

The Training and Development Secret

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Classroom Training Is Here To Stay

New learning delivery tools and technologies continue to enter the market every day. However, the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) research indicates that more than 70% of training is still delivered by instructors in a live classroom setting (ASTD 2007 State of the Industry Report). The 2008 Chief Learning Officer Business Intelligence Report states, "While delivery options continue to grow at a breakneck pace, the use of classroom learning has remained steady". Clearly, technology solutions work well where the skills are replicable, impersonal, need very little adaptation *and* have a process for ensuring folks are motivated to self learn. Thus it is no surprise that after 25 years no clear technology solution has emerged. The bottom line is no matter how much technology is thrown at the learning problem, effective training still requires opportunities for social learning, skill practice and knowledge sharing in an environment where adult learners can interact with each other and the trainer.

So how can companies run traditional classroom training when the economy remains in a downturn and there is no end in sight? This dilemma is also compounded by the limited money available to spend on training and the reductions of training and development staff.

Buying Traditional Classroom Training Is Expensive

The pressure is enormous to find cost effective approaches to training and development and run Human Resources (HR) as a business. Traditional classroom training is expensive and justification from a cost and measurement perspective is difficult in this economy. To date, we have been accustomed to three options for the purchase and delivery of classroom training.

Option 1: Develop and Deliver Internally

We all know training and development departments are among the first cut during economic downturns, resulting in a growing talent shortage of learning professionals. Many organizations do not have the necessary financial and human resources to develop learning content effectively and efficiently in-house (Chief Learning Officer 2008 Business Intelligence Report). The ability to develop and deliver training in-house is a skill and luxury most companies cannot afford.

Option 2: Hire a Consultant

A training consultant's job is to provide solutions to a customer's problems/issues. Every organization has a unique culture, issues and needs; therefore consultants approach each project with extensive analysis and then design customized solutions. In the ideal world where money and time are not factors, this approach offers an "effective" learning solution. However, it is very time consuming and expensive.

Similar to Option 1 this approach does not allow for just-in-time delivery. In today's business environment there is little tolerance for long design and development cycles, rendering the training useless.

Option 3: Purchase a Prepackage Product

The last option is to search extensively for the right prepackaged solution. These products assume that the skills and knowledge are generic enough to be applied to mass audiences. These courses work well when needs line up with the solution or a very skilled trainer can adapt to the audience in real time.

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Prepackaged solutions come with restrictions and a potentially sizable price tag. Most prepackaged courses cannot be altered or customized without permission, therefore driving up the price. They also charge customers each time the course is delivered or materials are reproduced. Many vendors do not allow internal instructors to teach their course, requiring the customer to continually purchase delivery services. These products are owned by the vendor, so the customer does not own the training product itself, merely the rights to have the product delivered.

The New Solution: Modular, Ready-Made, and Restriction-Free

The Training Industry recognizes that classroom training is here to stay. The industry has also recognized that current options for classroom delivery do not work in today's world.

In *The Leadership Brand*, authors David Ulrich and Norm Smallwood write that in exploring leadership development approximately 70% of the leadership skills and knowledge is core, common to all leaders. Regardless of industry, company or economy these competencies must always be present. The remaining 30% are those elements that are unique to each company's specific needs and business. This concept has been understood but not spoken by learning professionals for a long time and can be expanded to not only leadership but all learning content areas as well.

The Secret Revealed

Sharing and reusing content is the new standard in the learning industry. Gone are the days of designing a course using design, review and development phases. When a learning professional is tasked to deliver a course or topic, the first thing they do is explore content they currently have that can readily be used for the customer. The learning professional takes one or more of the following actions: reuses and updates the content; contacts their network to see what is available to "borrow"; searches their extensive library of books, articles and internet resources; finds out what others are saying about the topic and who is the current thought-leader on the topic. All of this is done to quickly develop 70% of the course content. If time and money permits, the learning professional works with the customer to customize the course around the unique 30%. This is the design and development secret that we all live by as learning professionals in today's marketplace.

Customers no longer look for week long training programs or even two-day training sessions. The demand is for quick, just-in-time training that meets the immediate skill and knowledge development needs and does not cost a lot of money.

The old options available for purchasing and delivering training do not meet today's business needs. Many organizations have reduced training and development staffs and moved toward a more generalist approach within HR departments. Therefore the human resources managers/staff may be responsible for all aspects of human resources, including training. These folks simply do not have the skill or time to develop courseware and teach it.

The secret applied

Finally, learning and development professionals are offering a new solution that capitalizes on the secret of design and development of training. Training and development companies are beginning to offer fully developed courseware that can be purchased just-in-time by downloading content from the internet. A customer receives everything required to teach the course, including facilitator notes, handouts and activities. The customer can then choose to use the content as is (the core 70%), or adapt and customize the product with the 30% that is unique to that company/client. This new approach to purchasing training is a perfect fit for an environment that is limited on costs, wants a just-in-time solution, demands the most

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current thinking on the topic and can not spend the time or does not have the skill to develop. This solution is a way to get thought-provoking learning content for the classroom with everything a customer needs to either teach or customize the training. The most advanced learning solutions will also provide that downloadable content with limited or no restrictions on customization, and little or no additional costs for doing so.

The secret sounds compelling, but how does this new learning solution really impact the bottom line?

Return on Investment

The return on investment is outstanding for this approach to purchasing learning content.

Comparison: Traditional Options v. New Approach

Example 1: Consultant Led/ Buy Training			
Length of Training Session	Development Cost per Hour of delivered training	Total Cost for Development	New Approach Total Cost
2 hours	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$499
4 hours (1/2 day)	\$4,000	\$16,000	\$999
6-8 hours (1 day)	\$4,000	\$32,000	\$1,999
40 hours (1 week)	\$4,000	\$160,000	\$9,995

Example 2: Build Training/ Internal Trainer				
Length of Facilitator and Participant Training Manuals	Five (5) Development Hours per Page @ \$60/hour	Total Development Cost	New Approach Equivalent Length	New Approach Total Cost
30 pgs	\$300	\$9,000	Topic: 2 hours	\$499
60 pgs	\$300	\$18,000	Module: 4 hours	\$999
90 pgs	\$300	\$27,000	Course: 6 hours	\$1,999
120 pgs	\$300	\$36,000	Program: 2 days	\$3,998

Above examples are based on an **ASTD** Industry report and calculates development costs based on length of training session. The new approach costs are based on TrainingMade's cost model.

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By removing the traditional barriers to purchasing training organizations can customize and deploy these innovative and practical modules wherever and whenever they deem appropriate. Whether the module is deployed once or a thousand times within the organization the cost benefit is enormous.

The SECRET REVEALED AND APPLIED..... a business solution to the age-old training problem!

Michelle Del Rosario, *President TrainingMade*

About TrainingMade

TrainingMade delivers business value to its customers by providing affordable, contemporary business training content for classroom and virtual delivery. TrainingMade products, which contain everything you need to deliver instructor led training, are designed and developed by business leaders and training experts and tested in the classroom. The TrainingMade solution of offering ready-made, restriction free training content for instant download is a cost effective alternative to traditional training design and development. TrainingMade content areas include Sales and Sales Management, Administrative Support, Human Resources, Business Strategy, Management and Leadership.