

LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE

GOING BEYOND TRAINING

By Kirby Martzall

The focus and expectations for training and development are changing. Organizations are becoming more exact regarding what they expect to receive as a result of time, energy and dollars invested in employee training and development.

An all-too-common training scenario is something like this: someone notices a problem with a “work” process or “poor performance.” The problem needs to be fixed, and the organization determines that employees need to be trained. A trainer or “program” is brought in to “fix” the problem (and possibly the employees), but nothing actually changes. **“The primary shortcoming of this approach,”** says Kirby Martzall, President of KL Martzall, **“is that it is task-oriented and isolated rather than process-oriented and integrated.** The focus needs to be on learning and performance instead of just training.”

The learning and performance process starts by identifying the processes, needs and expectations of the organization and the people who will be trained. What does the company want and need its employees to do? How should they behave as a result of the training? What do the employees’ need? Do managers know how best to interact with their supervisors? How do people and departments interact? What is required of the system to support the training; to support performance?

Once an organization has answered these and other questions, a tailored training and development program is designed to fit the organization’s learning and performance goals and work/interaction processes. We meet with the organization’s leadership team to outline this process and program.

“You can’t just train individual people and expect change and improvement across the system. The whole management or process team must be involved, or changes won’t take place or be reinforced,” says Kirby.

“For the most part, the people being trained have great ideas,” continues Martzall. “However, often they’re not sure how to proceed. We take the mystery out of ‘how people change their organization’ by helping them learn how to implement change in their specific situations, and how to communicate with their managers and peers about making changes.”

We meet regularly with the executive or lead team during the implementation process. Individuals learn to assess their skills and meet with managers and peers to address concerns and share insights. Participants must agree that any problems or needs that arise during training will be discussed with the management team. Managers in turn are taught how to coach and really listen to employees, address problems and needs, and reinforce the learning and transition to performance.

As the process continues, the organization reveals more of its expectations for people, performance and their work processes. As needed, we facilitate to reach agreement on exactly what’s expected and how the organization and people can make changes to meet those expectations.

Three to six months after ‘preliminary training completion’, we meet with the leadership team to follow up on what’s working and what’s not working. “Is the executive team holding people accountable for changes in behavior? Are employees going to managers and peers with concerns? What is being tracked? What results are emerging?” asks Martzall. “We track where the process is working or may be breaking

down, and help them adjust structure, processes and systems to gain improved results and consistency.”

Monitoring the results of training and development may indicate a need for further training or identify gaps and breakdowns in technology application or how the process is designed to work comments Kirby, “We sometimes find deeper or contributing problems or forces in the organization to be addressed.”

Kirby Martzall has successfully applied an organization-wide learning & performance approach since 1990 in a range of situations with both groups and individuals. **Learning and performance building are done *with people, not to people***. In this way, learning becomes part of planned succession for employees and for the total organization - a true win-win.

Learning and Performance: Process and Results

- **Traditional training and development** focuses on presenting knowledge and information, completing activities and discussions, talking about or watching skills applications. Change or improvement is assumed but seldom measured. This approach is much like a high school or college educational process for academic subjects.
- **Another view focuses on learning and performance**, where knowledge is applied, changed behavior is practiced and performance improvement is expected. This leads directly to improved results that are specific and measured, not guessed at or assumed.
- The learning and performance **focus is learner driven**, rather than trainer driven. It applies a range of learning strategies and technologies, combining training, interactive knowledge development in print or online, coaching, assessment for the purpose of development, and on-the-job

application and skill practice. All of these strategies can be measured to build true competence and capability.

- This process **involves both the learner and the supervisor, before, during and after planned working sessions**. These sessions define specific points targeted for learning or development, application of these points to daily work processes, and measurement of progress or regression based on actual behavior and performance.
- **Applications of learning and performance** are relevant in leadership development, project management, internal consulting, leading change, performance coaching, customer service, process improvement, performance management, coaching skills, conflict management, team building, sales to note a few uses.

Kirby Martzall

Founder and President of KL Martzall and Chair with The Executive Committee: TEC in Central PA combines 25 plus years experience in sales, management, professional services, consulting, manufacturing and adult learning. He has founded, built and sold two businesses, served on for profit and not for profit boards, and holds a master's degree from Temple University with post graduate work at the Center for Creative Leadership and Penn State University.

Kirby conducts over 75 strategic sessions and implementations each year with CEOs, their direct reports and other leaders dedicated to moving their organizations forward as they focus on and craft their future. Over the course of 12 months Kirby conducts well over 200 executive 1 to 1's focusing on the business and personal agenda of the chief executive.

Kirby is a Central PA Chairman of The Executive Committee- TEC International a member organization of over 9,000 CEO's worldwide dedicated to increasing the effectiveness and enhancing the lives of CEO's. He is a Certified Solutions Provider for Virtual CEO, an active member of the Institute of Management Consultants, Chair of the Excellence Council in Lancaster, PA and has received the Small Business of the Year Award, the Quality Achievement Award and the Young Entrepreneur Award.