

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

## Become an Idea Agent

Shari Caudron

In the new world of corporate training, it's not experience, contacts, or even education that are a trainer's most valuable asset but ideas. Years of instructional design experience no longer guarantee that you'll continue to fare well in the future. The business world moves too quickly for traditional approaches: Companies can't wait through a lengthy design process that produces lengthy training programs. Learning must work now.

Demanding clients, frequent mergers, globalization, a shrinking labor force—all require new solutions and new ways of thinking. Here are 10 tips to foster innovation:

1. Forget what worked in the past.
2. Recognize that you're your own worst enemy.
3. Think like an external consultant.
4. Learn about the business.
5. Become an expert in something.
6. Learn how to market yourself.
7. Pursue continuing education.
8. Recognize that you don't have to have all of the answers.
9. Don't innovate just for the sake of it.
10. Accept that you'll fail sometimes.

For a more in-depth look into designing your own innovation plan, consult the full article.

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## Presenting to the Big Dogs

Marsha Redmon

More frequently, trainers are being asked to tie their training goals to their companies' business goals. And that means at some point you'll be asked to present to the executive team or board of directors. Not to fear, Redmon, principal of M Group Communications Training, has some advice on how to hold your own.

Begin by getting the inside scoop on your execs, suggests Redmon. Ferret out their idiosyncrasies and preferences regarding presentations.

Once in the boardroom:

- Respond immediately to their body language.
- Be flexible but organized.
- Simplify: Focus on one or two main points, and support them with facts and statistics.
- Make the executives ask for deep detail. Don't bore them with too much detail, but have it ready if they want it.
- Remember the billboard rule: Don't put more on a slide than you could read on a billboard while driving by at 40 mph.
- Prepare as if you're on trial. Have your team brainstorm questions you might be asked.

Though there's a lot to consider, just remember to focus on one or two messages, support them with a few good facts, and tell a story to illustrate your main point. With that in mind, you can't miss.

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## On the Block

Anver S. Suleiman

With Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

Selling your training company may not be the best decision for a number of reasons, but it should never be because you're unprepared. Suleiman, CEO of the investment banking firm Luntz, Suleiman & Associates, raises several critical questions you should ask before the answer is to sell.

Begin by determining if you, personally, are ready to sell. Why do you want to sell? Are you prepared to devote time to the sale? What will your family and employees think of your decision to sell? Those are just a few questions to consider before you get down to business.

Next, prepare your company financially. Are you ready for what might happen once your plans to sell are known to everyone? You'll need to address long-term agreements, leases, and any special customer considerations up front.

If you're still ready to proceed, you'll need to prepare your company. Bring financial information up-to-date, file the necessary taxes, and begin to work out plans for your employees. Also, update your business plan and be prepared for potential buyers to want to talk with your customers.

Now it's time to conduct due diligence. Suleiman suggests that the more contingent the deal is on future factors, the closer you should look at the buyer's financials. And when it's time to hand over the company, do it with "grace and full cooperation."

*For complete text, see page 36.*

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## Developing the New Young Managers

Lynda C. McDermott

Despite having the education and talent needed to be successful, new young managers face obstacles certain to hamper their performance and expose their management inexperience. Many are fresh out of school—it's their first job—and the learning curve is steeper than their student loan balance. They need training fast.

NYMs are expected to manage in a cross-generational environment with staff who are older, more experienced, have different values, and respond to widely differing management techniques. So, how do you keep NYMs from making early management blunders? Give them coaching and training.

McDermott emphasizes the natural evolution of managers and top leaders through a directed course of learning. But before the training begins, you should follow these three steps:

1. Clarify expectations and goals.
2. Describe the big-picture strategy and vision.
3. Identify skill gaps.

Once you've accomplished those, begin to develop a foundation by cultivating NYMs' people and management skills, teaching them how to work in teams, and enhancing their emotional IQ. Though that's easier said than done, the trend to hire young, inexperienced but talented employees into management positions isn't going away.

"Smart companies take the responsibility of developing NYMs seriously," says McDermott.

*For complete text, see page 42.*

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## Worker-Directed Training

Stacey Wagner

For some people, a bad day at the office means misplacing a file. But for workers at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, a bad day can mean several million dollars worth of damaged equipment, lasting damage to the environment, or death.

Stacey Wagner, director of the ASTD Benchmarking Forum, takes a tour of INEEL's advanced test facility and witnesses first hand the sophisticated simulation that prepares INEEL's workers for emergency situations and the training initiatives that are boosting performance and improving processes. But that model of efficiency in training is an atomic half-life from where the facility was just two years ago.

In two years, INEEL went from having a training and safety record that needed improvement to being the first DOE lab to become an OSHA Voluntary Protection Program Star Site. How did INEEL do it? In part, through building exemplary stakeholder relationships and teams, using technology to leverage learning, and ensuring that training is integral to achieving overall business objectives.

More specifically, INEEL empowered its employees. Instead of INEEL holding workers responsible for training, workers hold the Operations Training Directorate accountable for providing the appropriate training. The switch has resulted in a company culture that fully supports training initiatives and demands continual innovation and improvements in content and delivery.

*For complete text, see page 50.*

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