

Involve Supervisors to Increase Learning Effectiveness

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I am often asked how I increase learning effectiveness in training programs and classes I teach at the university level. After giving some thought to the question, I realize that there is no one quick answer. Instead it is a culmination of strategies and activities that I use throughout a session that helps ensure that learners get the most from the content. The following are a few tips for increasing learning effectiveness in training.

Get supervisors and managers involved in the learning process. Too often, employees are sent to training to be "fixed" because something is not going well in the workplace. In truth, the issue is often more of a management or organizational issue.

By actively engaging supervisory personnel in the process, you can help them take ownership for transferring learning to the workplace. The following are some ways to involve supervisory staff.

Pre-Training:

Distribute a brief memorandum to attendees stressing the importance of the training. It should also encourage participants to focus attention on obtaining specific ideas and strategies for application on the job following training. Participants can do this by coming prepared to discuss specific types of generic and/or specific situations related to the training topic, express questions and concerns, and to actively participate in program activities.

Frontline managers/team leaders can also assist in mentally preparing attendees. They can do so by reinforcing precepts outlined in the memorandum and discussing with attendees how to relate the upcoming training to personal and job success.

During Training:

Where appropriate, members of upper management should observe segments of the training and participate or assist the facilitator. This will send a nonverbal message of the importance of the training and that management supports the initiative.

Following Training:

Supervisors should discuss the concepts learned in training with returning employees. Specifically relating what was learned to the workplace.

Supervisors should also observe employee behavior following training and provide feedback on situations in which the concepts learned are applied. Additionally, they should provide constructive feedback for improvement in instances when the concepts are ignored or misapplied.

Program objectives should be linked into individual performance goals for the training attendees. Thus, accountability for use of the information, knowledge and skills addressed in training is accomplished.

By involving supervisors, you significantly improve the chance of learning success in your training programs.

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