



# 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*

## ROI?..... Why?

ROI - as a training manager, you need to feel guilty if you're not focused on it. Or do you? Do typical ROI measures provide you with the answers you really need?

Let's step back. On one hand, the recent ROI push has been helpful because it has focused attention on the potential payoff of training. This is a good thing. On the other hand, it may have deflected resources from more constructive purposes, and bamboozled practitioners and their clients about the true nature of learning for performance improvement. This isn't so good.

Here's an interesting story from the electrical power industry. A training manager, young but who should have known better, conducted an ROI study of the impact of a personal productivity training program. Following the training vendor's advice, he surveyed the "time saved" by trainees using their recent training. Using estimates of trainee salaries and similar data, he calculated the dollar value of that "saved" time. From there, it was an easy - though slippery - step to an ROI estimate.

Then he presented his findings to senior management. Another slippery step! Here's what happened:  
T&D Guy (proudly): "So, as you can see, the training program provided a return on investment of a whopping 1600 percent!"

Senior Exec: "So that means for every dollar we spent on the training, we got back 16 dollars?"

T&D Guy: "... well, yes."

Senior Exec: "Do you know the margins we earn on the power we sell?"

T&D Guy: "I'm not too sure, but..."

Senior Exec (interrupting): "It's about 6%. So you're telling me we make a lot more money on our training than we do on our core product. It seems to me that you and your data are basically suggesting that we shut down all our power plants and just do training, and we'll make way more money. Do I have that right?"

At this point, the training manager had his foot so deeply inserted in his mouth that the game was over (as well as his

credibility at that company). The point is that these ROI procedures may lead to some very unrealistic estimates. Worse, they can reinforce the nagging doubts some senior executives may harbor—that their training departments are out of touch with the fundamentals of the business, and they really “just don’t get it”.

From our experience, we know that what senior leaders want is simply some credible and trustworthy evidence that training is aimed in the right direction, and that people end up using it in ways that can—and do!—make a difference. We fully believe there are more direct, more sensible, and more strategically useful ways to measure training and its impact than the old-fashioned ROI study.

Many members of our Advantage Way Users Group have done evaluations using the Success Case Method to produce irrefutable evidence that training is having an impact on goals and metrics that senior managers really care about. Better yet, they have linked the achievement of these valuable results to specific behaviors of line managers and other players in the trainees’ world that make or break success. Armed with this data, they partner with managers and senior executives to reduce the “scrap rate” of training and improve training results.

In a nutshell, we think it is short-sighted to waste precious training resources on self-serving evaluations that few people use or believe anyway. Evaluation should “pay its own way” – producing actionable results that are worth more than the costs of the evaluation. This is not just a vision or hallucination. We and our user group members are doing this and it is paying off.

Want to learn more? Contact us. Or, for a stronger dose, join us in Chicago on October 30th for the HRD Professional Development Day on "Improving Training Effectiveness." To dig into these concepts in more detail, please visit our [web page](http://www.advantageperformance.com/rsvp/workshop) (www.advantageperformance.com/rsvp/workshop).

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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