



Accidental Trainers Need Your Support

Train-the-Trainer Programs

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Accidental trainers? You know, the managers, subject matter experts, supervisors—anyone in your organization that has been put into the trainer role. For some, the role is exciting and rewarding, for others, it can be frightening and a burden.

Training is about change. It's about learning new skills, behaviors and attitudes. Learning occurs in many situations from one-on-one coaching to formal classroom to virtual settings such as e-learning or webcasts. How does your organization support your accidental trainers and plan for training?

The Challenge:

A salty snack manufacturer decided to revise the orientation program for new hires. The management team brought together a good mix of employees to develop the training design and new training materials. A consultant led them through the planning and implementation process. Everyone was excited and the new training design was a success. A year later, new hires were simply thrown into their jobs—the new orientation program was abandoned. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated occurrence. Here are some common barriers that all trainers face:

1. **Your organization's culture may actually punish the new behavior.** For example, does your compensation system reward the new behaviors or reinforce the old? Do you reward quality or reward quantity? Do you allow time for training to occur?
2. **Supervisors undermine the training program.** The participant's supervisors may not fully understand the new knowledge, skills or behaviors and do not support the changes. Or, the supervisors may not agree with the new program and undermine the efforts.
3. **Supervisors may not be the proper role model for the change.** Depending upon your organization's culture and the supervisor's style, someone other than the supervisor may be a better choice for training.
4. **It's difficult for participants to change.** Without reinforcement, participants who find the new skills, behaviors and attitudes difficult, revert to their old way of doing things. If they are the only one using the new skills, peer pressure may cause them to reject the new learning.
5. **Accidental Trainers do not receive training.** Do your trainers understand the role they play in the organization? Do you provide them with training and coaching? Do they understand how adults learn and how to provide interesting and relevant information?

Deborah Miller, a Project and Process Specialist, has more than 25 years consulting and coaching experience. Deb believes in sharing her expertise with her clients so your staff learns how to manage and coach others—becoming self-sufficient and proficient. Deb is a Six Sigma Black Belt and Lean in Healthcare certified.

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