



# The Way to Success

CHANGING THE WAY THAT TRAINING WORKS

The  
Advantage  
Way

## CALENDAR

### WEB BRIEFINGS

**Courageous Training: Bold Actions  
for Business Results**  
February 28, 2008  
May 6, 2008  
September 25, 2008

### TRAINING 2008 CONFERENCE

Atlanta, GA - February 3, 2008

**Success Case Method**  
Dr. Robert Brinkerhoff

**Visualizing Value**  
Larry Mohl - Children's Healthcare  
of Atlanta

### KNOWLEDGE ADVISORS ANALYTICS SYMPOSIUM

San Diego, CA - March 5, 2008

**Success Case Method**  
Dr. Robert Brinkerhoff

### ISPI CONFERENCE

New York, NY - April 5-8, 2008

**Training Impact Evaluation that  
Senior Leaders Believe and Use**  
Dr. Robert Brinkerhoff

**Driving and Measuring Business  
Results from Training**  
Dr. Robert Brinkerhoff and Tim Mooney

### ASTD CONFERENCE

San Diego, CA - June 1-4, 2008

**Using Evaluation to Move from  
Training Partner to Business Partner**  
Darell Provencher - Nike  
Tim Mooney - APG

**Training Impact Evaluation that Senior  
Leaders Believe and Use**  
Dr. Robert Brinkerhoff

**The Training's NOT the Thing: Getting  
Business Results From Training**  
Lisa Bell - Holcim  
Carolyn Laughlin - APG

## Are you focusing training decisions on what matters most?

One of my grade school teachers wrote on my report card, "Robby can sometimes be a bit of a smart aleck." Maybe she was right, as the following incident could show...

I was on a panel at a major meeting of training leaders and principal vendors discussing the bottom-line impact of leadership and management development training. An audience member asked me: "Based on your experience, how should we go about choosing the best program to develop our front line supervisors?"

Here's how I answered: *"Look at the color of the trainee materials binder covers. Then choose the program that has materials matching the principal décor of your training center."*

This was indeed a flippant response and I quickly apologized over the sound of sharp intakes of breath from my fellow panelists. I went on to explain my point - which despite my smart aleck response, I firmly believe is true.

The training program itself is only "a supporting actor" in the drama of training impact. Yes, it has to be a good program, meeting standards of good instructional design and adult learning. But beyond that, whether you get impact from the program depends on how thoroughly and carefully you implement it.

Training impact has everything to do with execution, beginning well before the program is "delivered" and continuing well beyond the point at which trainees complete their final in-class activity. A robust and consistent implementation process, supported by the right tools for manager engagement and follow-up, can achieve outstanding results from almost any reasonably sound training intervention. A weak implementation process that doesn't involve line managers and hold them accountable for supporting performance improvement will undermine the business results of even the most outstanding offerings from the world's greatest training vendors.

Apparently the readers of our newsletter have similar feelings. In our survey last issue, we asked: "What are your top three challenges?" Overwhelmingly, people reported that **systematically increasing the business impact of training** was the top challenge (89%). This was followed by **measuring the impact of training** (69%) and then **building leadership talent** (42%). (If you would like the complete results from the survey, simply reply to this e-mail and we will be happy to send them to you.)

What strikes me about these results is that the top two challenges are not about training content (i.e., what is the hottest topic or best program?), but about training implementation (i.e., how do we make it work?). Apparently, we in the L&D profession are beginning to recognize that our training content, design and materials are already OK; but we need to steadfastly guide our organizations to invest as much care, effort and resources into the implementation process as we do in the training content and materials.

We have had several customers in our Users Group (such as Holcim Cement) report that they were able to double the likelihood of business impact when their systematic process for aligning all stakeholders was followed.

Getting great results from training, not "delivering" great training is our challenge for the future.

Rob Brinkerhoff

Robert O. Brinkerhoff, EdD, is a global thought leader on training effectiveness and evaluation, and creator of The Advantage Way<sup>SM</sup> and Success Case Evaluation Method<sup>®</sup>.

[Advantage Performance Group](#) is a performance development company whose Advantage Way<sup>SM</sup> approach guarantees measurable business impact from training.

Please visit our [website](#) or contact Sheryl Sundeen at Advantage Performance Group for more information via email: [SSundeen@advantageperformance.com](mailto:SSundeen@advantageperformance.com)

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