

The Way to Success

CHANGING THE WAY THAT TRAINING WORKS



The Advantage Way

CALENDAR

Web Briefing:

Courageous Training: Bold Actions for Business Results
December 4, 2008

National Staff Development Council

Washington, D.C.
December 9, 2008

Conducting Level Four Evaluations Consistently

Tim Mooney
Advantage Performance Group

Corporate Learning and Development Summit

Arlington, VA
January 28-30, 2009

Communicate the Business Results of Your Corporate University to Senior Executives

Tim Mooney
Advantage Performance Group

Business Transformation: Turn Your Learning Program into a Business Partner for Increased Results

Robert O. Brinkerhoff
Advantage Performance Group

Advantage Way User Group Conference

Tempe, AZ
February 10-12, 2009

Katry Koelle—Verizon, Inc.
Sean Dineen—Limited Brands
Lisa Graham—Dell, Inc.
Kurt Wiesenberger—SPX
Mark Hamilton—SPX

ISPI Conference

Orlando, FL
April 18-22, 2009

Driving Measurable Individual and Business Results from Training

Robert O. Brinkerhoff and Tim Mooney
Advantage Performance Group

ASTD Conference

Washington, D.C.
May 30-June 3, 2009

Guarantee Performance and Business Impact

Robert O. Brinkerhoff and Tim Mooney
Advantage Performance Group

Using Evaluation to Drive Strategic Change in Leadership Development

Alejandro Reyes
and Lisa Graham—Dell, Inc.
Tim Mooney—Advantage Performance Group

Yes, You Can Guarantee Business Impact from Training!

Robert O. Brinkerhoff
Advantage Performance Group

Learning & Development lessons from Warren Buffett

I am sure I'm not alone in my concerns about the credit crisis and the dismal economic news that bombards us daily. But I took a break the other day from watching the stock market roller coaster to ponder an insightful article written by billionaire investor Warren Buffett.

Mr. Buffett used a guest commentary article in the *New York Times* to announce that he's buying stocks during these turbulent economic times.

"A simple rule dictates my buying: Be fearful when others are greedy, and be greedy when others are fearful," said Buffett. "And most certainly, fear is now widespread, gripping even seasoned investors." (*New York Times*, October 17, 2008)

Though learning professionals around the globe are probably bracing themselves for budget cuts and potential lay-offs within their training departments, I saw Buffett's wisdom as having a direct bearing on our situations in HRD. These times of fear may actually be giving us a gift – opening a door with an invitation to become better business partners and fiscal stewards for our corporate customers.

We have a golden opportunity to help our organizations constructively raise questions about and focus on *measurable* business results from our training initiatives. And our success in doing this can dramatically raise the stock (excuse the pun) of our L&D departments. Stick with me on my logic.

- Most likely organizations will be cutting back on the training that gets delivered during the next few months in an effort to save money or focus employees on the "mission critical" tasks.
- The training that does move forward must more than ever be closely aligned with mission critical issues (e.g., improving sales results, reducing operating costs).
- Our organizations will rely more than ever on the success of these initiatives and the training that supports them. Our senior leaders and stakeholders should have higher expectations for what the training should (needs to) help produce in terms of business impact.
- By helping our senior leaders raise expectations for measurable value from learning, we create the opportunity to push for the tangible management-

commitment actions that every seasoned L&D professional knows make a difference in turning training into results.

- These management actions, when we guide them to the critical support variables, such as having managers hold trainees accountable for using new learning, will significantly increase the likelihood that our L&D initiatives will produce more meaningful and measurable business results.
- This tangible success will shine a positive light on the strategic value of L&D in our organizations, and help us drive a future where L&D plays a more meaningful and valued business role.

Instead of fearing that our programs and resources will be cut and trying to lie low, now is the time to be “greedy.” Seize the moment, show courage, take a bold step and suggest (no, *demand*) that training be executed in the right way—i.e., operated with the right “before” and “after” actions that ensure significant and measurable business impact. The demands should include:

- Meeting with executive stakeholders to define and align expectations around business results and accountabilities for the learning and performance improvement initiative
- Having managers meet with their staff before training to create a specific line-of-sight for how the training should be applied in critical on-the-job behavior
- Having trainees develop SMART actions plans during training for putting the new skills to use immediately
- Having managers meet with employees after training to build accountability for those action plans
- Building evaluation into the process and then meeting with the senior stakeholders to review what worked and why (and what didn’t work and why not).

Members of our Advantage Way User Group have employed the *Courageous Training* philosophy to successfully raise expectations and consistently deliver higher business results for their organizations. They have found that this approach has changed the dynamic between L&D and line management and has helped them elevate their roles in the business. Now is the time to be “greedy!”

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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