

Why Most Strategic Training Fails in Call Centers

Assuming an organization employs competent trainers, the reason why most strategic training fails in call centers is because it is not strategic. In addition, the methodology is usually ineffective. Many people do not realize that an organization's ability to drive change management is directly linked to the effective training in so many key areas. Areas such as customer satisfaction, cost containment, productivity, employee retention, quality improvement, etc.

Too often, companies rely on lectures, inspirational speeches, videos, discussion groups and simulation exercises. While these methods may get high marks from participants, studies have shown that they do not change previous behavior. Knowing is not the same as doing; good intentions are too easily crushed by old habits. In addition, theoretical or inspirational training approaches can be ambiguous and do not correlate well to direct change management.

As aforementioned, most companies are really not strategic with their training. They fail to link their curriculum with organizational strategies and day-to-day management behavior. Often what happens in the classroom, and on the job, are not tied together with any impact metrics. As trainees attend mandatory courses, they tend to follow the general curriculum as required. Though well intended, this type of behavior training is usually HR driven and may only cover current management fads, or give enthusiastic commitments toward building "the new culture". Once completing this company obligation, the employee goes back to work and forgets 80% of the material within a week.

Steps to using training as a key strategic tool:

Use training technologies that build how-to skills that are highly relevant and immediately applicable. Research clearly shows that people tend to change behavior in their way of thinking, rather than think themselves into a new way of acting. Training that produces tangible results starts by changing behavior - which ultimately changes attitudes. Most executives and many professional trainers get this backward.

Follow up on training sessions with on-the-job coaching and support from managers. A Motorola ([News](#) - [Alert](#)) Inc. study has found that those plants where quality improvement training is reinforced by senior management got a \$33 return on every dollar invested in training. Plants providing the same training without top management follow-up, produced a negative return on investment. An earlier Xerox Inc. study showed that trainees retained an equivalent 13% of skills after six months if managers failed to provide coaching and support.

Build training around organizational objectives and strategies. Trainees should immediately see the connection between their new skills and where the organization is going. This makes training more relevant - and gets everyone focused on applying their new skills to the organization's key priorities and goals.

Another key principle is practiced by Dell ([News](#) - [Alert](#)) Computer Corp., it's called Management Participation. Chief executive Kevin Rowland and his executives are not only first in line for service and quality training, but they are also the trainers delivering sessions to their people. The process is repeated throughout the company to the entry-level supervisors.

This trend to cascade train down from senior management snaps everyone to attention. Also, training attendance problems disappear and results-oriented executives jettison all the nice-to-do, but irrelevant training. In addition, trainees do not cross their arms and ask, *is the organization*

really serious about this stuff? Finally, managers achieve a deeper level of skill development as they teach others, while they practice what they are now preaching and teaching.

For further information on how to build an effective training model, please contact us at www.ic3i.com

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