

# Bad News, Good Opportunity



THE NEWS IS SELDOM GOOD THESE DAYS. Tens of thousands of people around the world are on the streets protesting one thing or another on a nearly daily basis. Every evening on the TV news and every morning in the daily newspaper I see the pictures of these demonstrations. People all across the political, geographic, and economic spectrum have something to be mad about, it seems. Many of these protests are directly related to workplace issues.

If you are responsible for learning in your organization then you no doubt feel the pain. Your workforce is made up of people who live in the real world, and they bring that real world to work with them. They are probably under-educated for the needs of your company. They may have work-life balance issues. They probably want more opportunities in their careers. They might have calendars on their walls that count down the days until their retirement.

At the same time, your boss (or her boss) is all over you to prove your own worth. Return-on-investment is your mantra, and you spend as much time squeezing dimes as you do up-skilling your workforce. You think you are alone. And, you would be wrong.

This month, May 7-10 to be exact, in Dallas, thousands of your peers will attend ASTD's 2006 International Conference and Exhibition. They will take in four days of highly focused learning opportunities. They will have access to solution providers offering the widest range of cutting-edge products and services. They will be energized and renewed by spending a few days with the brightest minds in workplace learning and performance and talking to their peers.

If you are still on the fence about attending, think about this: What is the value of a good idea? Many people attend conferences with the hope of coming home with just one idea that will improve their organization. I guarantee that you will leave Dallas with a dozen good ideas. And, there is a good chance that those ideas will help you improve and change your organization—for the better.

Remember what author Alvin Toffler wrote: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

If you attend the conference, please look me up. I would like to hear what you find useful. And I especially want to know what good ideas you are taking home that will change your world.

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