

## CHAPTER ONE

# IN THE BEGINNING

*“We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”*

MAX DEPREE

## PURPOSE

This chapter will enable you to accomplish the following:

- Differentiate between training and development
- Identify the two essential functions of training
- Examine the four distinct elements of the change process
- Review the role of the trainer
- Recognize the consequences of ineffective training

## OVERVIEW

A successful training and development effort is more than providing well-received programs for employees—much more. It is built on a philosophical foundation that supports the organization’s business strategy. This chapter lays the groundwork for undertaking a comprehensive training and development process. Such a process examines the organization’s ability to use training to support its business strategies, goals, vision, and mission, as well as manage barriers to achieving goals. We’ll start by defining terms, review the essential elements of training and development, look at the role of the training professional, and finally examine the potentially devastating consequences of ineffective training.

## DEFINING TERMS

In the professional literature, the terms training and development are often differentiated. Training usually refers to the activities that help employees do their current jobs more effectively. Development usually refers to the activities that help employees prepare for the next job opportunity. For instance, a Fundamentals of Supervision program would be considered training for a group of new or experienced supervisors. It would be considered a development opportunity for an audience of high-potential non-supervisory personnel.

## IDENTIFYING THE TWO ESSENTIAL TRAINING ELEMENTS

Many processes are involved in attempting to accomplish organization-wide initiatives to assist employees in performing their current jobs more effectively and/or prepare them for their next job opportunity. The essence of these processes is composed of two essential training elements.

### CHANGE

Ask people for words that they associate with training and development and they will reply with terms such as facilitator, instructor, classroom learning, simulation, policies and procedures, presentation, learning modules, results, feedback, orientation, evaluation, goals, needs assessment, coaching, teaching, interaction, preceptor, instruction manual, computer-based learning, role playing, and so on. These words may appear disparate, but they are all pieces of the processes that people associate with change: learning skills, acquiring knowledge and abilities, modifying attitudes and behaviors, and altering ways of doing business to strengthen job performance. Training and development is a euphemism for change, and change is one of the two essential functions of training.

### GOAL FOCUS

The second, equally important function of training relates to what the training and development effort is attempting to

change. Training and development, when properly implemented, attempt to facilitate change in employees' knowledge and skill. Knowledge is a set of facts about a subject and the level of understanding that a person achieves through study or experience. Skill is knowledge that a person applies in a particular situation. Enhancing employee knowledge and skill through effective training leads to attitude and behavior change and improved job performance. Overall improvement in employee job performance supports the organization's vision, mission, and goal achievement. In order for the organization's training and development effort to be successful, it must be all about facilitating change that assists the organization achieve its goals. More about this piece of the puzzle in Chapter 2.

## CHANGING THE PERCEPTION OF CHANGE

Ask employees at any organizational level how they feel about change, and many will answer negatively. Words like difficult, unnecessary, unpleasant, uncomfortable, and resistant roll off people's tongues. Employees are generally wary of change. Employees are especially wary if what you are asking them to change (because it is a barrier to goal accomplishment) involves ingrained skills, abilities, behaviors, attitudes, opinions, or ways of doing business. It is a very challenging dynamic. The training and development professional is charged with the goal of facilitating change to improve current and future job performance, often in the face of negative associations with the very concept of change. Moving people from point A to point B when they think they're just fine and dandy at point A is tough. And moving people in a way so they feel good about both the journey and the final destination is both art and science.

William J. Bratton, City of Los Angeles Chief of Police, stated on February 13, 2003: "What is training? It is changing behavior." *A Practical Guide to Training and Development* focuses on the many, many steps the training professional must take to make this change process successful. If there were one simple path or method to achieve this result, the literature would simply say just do this, and employees would magically migrate from one point to another. As one might guess, that is not the case. There is no magic wand or formula to make the right changes happen.

There are certainly ways to help change happen, and there are ways to hinder it from happening, but there are no guarantees. There are, however, definite ways to improve chances for success.

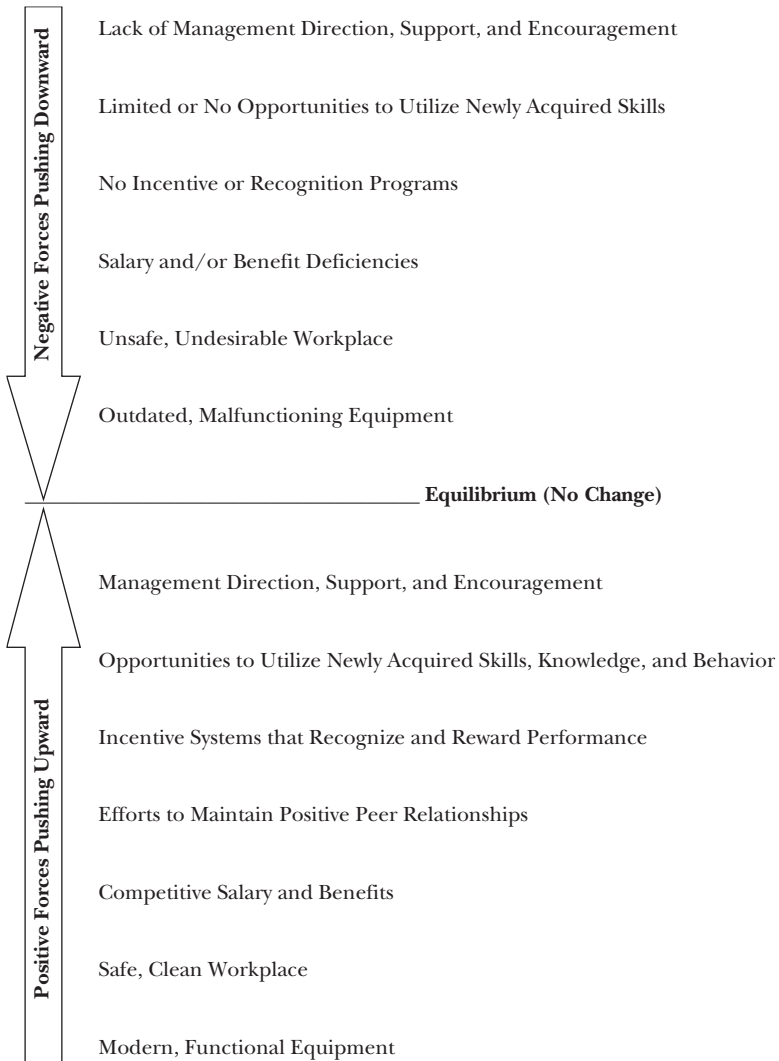
## UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE CULTURE: FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

