



Tip Sheet by De Backman-Hoyle

The Learning is a Waste of Time manager

“We have some managers that think that learning and development activities are a waste of time for their staff and make their staff feel guilty for being offsite for training”



What can we do to build better credibility for learning both on the job and off the job and move the training and development agenda higher up the list of managers preferred responsibilities?

What is your managers current psyche on organisational training and development?

“The true impact of a training program will best be predicted by the work environment participants return to after the event. More specifically, this refers to the type of leader they work with and report to after their respective training.”

Wick, Jefferson, Pollock, 2008

If your managers were never held accountable by their manager for following through and transferring new knowledge, skills or abilities gained through training they may have set up a belief that suggests that return on training investment is not as important as other business investments and in that belief there is an implicit risk that they may transfer this expectation with their own staff regarding their training and development activities.



Are your senior managers known as managers that hold people accountable for putting learning to work, this means excerpting leadership when required to demand that their staff take the investment of learning and development seriously and that they expect to see transfer of learning and therefore results.

Reasons why some senior managers don't engage in training initiatives

1. They just don't believe in investing in training and development because they have never had a good experience of training and development to date themselves, they have invested lots of money previously into training and development activities that reaped little business gains – they are carrying scar tissue.
2. They have had performance problems with a person who is been given the opportunity of attending the program, perhaps the senior manager has written this employee off as a helpless case and cannot see why the business is investing in them, there is personal baggage to be sorted out between the senior manager and their staff member.
3. The senior manager is so overloaded with what is happening to themselves within the business that they just cannot see a way to fit one more thing on their priority list including looking for opportunity and motive to gain transfer of learning with this staff member
4. The senior manager recently has been lobbying for resources for their business unit activities and has been knocked back and is holding a grudge against the HR team because they managed to secure funds for training at the same time.



Managers' Reactions to Employees' Using New Capabilities Learned in Development Programs

| <i>Manager's Action</i> | <i>Prevent Application</i> | <i>Discourage Application</i> | <i>Indifference</i> | <i>Encourage Use</i> | <i>Require Use</i> |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------|
| Reinforcement | ← Negative Reinforcement → | | | ← Positive Reinforcement → | |
| Effect on Learning | Counteracts benefits of learning and development; reduces return on investment | | | Enhances benefits of learning and development; increases ROI | |
| Effect on Employee | Confuses employees; devalues learning and discourages self-development | | | Encourages employee to continue learning; reinforces value of self-development | |

What is in it for a Senior Manager? WIFY

- You benefit when your employees performance improves – the better they are the better for you
- You gain a reputation as someone who is good at developing people – people look to work for senior managers who have this ability
- You get to plan and have staff that can step into some of your roles – excellent succession preparation
- You are seen as someone who makes good business decisions related to employees time and company resources
- It is in your own self interest as well as your staff interest to gain a return on training investment
- Developing others is seen as a hallmark of a great leaders.



Pre-Training Discussions are Important

“There is good evidence that training yields better results when managers and their direct reports meet beforehand. Managers that had discussions before and after the training with their staff members achieved significantly higher levels of skill application than people who attended the same programs but did not have these conversations.”

Brinkerhoff and Montesino

“Our experience suggests that learning and development programs that provide ongoing support for learners – especially during the first few crucial weeks of the transfer phase – enjoy a greater return on their educational investments. Supports for transfer and application should include the environment, people, and systems.”

Wick, Jefferson, Pollock, 2008

This tip sheet is part of the skills training that is covered in the Making Managers Matter programs.

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