



Are You Throwing \$ Down a Black Hole?

You might be, if you aren't taking certain steps before, during and after training and developing your people. Organizations spend hundreds of billions of dollars every year on training. The results of certain kinds of training, such as technical training, are easy to track. But other kinds, like leadership development, require careful thinking to insure a good return on investment (ROI). Studies show that knowledge retention will drop to less than 10% after two weeks if you don't put proper reinforcement in place - actual impact on the job will be even less.

Pretend that Joe is one of your recently promoted supervisors. You want to get Joe off to a good start so you send him to a one-day leadership seminar. Afterwards, Joe says he learned a lot of great things and thanked you for sending him. You are happy because you feel your investment will payoff. The hard reality is you probably won't see much ROI because it may be a challenge for Joe to apply the information.

By itself, this type of training format does little to change behavior. Ingrained habits of thinking and doing are formed over a period of time and are not easy to change. Also your company culture may not support the new things Joe tries to put in place. Since Joe didn't know specifically what he should do differently before he attended the seminar, you may not see the desired changes in his behavior.

Don't throw money down a black hole! Take these steps to insure your development activities are effective.



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1. Identify Specific Development or Training Needs. First, identify the employee's High Payoff Activities or HPAs (the six most important job activities). Agree with the employee as to which HPAs are strengths and where development is needed. This is the person's DNA (Development Needs Analysis). Many times what appears to be a problem is really a symptom of something else. Be sure it's a training problem.

2. Project the Potential ROI. Calculate what the return will be on the training. Don't spend \$1,000 on a \$5 problem. This can be done by anticipating a minimum of 1% improvement in the employee's performance. From this calculation, you can see if this is the most important problem to address.

3. Design Goals & Behavior Changes. Once you determine the appropriate ROI is there, establish the desired outcomes of the training. What, specifically, should be different after the training?

4. Set the Baseline Measurement & Scorecard (tracking) Tools. Determine the metrics needed to gauge success. This way you and the employee can see the progress along the way. It also shows you are serious about real change and allows the employee to personally track progress. Ideally, you want to take the beginning (baseline) measurement before the employee is aware that things will be tracked - because the very knowledge something is being measured often causes improvement in that area.

5. Check and Celebrate Progress. Schedule times with the employee to review progress. If this is event style training (one day), schedule follow-up after the training. If it is development style training (spread out over time), schedule coaching between classes, and after the class is over. Be supportive in removing any obstacles, but let the employee do as much as possible. Be sure to celebrate successes!

6. ROI (graduation) Report. When the training is complete, have the employee write a graduation report where he or she discusses what was learned and applied. Encourage the employee to "toot their own horn" and celebrate the accomplishments. Be sure to capture the baseline and measured progress in the report. This is also a good place to note ways to improve the process in the future.

7. Follow-up Methods to keep the Changes & Results Alive! Determine how to reinforce new behaviors. Without this, even the best programs will demonstrate little ongoing results. After the original goals are met, set new ones. Schedule reinforcement meetings, and tie expected behaviors and outcomes to the performance review process and bonuses. **SAN**

At Attainment, we are committed to helping our clients make the lasting changes that matter most and that there is a good return on development money spent. By following these seven steps, you can insure you and your supervisor, Joe, will get the development benefits both of you deserve!