

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

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Voice Mail

Doer's Profile



Nancy Bleich

This month's profile features Nancy Bleich, manager of training and development for Werner Enterprises, a trucking company in Omaha, Nebraska. In June, Bleich chose an unusual mode of transportation to the American Society for Training and Development conference in Dallas—she went via 18-wheeler.

Why did you ride a rig to Dallas?

"Our company is always looking for ways to cut costs, so I told my boss, 'Why don't I go down to Dallas on a truck and learn the business from the ground up?' I wanted to actually experience what our frontline people do."

What was the truck like? "It was a 53-foot trailer. We were hauling Kawasaki motorcycles, and we had 60,000 pounds of truck and cargo."

Describe the experience. "We left at 7 a.m. Saturday, and we got into Dallas Sunday afternoon at 3:30. I rode with the driver and experienced everything she did, from sleeping in the truck to waiting four hours for repairs. I even crawled on top of the tires to wash the windows. I slept in my clothes all night and then didn't have a place to freshen up."

Has the trip made you a more effective trainer? "I've gained a lot more credibility. It gave me a deeper appreciation of what these people go through to deliver on-time service to our customers and still be pleasant to them. I got more appreciation of their job and how it fits into the company."

"I was also able to talk to the

trucker about her job and what she thinks of the company."

The biggest challenge for trainers?

"Linking the business objectives to what our reality is. We all have these lofty goals, but you have to understand the business, and then you have to link training to it and be sure that the business is your catalyst."

What advice do you have for other trainers?

"If more trainers would get out of the box, to where the rubber meets the road, we'd create better understanding, we'd enhance communications, and we would build credibility in our organizations."

What is your favorite machine?

"Truck 16564."

This month's "Doer's Profile" interview was conducted by Catherine Petrini.

To nominate someone to be the subject of a "Doer's Profile," call the "Voice Mail" line at 703/683-9590 or fax your suggestion to Haidee Allerton at 703/683-9203. Include your own name and phone number as well as the name and number of the nominee, and tell us why he or she is a good candidate.

In evaluating training, we face many obstacles. But it's within our power to remove them. We have to ensure that we set high standards for ourselves so that we serve our customers better. We have to overcome a tendency to be nice and to give tests that get high pass rates instead of measuring whether learning took place. Do we evaluate to see whether learners have digested concepts and can apply them? Or, do we try to see

whether someone can pick an obvious fact from a list of obvious distractors?

We must be proactive in seeing firsthand whether learning is being applied on the job and whether behavior has changed. It's too easy to slip into the smile-sheet approach. How many times have we asked, "Do you think the training helped you perform better on the job?" instead of determining what performance outcomes should be measured in the