Behavioral change can occur through knowledge and skill acquisition in an instructor-led classroom experience, in front of a computer terminal, or in a virtual classroom, but what happens when the attendee goes back to the real world of the organization? Many forces help or hinder knowledge and/or skill acquisition and behavioral change to either flourish or die. Senior and middle managers, supervisors, co-workers, processes, resources, and equipment may help or hinder new behaviors. Force field analysis, a model developed by Kurt Lewin (1947) and reported and adopted by many others, provides a framework for examining variables that influence the change process.

Lewin, a pioneer of social, organizational, and applied psychology, found that in any situation there are both driving and restraining forces to change. Driving forces push or initiate change and sustain it over time. Training combined with managerial encouragement, incentives, and collaborative and/or competitive work group activities, may facilitate change and improve job performance. As a counterbalance, restraining forces act to decrease driving forces. Peer and/or management apathy, hostility, outdated technology, and/or poor equipment maintenance may undo any change in knowledge, skill, attitude, and behavior that training produced. A state of equilibrium, or status quo, exists when the sum of the driving forces equals the sum of the restraining forces. In the training world, a state of equilibrium means no change is apparent. As shown in Figure 1.1, once training is completed and employees return to the workplace, forces abound that will help or hinder implementing and sustaining newly learned attributes.

To sustain training induced changes, one must add or delete driving and restraining forces. The organization's commitment and/or receptivity to change, whether implicit or explicit, is a mirror of its commitment to the training and development effort.

FIGURE 1.1. FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS BEHAVIOR CHANGE AFTER TRAINING



The reach of the training and development effort can only go so far. In many organizations, depending on size and resources, there is an OD (or organization development) department that has the responsibility of facilitating cultural (systemic) change by nurturing driving forces and minimizing restraining forces. Ideally, training

works hand in hand with OD so the organization embraces change to better fulfill its mission and achieve its strategic goals. According to ASTD's *2007 State of the Industry Report* (ASTD, 2007), organization development received the most resources of any non-training performance improvement solution.

## IDENTIFYING THE FOUR STAGES OF CHANGE

A plethora of models describe the change process and the intermediate stages involved in getting from a starting point to an ending point. While these models may use different words to describe each stage along the way, the essential features of many change models are similar. Let's examine four change stages (denial, resistance, exploration, and commitment) from the non-supervisory employee, supervisor and manager, and training professional perspectives using the following example.

Organization A's Customer Service Department has a three-tier hiring interview process. First, a panel of five employees interviews each customer service representative job applicant. Next, two customer service supervisors interview the panel's top three candidates. Finally, the customer service department manager interviews the top candidate. Human resources perceives that the interview process at each tier needs to change.

### DENIAL

*a. Non-Supervisory Employees.* When change was first suggested to the interview panel employees, their overwhelming reaction was to deny that a change was necessary. The employees assumed that the current state, or status quo, was satisfactory, so why change? It didn't matter whether the suggested change was attitudinal ("You need to take this more seriously"), behavioral ("The panel is doing more talking than the candidate"), skill ("Some of the questions you're asking are illegal"), process ("The panel is giving information about the job to the candidate before asking the candidate for job-related background information"), or procedural ("The method the panel is using for evaluating candidates is flawed"). The overriding feeling was: "We don't want to change, and we don't need to change because things are just

fine the way they are.” The best chance for getting employees past denial is to help them understand the consequences of not changing and to reinforce the perception that the consequences of not changing are more negative than the consequences of changing. In this case, the negative consequence risked by the employee hiring panel is recommending customer service representatives for hire who were not the best qualified candidates in the pool. Additionally, asking illegal interview questions opened the organization to the possibility of a lawsuit.

*b. Supervisors and Manager.* The supervisors and manager saw the root cause of the problem differently. They thought their interviewing skills were fine. They felt the candidates they selected were willing and able to do the job they were hired to do. They blamed other factors—noncompetitive wages and benefits, outdated technology, equipment and facilities, lack of effective human resource policies and procedures—as the reasons good hires turned bad. They admitted that some hires only minimally met requirements, but they justified these hires as a reaction to pressure from senior management to fill openings as quickly as possible. And after all, as long as they had been conducting interviews they had never been sued for asking illegal questions. So how bad could their interviewing skills be?

*c. Training Professional.* Feel the plight of the training professional attempting to change the behavior of employees and experienced supervisors and managers in denial about their ineffective interview techniques. Human resources had documented the history of bad hires that resulted in excessive turnover from both voluntary and involuntary terminations after short employment periods; inordinate time had been wasted attempting to resolve employee relations issues; disability and workers’ compensation claims had risen; poor productivity occurred because of high absenteeism; and costs had increased from relying on temporary employment agencies.

In this situation, the best chance the training professional has to change the interviewing behavior of employees, supervisors, and the manager is to clearly debunk the myth that the process is fine as is, so it doesn’t need to change, making a case for behavioral change by presenting data that exposes the exorbitant costs of excessive turnover in new hires—their rising health claims

and poor productivity, the negative effect on the organization's bottom line (money unavailable for pay raises), staffing shortages that contribute to excessive workloads, and lower morale.

