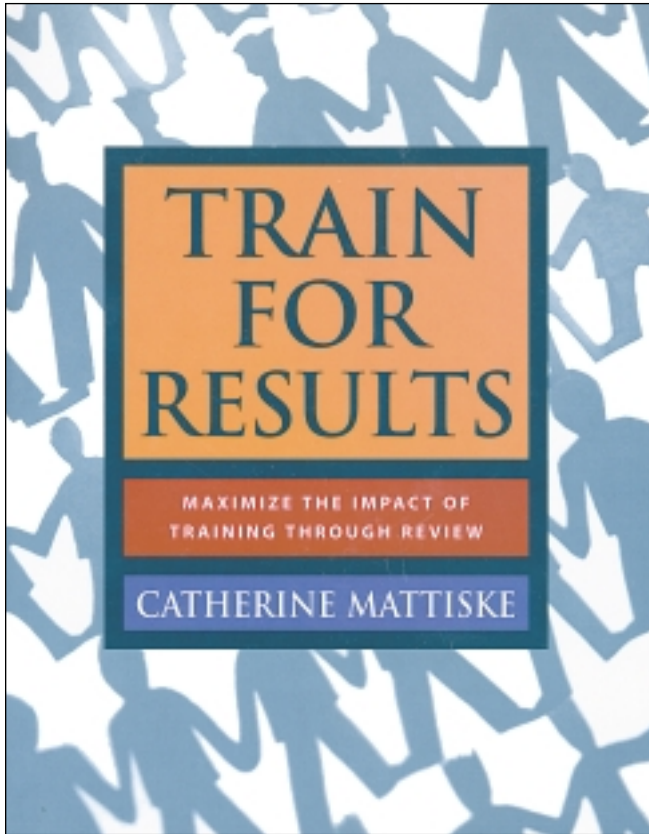# BOOKS

Train for Results

By Catherine Mattiske

Reviewed by Lisa Bing

Catherine Mattiske distinguishes the review process as a critical training component in her new book, *Train For Results: Maximize the Impact of Training Through Review.* In an easy-to-read, conversational, albeit sometimes wordy style, she presents the review as a discipline in its own right, with clear benefits to learners, trainers, and organizations. She debunks common myths about measuring training and challenges trainers to rethink assumptions about what can be measured, as well as rethink the efficacy of some traditional measurement approaches (for example, testing).

Both new and experienced trainers will find this book a valuable resource because in addition to imparting the importance of debriefing learners, Mattiske discusses the impact of adult learning theory and learning styles on the review process. She provides a treasure chest of review activities (complete with the how tos, the who fors, and the whys of) and sample training courses that map out placement of review activities, a welcome addition to any trainer's tool kit. The tips, tricks, and traps give practical and easy-to-follow shortcuts that can save time and money.

Yet, all of those tricks of the trade add up to nothing if training goals aren't

aligned with organizational goals. Mattiske suggests that for many trainers that requires developing strategic relationships with line managers; for others, it requires repositioning training as a strategic business tool. She pushes trainers to reach out to line managers prior to training to find out what's important to them, what their business goals are, and what outcomes they'd like to see from the training. That approach allows trainers to direct training toward targeted business goals, and engages managers, who are key in the successful transfer of training.

Mattiske acknowledges that this approach requires new ways of thinking and acting, and that it may feel a little risky. A common cry among trainers is that organizations don't recognize training's contribution to the bottom line. To change that perception, Mattiske suggests that trainers begin thinking strategically, working more closely with managers, developing training goals, and measuring learning against those goals.

Mattiske recommends engaging managers prior to training so they can help prepare participants for the training, support the learning, and fill development gaps after training. She challenges trainers to focus on the process of measuring learning during a course, acknowledging that many of them measure learning before and after training.

While working on this review, I was attending a golf camp, and consistent and continual review was woven throughout:

● The instructor demonstrated a new aspect of the golf swing.

● Students attempted to imitate the demonstration.

● After they got the hang of it, the instructor introduced another element.

● Before taking a morning break, the class reviewed the morning's lessons.

● After break, the class reviewed what it had covered before the break.

● At the end of the day, the class reviewed the day's lessons.

● At the start of the next day, the class reviewed everything that it had covered in previous lessons.

That lesson structure is a classic example of what Mattiske purports in this book: By building review activities into the training design, trainers accomplish more learning in less time. Her premise is that review activities build learners' confidence and maintain consistent energy levels that foster learning.

That was my experience: I was surprised by how much I learned with what felt like relatively little effort, through the consistent process of practice and review. I discovered that, although I wasn't able to execute all elements of the swing just right, I did learn the principles, as well as what should happen and why—and I never studied (in the classic sense) or memorized the material.

On the last day of my lessons, after thinking all week about Mattiske's review process theories, I could recite what I identified as the 21 components of the golf swing (not the 21 steps, for any golf aficionados who may be reading this). Not only had a student never done that before, but also the instructors had never thought of the instruction in that way. I attribute my success to the consistent and thorough review practiced by the instructors—and championed by Mattiske in *Train for Results*.

Training for Results by Catherine Mattiske. Warriewood, Australia: Business + Publishing, www.bpp.com.au, 142 pp. US$29.95

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ON THE NIGHT STAND

By Jay Cross

I'm a book junkie. Six-foot-high bookcases line the walls of my house in Berkeley. When the big quake hits, you don't want to be here.

I usually read about a dozen books simultaneously. I'm halfway through Andrew Weil's *Eating Well for Optimal Health* because I'm reinventing myself into a thin person. I'm also reading Monica Bhide's *The Spice is Right.* Who knew that an e-learning product strategist could also be an excellent cookbook author?

I'm also about halfway through Tom Stewart's *The Wealth of Knowledge,* a wonderful book not only because Stewart has pegged the rights and wrongs of knowledge management, but also because his language is delightful. His wit brings a smile to my face at least once a page.

I've just started David Weinberger's *Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web.* Weinberger and I both pray at the altar of the transformational power of the Web. His site *Journal of the Hyperlinked Organization* ◄)) **www.hyperorg.com** pillories hyperbolic vendors mercilessly.

Planning my company's next session, visual learning, led me to Leonard Shlain's *The Alphabet Versus the Goddess.* This book presents a biased but intriguing romp through history that purports to show that the linear process of writing and reading led to male dominance in society (and the demise of goddesses), which is only now being rebalanced by our increasingly visual culture.

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