

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

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Voice Mail

Why Training Fails

Training usually fails when it is based on an event taught by external consultants. Why? Because after the training is delivered, the trainer disappears, and the learning fades. Learning must be reinforced in the workplace.

Effective training should move participants through several levels of behavioral change—from extreme discomfort, to discomfort, to comfort, to reflex action.

The best scenario in most one-time-only seminars takes learners only from extreme discomfort to discomfort. Even that modest outcome is fragile. Without continued support from the organization and without repetition of the material, most people regress—no matter how excellent the program is.

To remedy the problem, many companies are taking a new approach. They're using repeatable training systems that engage their own managers as trainers. Such training ensures managerial and organizational support, as well as continuous reinforcement of the training content. Major corporations are using such systems in sales training and leadership training.

One such approach—created by the Fortune Group in Atlanta—strengthens the ties between an organization's levels and functions, directs attention to the organization's mission, and unifies the organization's culture.

The approach has three phases: training, trainers, and follow-up. In phase 1, managers complete a three-day seminar on learning, followed by a three-day session on facilitation.

In phase 2, managers return to their companies and train their staffs. In phase 3, the training is repeated, to drive home the lessons. In addition, audiotapes of the training videos from the seminar are distrib-

uted so that participants can review material on their own.

The design aims to maximize managers' effectiveness as trainers, mainly through the use of videotapes. Managers don't have to present content. They serve as bridges between learners and the learning—through discussions, exercises, and assignments. They ensure that all participants interact and apply the learning.

All of the manager/trainers use the same three-part facilitation process, which ensures consistency from session to session and from manager to manager. And the process helps maintain uniformity in learning throughout the organization. Everyone shares the same information, methodology, and values.

The manager/trainer approach transforms training into a form of team building. It derives its power from the recognition that managers can be good trainers, because they have a vested interest in making sure their people learn and succeed. Similarly, employees can learn well from managers, because the employees need to learn what their managers want them to learn.

—James M. Cusimano
New York, New York

Too Few Diverse Trainers

Recent issues of *T&D* have dealt with diversity. My question: Where is the diversity in diversity training?

As a diversity consultant, sociologist, and human resource professional, I've noticed that most of the economically successful diversity trainers are white males. That is as alarming as the problems of diversity. Race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and cultural differences

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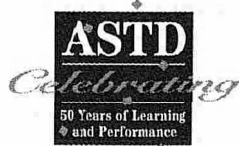
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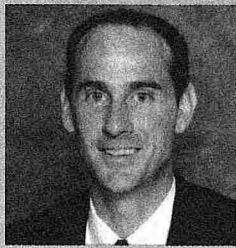
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Voice Mail

Doer's Profile



Ralph W. Emerson
Emerson Enterprises

The Doer's Profile was created to give you a way to expand your networking capabilities, and to let you know about the interesting and exciting things your colleagues are doing in the field. This month's profile features Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson is vice-president of Emerson Enterprises, a consulting firm in Pensacola, Florida, specializing in organizational development, strategic planning, and team building.

Most exciting new development:

"Seeing diversity work for companies. People with different social and economic backgrounds are learning to understand each other and work together."

Most recent accomplishment:

"Recently, we successfully used our foundation assessment tool, the Birkman method, in a Canadian company with very diverse workers. People's different perceptions of organizational goals can result in contrasting behaviors. The tool helps us see beyond people's actions to uncover their real needs. Then we can help motivate them to

be more productive in their work."

Best training tip: "Listen to what your customers say."

Are you related to poet Ralph Waldo Emerson? "He's a distant uncle. His children had no direct descendants, but he had a brother to whom I'm related. My grandfather is Ralph, Sr., and my father is Ralph, Jr. I'm Ralph the III."

We understand you conduct training with your mother. "Yes, she's the founder and president of Emerson Enterprises. I'm learning a lot from her. She's strong in group presentations, and I do more of the one-on-one."

are being developed and controlled primarily by the dominant group in America: white men.

For example, in Memphis, Tennessee, where there is racial tension, Goals for Memphis hired a white man to head its Race Relations Institute.

Many of us who live and experience the results of imperfect diversity on the front lines aren't listened to or sought out. Is that because the HR industry wants the issue of diversity to be palatable to the people who control training dollars? The trend seems to be that the heads of major organizations are far more comfortable discussing race and gender issues with their own kind. The rationale is that the decision makers, mostly white men, can identify with white men, who then encourage those in charge to "do the right thing."

Such "I have seen the light" forums are needed, because they are the best solutions in certain situa-

tions. But excluding trainers with accurate, professional information about diversity alarms me. Just take a look at most major training and business conferences and the lack of adequate representation by professional, articulate, culturally diverse trainers.

I hope the rationale isn't the adage, "High-quality ethnic minorities and women can't be found." Perhaps the real issue is why no one is listening to diverse voices.

— Dawnelle Hurd
*Southern Health Systems
Memphis, Tennessee*

"Voice Mail" is compiled and edited by Haidee Allerton. "Voice Mail" welcomes your views. Send your letters and comments to "Voice Mail," Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043; fax them to Allerton at 703/683-9203; or call them in on the "Voice Mail" line, 703/683-9590.