## RESISTANCE

*a. Non-Supervisory Employees.* Resistance is different from denial. The resistant employee says/thinks, "I know I need to change, but it is difficult to change. I know I need to change my interviewing technique, but it is hard to because I have been doing it this way for years and I am comfortable doing it this way." Resistance, though, is one step closer to achieving change, because at least the employee acknowledges that change, albeit difficult, is necessary. The best way to help an employee past resistance is to clarify the benefits of the change and to brainstorm (with them) ways to remove the barriers to trying something new. Sometimes, the best way for employees to get past resistance is to suffer the unfortunate consequences of not changing. Recommending the hiring of a co-worker using ineffective interviewing techniques and then experiencing the difficulties working alongside a "bad hire" might be the impetus for changing interview practices.

*b. Supervisors and Manager.* Consider the circumstances of the customer service supervisors and manager. They are busy dealing with other priorities that significantly impact the Customer Service Department's goals—customer satisfaction and retention, staffing, facilities, and information technology issues. The supervisors and manager know that they are not attending to the process of hiring interviews the best they can but, given their other pressing issues, something has to take lower priority. Finding the time to invest in this process right now is challenging. The supervisors and manager feel they are doing a decent job. If they weren't, they wouldn't have hired and retained any customer service representatives. These supervisors and manager are in a state of resistance about changing their hiring interview behavior and the process they are following; they know they need to change it, but it is hard to do.

*c. Training Professional.* Again, consider the plight of the training professional attempting to move customer service department employees, supervisors, and the manager past resistance. Explain

the benefits of an effective hiring process—for instance, using employees for the hiring panel who take the task seriously and see it as a true developmental opportunity, and training interviewers to (1) conduct effective interviews that get the candidate to do most of the talking, (2) ask legal, job-related questions, and (3) evaluate candidates based on previously established job-related selection criteria—will produce a new hire pool that will turn over less frequently, acquire skills and knowledge more completely, and contribute to reduced staffing issues and better morale.

## EXPLORATION

*a. Non-Supervisory Employees.* After denial and resistance are overcome, exploration is the next step in the change process. The exploring customer service employee says/thinks, “I’ll try this change and see how it feels. I’ll try doing interviews this new and different way and see how it goes.” The best way to help employees embrace exploration is to identify the positive outcomes and benefits of the new behavior. In training jargon, the term is WIIFM (What’s in it for me?). WIIFM implies that employees will be more likely to try something new if they clearly envision how the change will benefit them personally. In this case study, a better hiring interview will lead to recommending better customer service representative candidates, which will lead to better hires which will lead to more effective and compatible co-workers.

*b. Supervisors and Manager.* Consider the circumstances of the customer service supervisors and manager who are willing to explore change. They approach an organizational change initiative with curiosity. They are interested in attempting to implement new interview behaviors and processes for incoming customer service representative candidates. Additionally, their employees will be more likely to understand and accept the rationale behind the request for new behaviors and processes if they see their supervisors and manager doing the same. A powerful message resonates throughout the department when supervisors and manager experience the process and benefits of change together with the other employees.

*c. Training Professional.* The training professional is in an advantageous position with an audience that is exploring change.

In the case of the customer service department, non-supervisory employees as well as the supervisors and manager will be open to a selection interview training agenda that outlines the structure of an effective interview, delineates legal boundaries, demonstrates open-ended questions designed to elicit maximum information from the candidate, and provides a selection grid to help determine the most qualified interviewees. At the exploration stage, participants are willing, if not yet totally able, to implement a more effective hiring interview. The training program will give them much needed practice, support, and feedback that will more readily translate into new and improved workplace behavior. Employees at the exploration stage are motivated to try.

## COMMITMENT

*a. Non-Supervisory Employees.* Commitment means embracing the change, along with the philosophy of never reverting to former behaviors. This is adopting change at its highest level. The best way to help employees stay committed to change is to continually support and reward their new behaviors. New interviewing behaviors and hiring processes adopted by employees of the customer service department will self-reinforce if they perceive positive results and improvements over previous experiences. But just because employees adopt this level of change doesn't mean they will stay committed. Forces to be discussed later, both personal and organizational, may prevent or sidetrack commitment to change from continuing.

*b. Supervisors and Manager.* The supervisors and manager who approach a change initiative with the motivation and energy to make it work will stand a much better chance of making it happen. As with each stage of the change process, a self-fulfilling prophecy is apparent. Their buy-in is swift, their mindset positive, and their determination plentiful. Supervisors and manager committed to change will positively influence those who are less enthusiastic. The best way for a supervisory and manager team to maintain a high commitment level among employees is to model the behavior themselves and mitigate the external factors that impede change from continuing. In the customer service department, commitment to change by supervisors and the

department manager will help maintain the new hiring behavior and practices despite the pressure of other department factors (i.e., time crunch to fill open positions more quickly by lowering standards) that may impinge the process.

*c. The Training Professional.* Employees, supervisors, and managers at the commitment level of change come to training eager to understand and learn how to behave differently. They know the status quo is not acceptable and are hungry to incorporate new techniques, practices, and processes. If the training program is executed properly, all customer service employees exit with a renewed energy to work cohesively to interview and hire only the best candidates. Time will tell how long they remain committed to this new way of doing business.

## NOTHING LASTS FOREVER

Despite one's commitment, changed behavior reverses when the forces of denial and resistance become stronger than the forces of exploration and commitment. We know that people can, for instance, change their leadership behavior, work more effectively as a team, interview differently, stop smoking, or start dieting and exercising—for a period of time. It doesn't necessarily mean the new behavior, any new behavior, lasts forever. Bosses, co-workers, direct reports, family, friends, neighbors, economic conditions, and shifting priorities can all help or hinder changed behavior.

The goal of facilitating and maintaining positive change in employee knowledge, skill, attitude and behavior over time is a daunting role. It requires the training professional to acquire and use a unique blend of talents to be successful.

