight of the plane at the gate next to mine. I was disturbed by what I saw. It was the same carrier and the same model as my airplane. The finish on the neighboring jet, however, had flaked away. Not just small patches, mind you, but huge sections of paint had peeled off, including a large portion that marred the airline's logo. (The airline had probably paid millions of dollars to create that logo, and somewhere a corporate identity consultant was crying.)

I was struck by an irrational fear: If the airline couldn't afford the maintenance on the outside of the plane, what was it ignoring on the inside of the plane? The airline in this case is one of several U.S. carriers hanging on by its financial fingernails. I tried to put that out of my mind. Federal regulations require that maintenance on commercial aircraft be conducted on a rigid, regular schedule, which I suppose should have made me feel better. It didn't. Meeting minimum requirements does not equal creating a quality product.

Tough financial times for businesses and organizations—and it doesn't get much tougher than bankruptcy—force many difficult decisions about resources. Vital programs and initiatives get delayed, forgotten, or scrapped. And that leads me again to one of my favorite topics: the future. In so many ways, the future of business and commerce seems bright. To get to that future, however, requires a commitment to making things work today. Make the case for workplace learning today to ensure the enterprise will thrive tomorrow. Don't let the paint peel on your organization.

What are you, as a workplace learning professional, doing to ensure your own future inside the organization? Do you have the skills and knowledge to earn a seat at that much-discussed proverbial table? Furthermore, what are you doing to ensure the success of your organization? Are you providing a road map for the future or are you just along for the ride?

Rex Davenport
Editor
rdavenport@astd.org



ASTD
1640 King Street, Box 1443,
Alexandria, VA 22313-2043

Vice President
Content
Patricia A. Galagan
pgalagan@astd.org

Editor
Rex Davenport
rdavenport@astd.org

Managing Editor
Sabrina E. Hicks
shicks@astd.org

Associate Editors
News
Eva Kaplan-Leiserson
ekaplan@astd.org

Books
Josephine Rossi
jrossi@astd.org

Contributing Editor
Jennifer J. Salopek

Art Director
Elizabeth Z. Jones

Publications Assistant
Clover Soares
csoares@astd.org

Circulation Manager
Marnee Beck
mbeck@astd.org

Manager
Supplier Sales & South/Midwest
Richa Batra, 703.683.8127
rbatra@astd.org

Northeast/Europe/Middle East
Account Executive
Mark Stout, 703.683.8142
mstout@astd.org

West/Canada/Asia/Pacific
Account Executive
Mary Randall, 703.683.8124
mrandall@astd.org

Customer Service/Subscriptions
703.683.8100
www.astd.org

PRINTED IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

©2005, ASTD Inc. All rights reserved. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the society. The appearance in *T+D* of advertisements and product or service information does not constitute endorsement by the society. The publisher has not investigated the claims made by any advertiser; product information is based solely on material received from suppliers. Send editorial communications to the editor. Send inquiries concerning subscriptions and membership to the Customer Care Center. Printed by Cadmus Specialty Publications, 2901 Byrdhill Road, Richmond, VA 23228-5867.