

# How to Make Training Stick

*How can we make training stick? How do we make our employees apply what they just learned? How do we make them implement the tools? These are probably the questions most often asked in the world of training.*

IWCC Training (IWCC) has worked with tens of thousands of professionals over the 40+ years we have been in business. In that time, we have observed a number of methods for making training stick. **The bad news is that most approaches don't work. The good news is IWCC has found five that do work quite well.**

Making Training Stick is not a perfect science ... but these approaches will help.

## **Approach #1: Inspect What You Expect**

This approach has been around for a while. Essentially, if you don't ask to see proof that your people are applying the learned skills, you won't know if/how/when they are applying them. And, your people won't think it's an issue since you aren't checking if they are applying the learning! The trick here is to be consistent and start inspecting immediately after the training. By the way, consider sending your managers to the training so that their skills are also current.

## **Approach #2: Make application of the skills part of the performance review process**

This approach really formalizes Approach #1. Reviewing how well they applied the learning does not need to be a huge portion of the employee's review, but it does need to be big enough to attract their attention. If possible, tie the learning application to the monetary (bonus) portion of their performance review incentive program.

## **Approach #3: Establish Peer-to-Peer Coaching**

Peer-to-Peer Coaching is simple. Two people on the same team meet for 10 minutes every Friday morning to review what they learned in the last week from applying the training. They ask each other three questions ...

1. What did I apply from the training that really helped, and why?
2. What did I apply from the training that backfired on me, and why?
3. What from the training will I focus on next week?

Therefore, instead of the manager trying to coach 10 people to implement the training, set up five teams of two and have them use Peer-to-Peer Coaching. You should review the progress at your team meetings, but avoid sitting in on the actual Peer-to-Peer Coaching sessions. As an added bonus, you might spot tomorrow's leaders through this approach.

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### **Approach #4: Publish the WINS!**

This approach is akin to #1. It proves that you are interested in seeing how the team is doing after the training. And let's face it, in this competitive and changing world of ours, a win is a win – no matter how big or small. If someone is making progress by using what they learned in the training, then e-mail the story to the team ... post it in the lunch room ... mention it in a presentation ... put it up on your intranet. This is called *momentum*! Once it gets going, it's hard to stop!

### **Approach #5: Be selective on what you measure**

Your team can learn any number of new techniques/tools/methods in any given training program. Be selective about which items you want to measure ... focus on two or three items only for the first few weeks, then change to a different set of items to focus on. This approach gives the team a chance to apply, de-bug and, ultimately, master the application of the learning.

As a final note, remember that you don't need to measure everything that they were trained on. After all, just because you get a new wrench doesn't mean you have to tighten every bolt in the house!

### **About IWCC Training in Communications**

IWCC Training offers a full curriculum of writing, presenting and meeting skills workshops for business, technical and scientific professionals. Our unique and powerful framework enables business leaders and their teams to gain control and consistency in their communications. By empowering your employees with the skills to communicate clearly, you will achieve better results and support your business objectives.