



The Way to Success

CHANGING THE WAY THAT TRAINING WORKS

The
Advantage
Way

CALENDAR

Web Briefing:

*Courageous Training: Bold Actions
for Business Results*

October 2, 2008

December 4, 2008

Human Capital Institute

*Webinar: Leadership Development
As a Business Process*

July 16, 2008 - 2-3 pm EDT

*Larry Mohl - Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
Tim Mooney, Advantage Performance Group*

**Society of HR Management (SHRM)
Regional Conference**

*Courageous Training: Bold Actions
for Business Results*

September 16, 2008 - Rockford, IL

Tim Mooney, Advantage Performance Group

ISPI Conference

Albuquerque, NM

September 24-25, 2008

*Driving and Measuring Individual and
Business Performance Results from
Training*

*Robert O. Brinkerhoff & Tim Mooney,
Advantage Performance Group*

*Courageous Training: Bold Actions
for Business Results*

Tim Mooney, Advantage Performance Group

Who's Really Your Training "Customer?"

Imagine this: You've just finished leading a training workshop and say to the group, "You may have noticed that I'm not handing out an evaluation form. That's because I don't care whether you liked me, or today's session for that matter."

Now imagine the startled gasps from your audience. Are you serious? Have you lost your mind? Rest assured, we are not proposing that training should aim to annoy customers. On the other hand, there is a lot going wrong in training departments around the issue of properly serving training's true customers.

Training is not a customer service operation, but it has important customers whose needs must be served, and served well. Many training department practices would lead you to believe that trainees are the principal customer group. Training departments bend over backwards to assure trainees of an enjoyable training experience; large sums of money are spent on training meal menus, recreational facilities, high-tech equipment, trendy furniture, and other accoutrements.

There is nothing wrong with efforts to make the learning experience enjoyable. But there is something deeply wrong with being fuzzy about whom the customer of the training operation really is. If training is construed principally as a staff benefit - to provide learning primarily to attract and retain employees -- then conceiving the training operation as if it were a university campus or commercial conference center is just fine.

But the overarching purpose of workplace learning is to help the business perform and succeed. For this strategic purpose, the ultimate customer is executive leadership, and the proximate customer is line management – the bosses of trainees. It is line managers' needs, first and foremost, that should be served.

There is a further, subtler dysfunction with conducting the training operation from a customer service foundation. A customer service mentality poses a possible viewpoint that the customer needs only to "sit back and be served." In the training business, if we are to expect and achieve results, nothing could be farther from the truth. The trainee-manager customer needs to get up, get on board with the goals of the training, and play a very active role in making sure those goals are achieved.

Our Advantage Way process starts and finishes with managers, and makes sure they play their part in the drama of training impact. Because without their active and committed engagement, most training resources yield little return. We suggest that you review your metrics, practices, and goals. If you are not focused on the goals and roles of managers and senior leaders, and what they need to do to make training work, your training efforts may be headed in the wrong direction – and inadvertently digging the low-impact hole even deeper.

Sincerely,

Rob Brinkerhoff

P.S. Tim Mooney and I have written a new book, *Courageous Training*, which has just been released and is available [online](#) at Amazon.com.

Robert O. Brinkerhoff, EdD, is a global thought leader on training effectiveness and evaluation, and creator of The Advantage WaySM and Success Case Evaluation Method[®].

[Advantage Performance Group](#) is a performance development company whose Advantage WaySM 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

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