## ROLE OF THE TRAINER

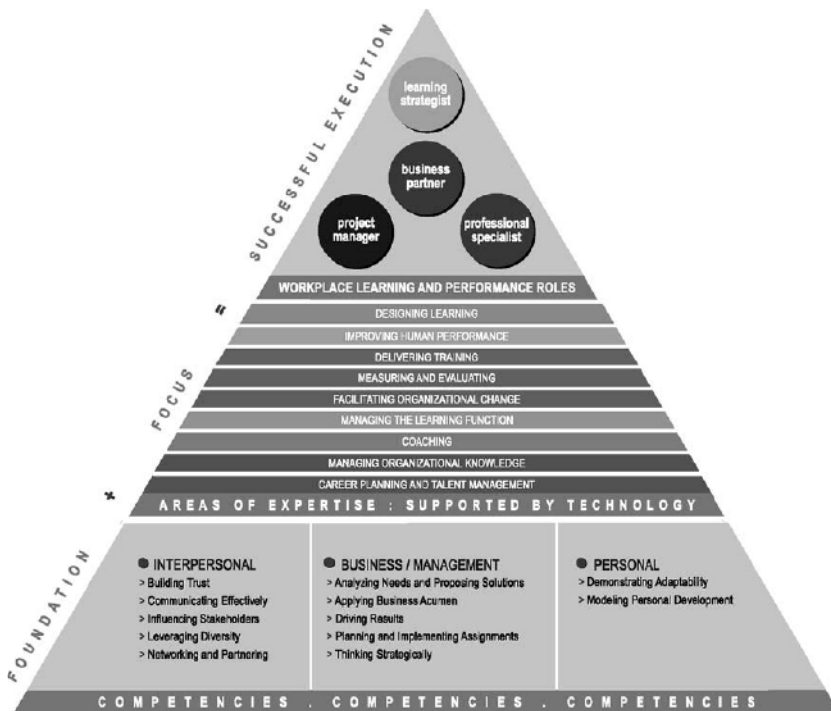
Training and development focuses on facilitating change to improve employee job performance. That means the trainer must possess competencies—the skills, knowledge, abilities, attitude, and behavior clusters—to implement specific change required to help organizations achieve their goals. In 2004, The American Society for Training and Development conducted a study titled “Mapping the Future: Shaping New Workplace Learning

and Performance Competencies” (Berntal, Colteryahn, Davis, Naughton, Rothwell, & Wellins, 2004) that attempted to determine a defined set of competencies so that the current and future generations of practitioners provide their organizations with high levels of value and service.

### COMPETENCIES

The pyramid model (Figure 1.2) that the ASTD study unveiled includes three layers: (1) foundational competencies including interpersonal, business/management and personal skills; (2) areas of professional expertise including, designing, delivering, measuring and evaluating, facilitating organizational change, managing the learning function, coaching, managing organizational knowledge, career planning and talent management; (3) workplace learning and performance roles including, project manager, business partner, professional specialist, learning strategist.

FIGURE 1.2. THE 2004 ASTD COMPETENCY MODEL



measuring and evaluating training, and (3) organizational roles including those of a learning strategist, project manager and business partner.

### *Foundational Competencies*

Interpersonal skills associated with this competency level include the ability to build trust, communicate effectively, influence stakeholders, appreciate and leverage diverse ideas and insights, and network and partner with internal and external contacts. Business and management skills associated at this competency level include the ability to analyze needs and propose solutions, business acumen, drive results, plan and implement assignments, and think strategically. Personal skills include demonstrating adaptability and modeling personal development.

### *Areas of Expertise (AOEs)*

The second tier of the pyramid include specific technical and professional knowledge and skills areas required for success in the training field. AOE's are specialized areas that focus application of the foundational competencies in specific activities that drive organizational learning and improved job performance. Designing, delivering, measuring, and evaluating training, facilitating organizational change, managing the learning function, coaching, career planning, and talent management are some of the areas of expertise required for successful training professionals. According to the ASTD study, most people in the field spend most of their time designing learning and delivering training.

### *Roles*

The top tier of the model reflects the organizational roles fulfilled by the training professional when effectively applying a select subset of competencies and AOE's. Different roles are often required depending on the project and/or specific situation or need. Like a mechanic reaching into his or her toolbox to deal with a particular situation, the training professionals reach into their vast array of competencies and AOE's to assume the specific role best suited to the circumstance. Learning strategist, business partner, project manager, and professional specialist are each

roles that the training person might need to assume depending on current project assignments and organizational needs.

Ultimately, successful training professionals must be able to apply their competencies in ways that support organizational strategies and goals. Chapters 2 and 3 will delve into ways to align training with goals. One overarching training goal is to help employees attain transformational learning in which knowledge converts information into skill enhancement, attitudinal shift, and behavioral change that drives business performance. It is an achievable yet elusive and difficult goal to accomplish. Trainer competencies must be developed in order to fulfill this challenging role. Knowledge of the training topic, good speaking ability, enthusiasm about the topic, focus on training goals, active listening skills, and familiarity with adult learning concepts are some of the competencies that trainers must develop (to be discussed in later chapters) in order to provide a transformational learning experience for trainees.

## DEVELOPING TRAINER COMPETENCIES

The 2004 ASTD Competency Study demonstrated that, to be a considered a competent trainer, the aspiring professional needs to acquire a set of skills and knowledge and demonstrate defined abilities and behaviors.

Developing trainer competencies requires much the same process that anyone follows to determine and acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed to work effectively in a chosen profession. The developing trainer must identify the competencies necessary to perform effectively, assess current capabilities, and execute a knowledge and skill development plan to improve their capabilities.

### X MARKS THE SPOT; CHECK MARKS THE FUTURE

Quick, take out a pen or pencil and draw a line on a blank piece of paper that represents your training career (this instruction is purposely ambiguous). Now, put an “X” where you are in your career right now. Put check marks where you want to be one, two, three years from now. Getting from where you are today to check

marks 1, 2, and 3 requires creating a career development plan. Regardless of one's career choices, it is important to assess the current career state and plot a path for future career development. It is essential to identify the activities that will produce the necessary changes in knowledge, skill, attitude, and behavior to achieve each milestone along the way.

