

How To Make Training Stick

by Barbara Carnes

Have you or someone who works for you ever come back from a workshop and realized that you didn't get a thing out of it? Have you ever sent employees to a meeting and had them come back and do things just the way they always did them?

American business people spent \$54 billion last year on business-related workshops and training. Did they get their money's worth? In many cases, no. How can you ensure that you and your employees get the most out of your investment in workshops and training?

Research shows there are some simple steps to take that will help people use what they have learned and increase the return on their training investment.

If You Are Sending Someone To Training

The person or people you send to training will learn more and use it on the job if you:

- Send as many people as you can. They will reinforce their learning with each other.
- Before the workshop, make a list of three to five things that you want them to learn. Focus on the most important things you want them to learn.
- For each idea, talk with them about how using it will help them and your company reach a business goal or objective.
- Now read the description of the training again. Are your expectations realistic? If you are uncertain, consider contacting the person or company conducting the workshop.
- Plan for their time away from the job. Research has found that trainees who are distracted by what is going on back at the office are less likely to learn and apply what they have learned. Be sure that their job will be covered, and, if possible, plan so they do not need to call back to check messages until the end of the day, or at least until lunchtime.
- If someone else has attended the training previously, arrange to have him spend a few minutes talking to the person who is going, to discuss key things he learned and how he is using them in his job.
- After the training, sit down with the employees and discuss what they learned and how they can use it to do their jobs better.
- Follow up at one-week, three-week, and six-week intervals to see how they are doing and if they could use any additional support.
- Have plenty of opportunities to use what they have learned as soon as they get back to work. The more time that goes by before they can use it, the less of the training they will use.

If you are going to a workshop or training:

- Make a list of 3-5 things you want to get out of the seminar or workshop.
- Next to each idea, skill, or technique, write how using it will help you do your job better or reach a business goal.
- Re-read the description of the training. Are your expectations realistic? If you aren't sure, consider contacting the person or company conducting the workshop.
- Make a list of questions you would like to ask at the workshop.

- Talk to someone who has attended the training previously. Ask her what she learned and how she is using it. Ask if she would be willing to meet with you after you return. See if she would be willing to be your coach.
- Plan for your work to be covered while you are in training. You will learn more if you are not distracted by what's going on back at work.
- Tell others to page you or call you only if it's an emergency.
- Plan to have your pager or cell phone turned off, not on vibrate, during the training.
- During the workshop, check your voicemail only at lunchtime, and return only those calls that absolutely can't wait until after the training.

- Make friends with the other attendees. Talk with them about how they are going to use what they are learning.
- Find a "training buddy"—someone who has similar goals and objectives for the training. Arrange to be in touch afterwards to talk about how the training is being used, any obstacles encountered, and how to overcome these obstacles.
- Set time aside within the first 24 hours back at work to go over the materials from training, and to think about what you have learned and how to use it in your job.
- As a to-do in your planner, list 3-5 new skills or behaviors that you want to use or that you want to try. Carry these forward for at least three weeks.

Research has found that people retain less

than 15% of what they learn in seminars and workshops. Following these simple tips will more than double this figure. Remember, why are you going to the workshop in the first place? If your answer is "to learn something," then doesn't it make sense to do what you can to make your training stick?

Barbara Carnes is president of Carnes and Associates, Inc., specialists in workplace learning, and a co-author of training books.

Speakers University

Carnes will be speaking at the National Speakers Association St. Louis Chapter's 4th Annual Speaker University at Edward Jones Corporate Park on April 21, co-sponsored by the *St. Louis Small Business Monthly*. For more information, contact Mary Garvey at 314-838-0711.

Get *Proven Answers* to the Greatest Challenges of *Your Selling Career*

"Closing More Sales!"

With **Tom Hopkins** *Live!*



- **MAKE DYNAMIC PRESENTATIONS** Make your words work for you
- **SEEK OUT NEW PROSPECTS** Build a strong rapport every time
- **WIN CUSTOMERS OVER** Help people buy from you
- **ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS** Get the information you need
- **GAIN YOUR CLIENT'S TRUST** 7 keys to building confidence
- **ADDRESS CUSTOMER CONCERNS** 5 steps to overcome objections
- **CLOSE MORE SALES** 5 low-profile techniques
- **MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE** The secret to success



The Best Selling Book Comes to Life

Thursday, May 17, 2001
1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency
Grand Ballroom
One St. Louis Union Station
St. Louis, MO 63103

Call Now to Register... Limited Seating
1-800-781-1118

ATTENTION MANAGERS: ASK ABOUT OUR BONUS! PREVIEW WORKSHOP & CALL TO SEE IF YOU QUALIFY FOR A FREE SEMINAR TICKET

Sponsored by

www.backtobasicsplus.com