

The Way to Success

CHANGING THE WAY THAT TRAINING WORKS



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Business Impact from Training!**
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“However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.”

Sir Winston Churchill

This wonderful quotation from one of the most courageous leaders of the 20th century nicely sets the tone for this edition of the *Way to Success* newsletter.

Every year the Advantage Way User Group convenes to share best-practices and to discuss successes and challenges in using training to accelerate measurable business results for their organizations. This past month 40 dedicated Advantage Way practitioners assembled in Phoenix not just to talk about beautiful strategy but also – in the words of Winston Churchill – to look at results.

I will shine a light on some trend-setting leaders (both line managers and HRD Professionals) who have courageously put the *beautiful strategy* of The Advantage Way to work-- and produced highly significant results.

Kathy Koelle (General Manager for Verizon’s West Coast Region) shared her experience in driving business results through better performance management and leveraging The Advantage Way. The company was facing strong competition which necessitated stretch goals in terms of profits, productivity, and customer service.

She recognized that building the leaders’ skills in managing performance (using the Symphony program) was critical in achieving the stretch goals. And she saw The Advantage Way as the best way to assure that this training paid off. Their Success Case study found that managers now are more effectively setting clear expectations and making sure those expectations are aligned with regional goals. This initiative has resulted in measurable improvements in key operational metrics, including increases in productivity which have saved the organization more than \$1.5 million!

Kurt Wiesenberger (Director of Management Development) and Mark Hamilton (VP of Leadership Development) overviewed how SPX prepares future General Managers. Their comprehensive executive development program spanned 9 months and utilized training content from two providers and incorporated action learning projects.

SPX uses The Advantage Way process to build credibility, to specifically connect SPX’s business strategy to the

executive development program, and to gain senior executive commitment. Although the primary goal of this initiative (more leaders ready to assume executive roles) will take several years to fully materialize, SPX has been able to identify some significant short term results through the Success Case Evaluation Method®. These results included improved margins through better pricing and a multi-million dollar cost savings due to facility consolidations—all directly tied to what was learned and used from the program.

Sean Dineen (Director of L&D) presented how Limited Brands tackled an important store operations issue following the implementation of a new labor scheduling system across the enterprise. After implementing the system, the organization found the Store Managers were not effectively using the system and District Managers were wasting significant time editing scheduling reports. And even more critical, the stores didn't have the proper staffing to drive revenues and profits.

The Impact Mapping process helped Sean surface and define this business need—a customized learning process for Store Managers on the scheduling system. Sean also used the principles in The Advantage Way Impact Booster to build manager engagement throughout this process, because he knew training alone wouldn't produce behavior change. A Success Case study revealed an increase in scheduling effectiveness that in turn drove an increase in sales conversion (one of their key sales metrics) due to having the right people in the right place at the right time.

Lisa Graham (Learning Consultant) told how Dell integrated The Advantage Way process into their global roll-out of a Front-Line Leader program to maximize their training investment. Dell had high expectations for this comprehensive five-day experiential program. They expected participants to not just learn new skills, but actually apply what they learned to address important business issues. They used Impact Maps to create a line-of-sight link between the business goals, the desired leadership behaviors and the key learning objectives throughout the program. Dell also employed several creative approaches to build manager engagement around the globe, including recording the Impact Booster sessions to ensure that managers were prepared to support the front-line leaders.

A Success Case study documented that the program led to improved results in customer experience scores, increased sales, and improved team productivity. The study also revealed a correlation between manager engagement and participants who produced tangible and important results.

So what can we take away from these outstanding examples?

- L&D organizations can enhance their credibility with business leaders by being Bulldogs when it comes to aligning training investments to business issues and delivering measurable business results.
- These trend-setters are successfully evolving their

L&D organizations from “Training Partners” to “Business Partners.”

- Managers play a critical role in turning learning into business results. Courageous Training leaders are developing creative ways to help managers play this role.

Strategy can be a beautiful thing. But results are even more beautiful!

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: TMooney@advantageperformance.com

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