People can expect to average at least three different careers and at least ten different employers in their lifetimes. Whether it's your first or third career, first or tenth employer, assessing current knowledge and skills and planning for improvement is an ongoing process. It doesn't matter whether the current career state is enrollment in undergraduate or graduate school, an after-work evening extension program, or employment for an organization in human resources or some other department. Developing trainer competencies is vital if the career choice is training and development.

## COMPETENCY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

A plethora of competency building activities are available and suggested here in no particular order of importance or priority:

*Professional Organizations.* The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the National Training Laboratory (NTL), and the Organization Development Network (ODN) offer courses and various levels of certification for trainers. They also offer individual workshops and seminars in specific competency areas. Attend their annual conferences and local training courses. Join a local chapter and attend its meetings.

*Colleges, Universities, and Extension Programs.* Public and private colleges and universities, both on an undergraduate and graduate level, offer degree programs that include courses in training and development that teach trainer competency. University extension programs, geared to the working adult learner, also offer certificate courses that include opportunities to develop trainer competencies.

Courses in computer-based learning management as well as training-related graphics or software courses might be available as well.

*Internships.* Corporations with well-developed training organizations offer internships as developmental opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students as well as high-potential employees who indicate an aptitude and interest in pursuing a training career. These can be excellent opportunities to work alongside trainers and develop competencies in a variety of areas. Consultants and/or consulting firms that specializes in training and development activities also offer such opportunities.

*Books, Professional Journals, and Catalogs.* Knowledge related to trainer competencies can be acquired by reading and re-reading books (like *A Practical Guide to Training and Development*) and subscribing to and reading articles from professional journals like *T+D*, *HR Magazine*, and *Training*. It's also a great way to stay current on the latest developments in the field as well as reviewing catalogs of training-related instruments, games, and computer-assisted learning tools.

*Websites.* Continually browse training-related websites for the latest trends, research studies and recent publications in the field. Using search engines (such as Google or Yahoo) to find specific training-related topics, organizations, materials, and research will help educate the training professional and further develop competencies.

*Mentors.* Establish mentor/coaching relationships with other training and development professionals in the community who are willing and able to share their time and expertise with new or aspiring trainers. Mentor relationships can be formal (internships) or informal. Mentors and coaches can provide insight into the training role, challenges faced, and different methods used in the field.

*Product Vendors.* Contact vendors that sell and/or support training materials and receive training on their products and services. Product vendors are usually very knowledgeable about the products and services they provide. Aspiring training professionals can perhaps, in the future, apply the expertise they gain toward a professional opportunity they are pursuing.

*Training Vendors.* Training vendors like the American Management Association (AMA) and the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) offer trainer competency development programs, seminars and workshops. Organizations like Toastmasters

focus on improving public speaking and platform skills and abilities, essential competencies for training professionals.

*Volunteer.* Volunteer to use trainer competencies (assess training needs, design and conduct, and evaluate programs) for organizations that cannot afford to pay for the expertise. The practice of using knowledge and skills related to these processes will be an invaluable experience for the fledgling training professional when they are called on to perform similar responsibilities in the future.

*Observe and Take Note.* As a participant in training programs, observe the competencies of the trainer(s) leading the session(s) and note the abilities and behaviors that they demonstrate. Conversely, note whatever detracts from the learning experience. Plan to model the positive abilities and behaviors that you observed when you are the one standing and delivering in front of the classroom.

*Observations and Notes from Trainees.* One of the wonders of an instructor-led classroom experience is that each trainee observes and learns something different, even though everyone in the room is part of the same presentation. This seems to be a reoccurring phenomenon, as trainees typically internalize different elements of a training experience in individual ways, depending on their previous experiences and knowledge.

Recently, trainees in an overview course on training and development were required to design and conduct a short training program. At the class' conclusion, they were asked to write a key learning they would take away from their training experience. Each answer was different, some more profound than others. Yet they revealed a knowledge and/or skill and/or behavioral change that would enhance their ability and competency to perform as a training professional in the future. Their verbatim comments included the following:

- “It is important to be sure that the room/conference room is set up properly before beginning the presentation.”
- “Prepare thoroughly and do not add unplanned items to the training program.”
- “Keep people energized. Overall, I think keeping people interested will increase the overall experience and how much they take away from the training.”

- “Use PowerPoint as a tool but not as a script.”
- “Narrowing and focusing the content to fit the timeframe is very important. It’s tricky when the scope of the training topic is very broad.”
- “I’ll remember how important it is to involve the audience even by doing simple things like asking them questions.”
- “Know your audience and who to look at.”
- “Creativity and enthusiasm are key ingredients in making a presentation successful.”
- “Training is a lot more work than I imagined. Remembering everything to do to make it a successful experience for the trainees is challenging.”
- “Training is not as hard as I thought it would be. Practice makes it achievable.”
- “It was a great experience to actually stand in front of an audience and deliver a training program. Keep the content simple and it will be easier for the trainer and the audience to get the message.”
- “Be comfortable with silence when you ask the audience a question and no one answers right away.”
- “I need to slow down when presenting.”
- “I am not good at training when I am not fully knowledgeable and comfortable with the topic. I am not good at faking it.”
- “Never assume that the audience doesn’t have questions.”
- “I learned that standing in front of an audience is very hard for me but I did it!”
- “Practice makes perfect.”

*Common Themes.* The common theme of these comments is that, regardless of the specific insight gained, participation in a developmental training activity appeared to have a positive effect on the trainee’s perception of their competency. It is unclear whether trainees will take their new-found insight and apply it to a training opportunity in their workplace (a self/peer reported follow-up of behavioral change would add an interesting evaluation piece to this process) but at least the trainees appeared to have a positive learning experience. It is also apparent that they were already thinking about how they could enhance the learning environment for the adult learners they would be training.

