Why Training Trainers Is Important

If your organization spends money on training employees then you already know that teaching new and relevant skills (methods, procedures …) is helpful. If your organization delivers training with your own trainers, then it is in everyone’s best interest to regularly train your trainers. To go further, it would be in your organization’s best interest to have a process in place where you could create and support temporary trainers.

I won’t go into details on why training ought to be done. Those who don’t believe in taking an active role in training will simply do what they have always done. I will go into some detail on what training means to trainers, how that impacts people being trained, and how the process of training trainers can impact the organization.

Because trainers are trainers, they need to believe that training is important. The effort that goes into preparing for, delivering, then following up and making modifications to courses is often above and beyond the ordinary. When trainers receive relevant training, they directly experience the benefits of good training. Believing is easier. It makes them more able to do even more for the organization.

Neglecting your trainers (or just throwing people into training roles) is illogical when you understand what trainers really do. Trainers are charged with the duty of changing people’s behaviour. Truly, their job is to get people to see value in applying new skills, methods, or procedures. On the surface it may appear that trainers are teaching people how to be more effective working with SAP or dealing with generational issues or … in fact trainers are convincing others to do new things in new ways. Not only do they need to be well prepared they need to be well motivated.

Imagine sending people in your organization to training knowing (really knowing) that when the class was over everyone would be able to perform new skills; imagine knowing everyone would apply those skills in appropriate situations.

Participants learn more effectively and efficiently in classes run by well trained (specific skills and pedagogy) and motivated trainers. All sorts of negatives are eliminated and all sorts of positives are realized. Simply put, people try harder and pay more attention when classes are lead by competent and enthusiastic trainers. More importantly, when classes are finished those same people are more likely to continue to use what was taught well. (We have all heard the talk on the shop floor after an exceptionally good (or bad) class.)
This brings me to my point about having a process in place where you could create and support temporary trainers. One high return-on-investment area is helping experienced people in your organization teach others what they know.

People leave organizations for a lot of reasons. Canada and the US have an aging population – more of the work force is older and more of the workforce is planning to retire early. Competition for skilled and experienced workers is increasing even now: head hunters boast of a business revival – large profits are back. Add a strong simple-living movement that is gathering momentum and human resource departments have a proactive job that needs doing.

The challenge in getting experienced workers to teach others what they know goes beyond just getting busy people to do even more. Those that control organizations need to be sold on the worth of training replacements as priority activity. This is probably a necessary first step.

The next step would be to show the organization’s talent how to teach and coach/mentor. Pedagogics has been said to be the most revolutionary of all sciences, but can it be taught quickly and efficiently? From experience I would answer “in two days.” Those becoming trainers would also need support in the areas of training materials, marketing and organizing classes.

The last challenge would be figuring out how to reward those people that actually pass on what they know. Intuitively I’m guessing that job-sharing might be part of the reward. (A nice thought: those that reach the pinnacle of their careers, finish off by teaching and then providing a bit of coaching before and after riding off into the sunset.)

Organizations that provide training ought to provide training for trainers too. A trainer who truly understands and believes what they are teaching provides more value to participants. A trainer who continues to learn more about training becomes even more capable of providing more value. This applies to new trainers who happen to be your organization’s most knowledgeable-experienced-older-and-about-to-depart employee. Any team leader that facilitates the training of trainers has done their organization a significant service.

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