

# Before and After: Tips for Successful and Impactful Employee Training

eBook

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## *Introduction*

Employee training is not easy, which is of course an understatement. You have to deal with a diversity of learners, starting at different levels, with different talents, and with various levels of familiarity to technology, which is such an integral part of the workplace environment today. Yet through years of trial and error, experience and insight from key thought leaders, there have been several best practices that have been proven to, for the most part, bring measurable success. The training process – and yes, it is a process, not a one-time event – can be managed and strategically administered to ensure that the knowledge needed is delivered in a timely and in an efficient manner to the employees that need it, bringing satisfaction and higher performance levels from individuals, teams and departments.

So with that in mind, let's look at some of these best practices – BEFORE AND AFTER the initial training period.



## 6 IMPORTANT TECHNIQUES TO TRAINING SUCCESS BEFORE IT EVEN BEGINS

Sometimes being able to discern between an immediate improvement and long-term knowledge absorption and performance growth is very difficult. Patience, and close observation and analysis are required to ensure success.

That said, it is possible to make training and development support mechanisms that will enable the training of workers succeed. Making training and growth effectual is achievable within a company. And key planning before the actual training even begins sets the tone and creates proper expectations and communication needed during the training session and long after.

The following 6 tips and procedures – before the learning even starts - will make the training of your workers more useful and handy. Their application will bring about quantifiable disparity to your outcome concert.

### **1. Conduct a Needs and Skills Analysis**

Before the training of new employees even starts, it is very important to carry out a systematic needs and skills and analysis to establish clear objectives for workers during their training and development. Without the initial definition of these goals, and a thorough analysis





of what type of training will help achieve them, chances for success are low. Make sure that you are offering your workers the right tools for performance growth. And also evaluate and then communicate expectations.

## **2. Answer Upfront the “What’s in It for Me?” Question**

Again, as with expectations, communication is key here. It’s critical to make a clear connection between what the training session(s) will be covering, and why and how these relate to practical on-the-job required tasks. And not just to the task itself – explain to the employee how the knowledge you’re going to impart is valuable in the long term as well, both on a personal level for his/her professional growth and on a business level, due to the fact that those tasks will directly contribute to business productivity and success. Remember that training is not a “1st Inning” event.

## **3. When Designing The Training, Make Sure It Is Directly Relevant To Practical, Applicable Skills**

The training and growth you provide should be relevant to the skills you require your workers to acquire as well as their work objectives. Abstract or background information in the eyes of the learner is often quickly forgotten following the completion of the training sessions. A clear line should be drawn from knowledge taught to skill learned.

## **4. Develop short compact training sessions, with the goal of not overwhelming the learner**

When designing and scheduling training sessions, it’s important to

keep in mind that a) people have limited attention spans, b) too much information at one time is not a good thing, and c) that it should not be forgotten that the goal of training new employees is not for them to memorize a series of facts or instructions as the end all to be all, but rather, that in the long term, their talents are maximized and fully realized in a performance level that is as efficient and beneficial to the business overall. So let’s keep in mind that compact and concise information, in relatively short time intervals is to the benefit of everyone involved.

## **5. Remember to plan sessions that are engaging**

In addition to the short time intervals of sessions, it would also be important to make them as engaging as possible, and – this should not be seen as an evil word in business – FUN. Remember that sometimes, less is more. Let’s treat the worker well, and the worker, in return, will likely perform at a higher level. Don’t force the learners to stay stationary and sitting the entire time – get them involved, moving around, and feeding off of each other. Newer techniques like gamification engage users in non-traditional ways that still (and sometimes even more effectively) help get the knowledge across to your trainees.

**Keep in mind that compact and concise information, in relatively short time intervals is to the benefit of everyone involved.**

## **6. Remember that training is not an end, but only a beginning**

In the whole pre-training stage, when determining objectives and designing the training the course, it’s so important to remember

that training is ONLY THE START of what you hope will be consistent knowledge and performance growth for your employees. Know that – long after the initial training sessions are over – there are a number of ways to encourage your employees to constantly learn new skills and upgrade existing ones. Self-guidance tools in business software, like [WalkMe](#) as one example, allow employees to continuously “train themselves” over a long period of time, as they are actually doing jobs. So the learning never stops (even if initial costs on training are actually reduced). Other methods to encourage long-term learning like social learning online, days away from the office at conferences or other settings to enhance skills, or mLearning are gaining increasing adoption these days. The key is looking at the training as a facilitator of knowledge and skills that will continue in different ways after the initial orientation sessions.



# 7 IMPORTANT TIPS FOR TRAINING SUCCESS AFTER IT ENDS

## 1. Properly Evaluating Training – Have the Objectives Been Met?

The first thing that is necessary following the end of the initial training is to evaluate whether it – at least at an entry level – worked. It's important here to look back at the pre-determined training objectives. Training objectives serve two main purposes, the first being that they define the exact knowledge that will be transferred during the training, and it answers the “how” question as well, i.e. in a successful training session. If developed properly, they are both specific and measurable, and will tell employers what they want their employees to do, to do better, or to stop doing. So with that said, after the training has been completed, learning officers and team managers should be able to utilize the training objectives and have an initial evaluation of the effectiveness of the training. Did the participants learn what you intended? Can the learner transfer what they learned to apply to a direct skill or task? Can the specific action which you needed to teach be completed now independently by the worker? All these are important questions to answer.