## TAKING ACTION

Competencies do not change in a vacuum; active engagement in professional, growth-oriented experiences will move the learning process along. It's the only way to go from the X on your career path to the checkmarks along the way to your ultimate career goal.

Create a development plan to increase the probability that you will act. Changing behavior, as discussed earlier in this chapter, requires proceeding through stages of denial, resistance, and exploration to arrive and remain at commitment. It is important to reflect and assess the current stage and take action to move in a productive direction. It may help to begin by selecting activities to improve knowledge and skills in trainer competency areas that have been identified (by yourself and/or others) as needing the greatest development. This will result in the greatest immediate benefit and act as a motivator to continue.

## NO CLASSROOM, NO FACILITATOR, NO CHANGE?

Although delivering training is a much used area of expertise for the training professional, accounting for 17.3 percent of time spent according to the ASTD 2004 Competency Study, it appears to be a competency that is being used less frequently now than in the past. According to the 2006 Industry Report in *Training*, only 62 percent of all training was of the instructor-led classroom variety, low in comparison to the previous year's figures of 70 percent; 15 percent was online self-study, 14 percent was delivered via the virtual classroom, and 9 percent was delivered by other methods. The *2007 State of the Industry Report* (ASTD, 2007) reported 71 percent of training hours available were all instructor-led, as opposed to almost 75 percent in 2004. With such a significant amount of training being conducted via self-study and virtual classroom learning environments, training professionals have less of an opportunity to produce change in employee behavior using traditional classroom training skills. More frequently, they are using technological and organizational forces that support the employee's strong internal motivation to acquire knowledge and skill and change behavior to achieve training goals.

Unfortunately, employees with a bad case of denial and/or resistance are going to be hard-pressed, even in an instructor-led classroom environment, to critically reflect on their preconceived assumptions and beliefs and consciously implement plans to behave differently. The training professional and the organization face a critical challenge to facilitate this segment of the employee population to change their behavior and move into exploring and committing to new ways of performing their jobs. In future chapters, *A Practical Guide to Training and Development* presents strategies and techniques for training professionals to overcome these potentially significant barriers to achieving goals.

## CAREER CHALLENGES FOR THE TRAINING PROFESSIONAL

What happens when the training and development person feels the organization is not responsive to change? Trying to facilitate change in a resistant organization can produce a tremendous amount of learning and career development. These professional growth experiences, difficult as they may be at the time, will benefit the training and development person at some point in the future. On the other hand, if the training professional is a member of an organization that embraces and accepts change, it can be a tremendous opportunity to be involved in activities such as participating in training needs assessments, creating training matrices, designing, conducting, and evaluating training programs that become unique learning opportunities. Working in different organizations with both types of cultures—those very resistant to change and those very embracing of change—is probably the most complete learning experience one could ask for. No matter the culture of one's organization, it is in both the training professional's and the organization's best interest to do the best possible job with the situation as it is.

## TRAIN EFFECTIVELY OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES

Organizations cannot afford to miss the mark when providing training. Ineffective or non-existent training programs can lead to serious legal and economic consequences. Training deficiencies

can be avoided by effectively implementing strategies to avoid such devastating pitfalls.

## CONSEQUENCES OF INEFFECTIVE TRAINING

“Truth or Consequences” was the first game show to air on commercially licensed television, appearing on WNBT in 1950. It was an American quiz show originally broadcast on radio beginning in 1940. The entertainment concept was to mix the quiz element of game shows with wacky stunts. Contestants who failed to answer difficult questions correctly, (truth), had to participate in embarrassing stunts (consequences).

Unfortunately, organizations face a similar plight if they do not respond appropriately to training needs. They suffer consequences that are not entertaining; they are embarrassing, costly, and damaging to the ability of the organization to fulfill its mission. Employees who receive inadequate and/or ineffective training can experience similarly dire consequences: disillusionment that may turn into adversarial relationship with employers, physical and psychological disability, even death.

We live in a litigious society. Current statistics of employment lawsuits in the United States illustrate this point. While only a certain percentage of employment lawsuits can be attributed to ineffective training, consider these facts:

- More than 450 employment lawsuits are filed in the United States every day according to a 2006 USA Today report.
- Sixty percent of all companies are sued by former employees every year, according to a 2006 report by the Society for Human Resource Management.
- Eighty percent of all employers sued felt they were the victims of unfair or frivolous lawsuits according to a 2006 survey by the California Chamber of Commerce,
- Half of those companies sued spent in excess of \$50,000, and one-third spent more than \$100,000 defending against these claims, not including the cost of settlement or verdict, according to the same survey by the Chamber.
- Fifty-six percent of all employment cases that went trial in 2006 resulted in verdicts for the plaintiff (employee).

- \$250,000 was the average plaintiff's verdict in employment law cases in 2006, with 15 percent of all verdicts exceeding \$1 million.

While it is difficult to assess how many lawsuits could be avoided by effective training, the literature is strewn with unfortunate cases of training efforts (or lack thereof) with negative consequences for both the organization and the trainee. Consider these real, unfortunate cases:

*Case 1.* In 1999, The Bureau of State Audits presented its report of the California Science Center and concluded that the Center does not ensure fair and equitable treatment of employees, thus exposing the state to risk. Among other deficiencies, the audit found that the organization had an inadequate training program despite regulations that stipulated specific standards. There was no overall training plan or program designed to promote a capable, efficient, and service-oriented workforce. No central training records were kept to document who had received training. It appeared that higher-level employees received more training opportunities than lower level employees, which resulted in some employees being better informed of important policies than others. These factors led to the appearance that the science center treated its employees unfairly and inequitably.

*Case 2.* In an infamous 1988 case, grocery chain Lucky Stores identified a need for training managers in diversity issues and hired an external trainer to conduct diversity training with the organization's management team. An exercise in the training program asked managers to list various stereotypes they had heard about women and minorities. Their responses were written down on flipchart paper and posted around the room per normal training protocol. Subsequently, female employees of this organization filed a class-action sex discrimination lawsuit against the organization based on a lack of promotions for females. The written comments from the training program were used as evidence in the trial and were found by the court to be not just portrayals of social stereotypes, but reflections of what the managers truly believed. The court concluded that the notes constituted evidence of discriminatory attitudes and stereotyping of women by company managers and awarded the plaintiffs over \$90 million in damages.

*Case 3.* Meyers (2005) reported thirty-one separate incidents across the United States of police officers seriously wounding or killing other police officers in an article titled “Why Are We Killing Ourselves: A Look at Accidental Shootings of Police Officers by Police Officers.” At least sixteen of the incidents occurred during training exercises. His analysis concluded that a properly designed and implemented training program would eliminate or minimize the frequency and severity of accidents.

## COMMON TRAINING DEFICIENCIES

Unfortunately, poor training outcomes occur for many reasons. Often, their root causes can be grouped into categories that can be readily addressed.

### POLICY DOES NOT ENSURE PRACTICE

Organizations make noble gestures. They proclaim in their mission statements, employee handbooks, offer letters, and job descriptions that people are their most treasured resource and that providing training to continually improve knowledge and skills is their highest priority. Walking the talk, however, is another matter. Having a training plan and executing a training plan are two different matters. It is senior management’s responsibility to ensure that both planning and execution occur. When they do, training is offered that meets the knowledge and skill improvement needs of employees, and all members of the target audience(s) can participate and benefit from this important activity.

### UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Organizations wrongly assume that training equals behavior change for all participants, that merely sending people to training means that all participants will now perform job tasks the way they have been trained to do. Successful training will accomplish this feat for a great many trainees and for a great many job-related tasks, but assuming 100 percent compliance on both fronts is unrealistic. Less than 100 percent compliance, though,

can wreak havoc on an organization. Processes must be put in place to assess individual behavioral change and improved training results once trainees return to their jobs. These same processes will also uncover those individuals for whom training did not produce desired outcomes. A re-training effort for these individuals may be prescribed.

### INADEQUATELY SKILLED OR UNQUALIFIED TRAINER(S)

After going through the painstaking efforts of training needs identification, securing management support, marketing the training programs to the target audience(s), and internally mobilizing participants to attend, there is nothing more disappointing than a less than effective presenter. Even more distressing and disturbing is an ineffective or unqualified presenter causing an incident in the training program that results in a lawsuit against the organization. The trainer selection process must be given great care and attention regardless of whether the candidate list includes internal employees or external consultants.

Employees are generally known quantities. Carefully assess their knowledge, skill, and readiness to conduct training before they are selected to train others. Just as background checks are conducted on prospective employees, research must be undertaken to make sure the consultant under consideration is qualified to do the job. Check referrals and references from reliable sources, including the consultant's client list, review his or her resume and website, scrutinize training exercises and agenda in advance, and read any of their published books and articles to gather information about the consultant's knowledge and skill. If possible, observe the consultant in action, conducting a training program on the same or similar topic for which the organization is contracting, in front of a live audience.

The trainer must also have extensive knowledge of the relevant organizational policies as well as pertinent local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Providing incorrect or misleading answers to participant questions could lead to misguided behavior and serve as the basis for a future lawsuit. "That's an excellent question. Let me get back to you on that" is a favorite response by trainers if they do not know the answer to a participant's

question. It's a much better response than providing wrong information.

Similarly, trainers who are not attorneys should not make statements that suggest a legal opinion. Training participants will sometimes offer so-called hypothetical statements that are actually descriptions of real-life issues occurring in the workplace. For the trainer to respond to such statements by saying, "That's illegal" or "Someone could go to jail for doing that" is inflammatory and could send the wrong message to the participant. Instead, saying something such as "The hypothetical you describe is prohibited by our policy, and anyone who knows someone is behaving in this manner should report it to management" is probably a more appropriate response.

## KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL EROSION

Even if 100 percent compliance was achieved and behavioral change was realized at the conclusion of training, time can diminish task performance. People can become complacent, the positive effects of training can wear off, and degraded job performance can result. Re-training on a regular basis can help rekindle peak performance. Frequency of re-training is a judgment call by both management and participants, but should be instituted at mutually agreeable intervals to reinforce behavior. Regularly scheduled, periodic field audits or behavioral observations could be conducted to provide feedback regarding re-training needs.

## FAILURE TO ADDRESS IMPORTANT JOB TASKS

Certain job tasks within each job classification are more critical than others. Mistakes performing certain responsibilities can be tolerated; for other responsibilities there must be zero tolerance for errors to ensure health and safety. Focus training most acutely on those job tasks for which there can be no deviation from top performance. All too often, training time is not differentiated in this way; concentrate efforts on critical tasks to ensure behavioral compliance.

## TRANSMISSIONAL NOT TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

Training that only imparts information and knowledge does not necessarily translate into behavioral change. Frequently, instructor-led classroom training as well as self-paced learning is designed to stream information to participants without paying particular attention to interaction and new behavioral practice. Self-paced training delivered via computer or teleconference is much less likely to afford opportunities to practice behavior change. Organizations need to ensure, as best they can, that training is enhancing knowledge and skills and achieving the goal of changing behavior. Build opportunities to demonstrate and practice desired new behaviors into the training design (incorporating the adult learning Law of Exercise, as seen in Chapter 5) to help the transformational process.

## INCOMPLETE OR NON-EXISTENT EVALUATION

An evaluation process at the behavioral and results level (see Chapter 7) reveals whether knowledge and skill enhancement have translated into behavioral change and improved results. If behavioral- and results-level evaluation is not instituted, there is no data to support the contention that task performance has been raised as a result of training. Attending training does not necessarily equal heightened performance by participants.

Positive evaluative feedback from trainee reactions is a start. Self-reported improvement in learning is good. Testing to validate learning achievements is better. Participants stating unequivocally that they will behave differently if or when faced with certain critical incidents in the future is important to know. But none of these evaluation criteria will truly reveal whether on-the-job behavior has changed. Only evaluation processes conducted at the behavioral and/or results level will reveal that change has occurred.