## 2. Get Employee Feedback – Both Initial and Continuing -

One relatively simple and useful way to make that initial evaluation is to approach the learner and get his/her direct feedback. You can do this directly and individually, both immediately after the completion of the training session, as well as checking in with them periodically

to ask after a period of time what their personal evaluations are of how much information from the training they retained and currently apply to their skills. Alternatively, you can send out surveys to ask the learners to fill out to assess their satisfaction in the training and to what extent they thought it was successful and useful. Ask employees questions such as, “do you understand what was said?” “Do you still have any specific questions?” “Are you now more prepared to perform your tasks more quickly and easily?” You can even have the worker summarize the key elements of what he learned during the session(s). However, don't forget to follow up with employees from time to time to hear what they have to say. The most important thing to remember is that training is an ongoing process, not a one-time thing, and that the importance of honest employee feedback is extremely valuable. Remember that training, beyond just being an organizational tool, is very much a personal process that plays an important role in overall employee engagement within a company.

## 3. Get the Worker To Apply What They've Learned QUICKLY

Don't waste a lot of time in getting learners to apply what they've learned directly to a specific desired performance task. There are a few benefits to this. Firstly, the message is immediately reinforced to the learner that what is learned is not something theoretical or general and just “good to know”. Rather, the training knowledge is directly relevant to their performance and daily tasks. Too often training managers are faced with employees who question, “What's in it for me?” Immediate application of these new skills helps to answer that question. In addition, you don't want to wait long between the training and use of that knowledge for the very simple reason that the longer time goes



by, the more likely learners will forget what they learned. Finally, this also aids the managers in getting an early evaluation of the training's success. Why wait? If something didn't entirely work, you should know that right away.

#### **4. Close Skills Monitoring – Getting Updates with Managers, Checking Metrics, etc.**

In addition to forming an initial assessment of training success through direct feedback and immediate application, even more important is close and continued monitoring of skills development over time. Many times, results don't show themselves immediately, and frankly, often it's a better that managers see their employees continue to grow over the long-term, as opposed to an initial, but fleeting short-term impact. So long-term monitoring can be done through a variety of different methods. Direct feedback from employees as mentioned above, as well as from team leaders and managers. What do they think? Is there a clear sign of performance improvement and efficiency? What do they think are still points of weakness or confusion? Communication here is of value to everyone. Don't forget to also use metrics and statistics in your analysis. Can you show a certain percentage of improvement of speed, or fewer mistakes? How many times is the employee calling the helpdesk for assistance? Finally, be sure – through your communication with managers and workers – that there might not be additional factors beyond the level of training that might be influencing performance levels before coming to conclusions.

#### **5. Technology**

Know that beyond the initial training sessions itself, there are



technological aids to continued learning and skills enhancement. The technology revolution, like in every field, has an enormous impact on employee development. Managers should encourage their workers to continue learning over the internet, through participation on social media sites, online videos, blogs and forums. Self-guidance technologies such as WalkMe, for example, integrated into the company software, can guide users as they work through direct, live demonstration, which assists them complete even the most complex tasks. WalkMe and similar technologies allow the learner to reinforce his initial training over the long-term, constantly learning as they do his/her job. Hands on learning like this is more commonly proficient for the average person, but also makes concrete the practical application of the learning in ways videos or lectures never could. Finally, in recent years and surely to continue in the years ahead, continued learning both at work and at home over mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet have the potential to revolutionize employee learning, if companies invest and incorporate these technologies into their overall learning strategy.

## **6. Managers Should Serve as Examples**

Another important tip is to make sure managers and team leaders lead by example. Employees will look toward their bosses for inspiration and positive reinforcement when they are trying new things that might be initially unfamiliar to them. This is especially true with younger employees. Therefore, it's a good idea for managers to use the same techniques in order to set an example for their younger workers. When applicable, don't be afraid to call the employee over to your computer periodically just to show him/her again that you are performing a similar task utilizing what they have been taught during training. Beware that

without managers setting such an example, employees are liable to begin doubting not only their own competence, but also how useful or truly important and useful this new learning is, and will disregard it due to poor examples being set.

## **7. Remember Again that Training is Not an End, But a Beginning**

Remember that **training is ONLY THE START** of what you hope will be consistent knowledge and performance growth for your employees. Know that – long after the initial training sessions are over – there are a number of ways to encourage your employees to constantly learn new skills and upgrade existing ones. In addition to technological tools and consistent feedback, consider granting employees days away from the office at conferences or other settings to enhance skills.

In conclusion, please know that the most successful companies, who get the best long-term employee growth and sustained results, recognize **training** as just the start of a process of **continuous learning**, long after the initial sessions have ended.



## ABOUT WALKME

[WalkMe](#) provides a cloud-based platform for businesses to guide and engage employees through any online experience, accelerating time-to-competence, and helping employees successfully apply what they learn on any website or software.

As they work, employees receive immediate, onscreen step-by-step guidance in the moment of need, helping them successfully perform their most important tasks, no matter how complex. With WalkMe, employees no longer need to focus on the technical aspects of operating software, freeing them to be more productive and avoid mistakes. WalkMe improves training effectiveness and ensures a lasting impact on employee productivity, while reducing training costs.

WalkMe's Just-in-Time Contextual Guidance and Performance Support platform can simplify software and reduce training times and costs; accelerate adoption and increase user productivity; ensure proper usage and eliminate user confusion and errors by delivering knowledge at the moment of need; and streamline change management, helping your employees adapt to changes in their workflow or when migrating from other software.