## INCONSISTENT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Management support is vital for successful training. Managers can ensure that all of their direct reports attend training as scheduled. They can also encourage trainees to demonstrate newly learned

behavior on the job once they return to the front line. Managers can also notice and praise new and improved behavior. All too often, though, management support is inconsistent. Some managers ensure 100 percent attendance; others overtly and/or covertly make it difficult for their direct reports to participate. Some managers support the attendees' desire to try new behavior; other managers barely acknowledge the attendees' participation in training and ignore or even discourage any new behavior based on newly learned knowledge and skill. Supportive management behavior must be consistent in all regards. Senior management must instill this value with all of their direct reports. Managers attending their own program that focuses on methods of supporting organizational training makes a statement that new trainee behavior is expected and encouraged after attending training.

#### LACK OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Organizations must fulfill their responsibility to provide high-quality training and to support 100 percent participation by the target audience(s). But, as the expression goes, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Employees must share equally in the responsibility by continuing to acquire knowledge and skill to maintain job behavior and performance at maximum effectiveness. There is no place for denial and/or resistance to training when diminished job performance puts people's lives, including the trainees,' at risk. Complacency or assuming an attitude of knowing it all can only lead to trouble for the employee and the organization.

#### EFFECTIVE TRAINING FOR MINIMIZED LIABILITY

Just as ineffective or non-existent training can lead to dire consequences, effective training is an ally to everyone—non-supervisory employees, managers, executives, investors, and customers. It produces productive changes in knowledge, skills, attitude and behavior that contribute to accomplishing strategic goals. Additionally, these changes will lead to better behavioral choices by trainees that by their nature minimize legal risk. However, if an employee's actions are challenged in court, the

fact that the organization had a training program in place may minimize liability if certain requirements are met.

### EXERCISING REASONABLE CARE

The courts generally look more kindly on employers who can demonstrate that they took actions to minimize the potential for negative outcomes. One way to demonstrate this good faith effort is through training. When an employer can show that the accused employee(s) participated in a training program (via dated sign-in sheets) that covered relevant information (via training agenda and program materials) taught by a knowledgeable trainer (via his or her professional work experience resume) but behaved badly nevertheless, it strengthens the employer's case that it truly attempted to instill positive behavior. This circumstance also underscores the importance of strong management support for training, thus ensuring that all members of the target audience attend training. If someone did not attend the training and is alleged to have behaved badly, the organization's liability is not mitigated.

### ADEQUATE TRAINING

To minimize liability, training must also be perceived as adequate. Employees accused of wrongdoing who describe their training experience with the organization in vague, sketchy, and non-descriptive terms would not give the impression that the training they received was adequate. While training is difficult to plan and challenging to execute, the organization must ensure that adequate time and resources are devoted to creating a training curriculum that participants will learn from and use in their daily job tasks.

### MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING ROOM BEHAVIOR: AN EXAMPLE

Inappropriate comments made by attendees that suggest stereotypes, bias, and/or hostility toward others have been used as evidence of hostile work environments in claims of discrimination by employees who are the targets of such epithets. These are serious issues that must be addressed in order to minimize

risk and send the proper message to participants. The following suggested strategies will minimize (or eliminate) the opportunity for such inappropriate behavior during training;

1. At the beginning of each session, the trainer lists behavioral ground rules, including guidelines prohibiting discriminatory speech.
2. If such words are spoken during the training, trainers must immediately intervene, stating that the comment is not appropriate for the workplace and does not represent the viewpoint of the organization. Saying something like “While we may have our own personal opinions on these sorts of issues, what was said is a perfect example of something not to say” sends the proper message to the other trainees and should prevent future similar future expressions.
3. If certain people do not heed the warning and continue to make inappropriate statements, the trainer must remove the individual(s) from the room.

#### CLEAR LINES OF ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

One person must be in charge of training if a court of law is to view the function favorably. The enterprise’s organizational chart should clearly delineate a person who has training responsibility. This is the individual responsible for making budgetary decisions related to training expenditures and accountable for the development and execution of a training plan.

Courts will tend to view the training function skeptically and as an uncontrolled activity if no one in the organization is ultimately held accountable for its actions. Liability is minimized through effective training, and the opportunity to create an effective training function is greatly enhanced with a clearly defined, accountable, and responsible training leader.

#### ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

For training to be effective, it is important to make sure that all trainees can understand the content of the program. It is difficult

to expect knowledge and skill improvement from all trainees if language, hearing, or visual impairments interfere with communication. Provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that all receive the training messages accurately. Examples of such accommodations can include training conducted in languages other than English, using sign language interpreters, and/or providing written materials in large print or Braille. Ensure that the training location is wheelchair accessible. These aids will ensure access and the ability to communicate with all trainees. The training professional could conduct an assessment to identify the necessary accommodations to include all trainees.

### EVALUATION FOLLOW-UP

As described later in the book, using learning, behavioral, and results criteria is vital to provide evaluative data documenting the impact of the training program on the individuals attending. Of course, the trainer hopes that all attendees will show post-training improvements.

Organizations that collect this sort of training data and then do not counsel or re-train participants who don't improve could be liable for charges of negative retention if these same individuals behave badly afterward. For training to limit, not create, liability, the organization must act on this information once it is available to ensure that it is doing all it can to improve the knowledge and skill of all employees.

#### *Summary*

1. Training helps employees do their current jobs more effectively; development helps prepare employees for their next opportunity.
2. The two essential training elements are facilitating change and achieving goals.
3. Employees progress through four stages of change; denial, resistance, exploration and commitment.

4. The role of the trainer involves mastery of foundational competencies, developing areas of professional expertise and assuming various organizational roles.
5. Competencies are developed by undertaking a variety of professional development activities.
6. Organizations experience severe consequences by conducting ineffective training.
7. Organizations must overcome training deficiencies and provide effective training to minimize liability.