

Enhancing Training Application: Three Successful Methods

by

Dr. Will Powers
Dept. of Communication Studies
Texas Christian University
w.powers@tcu.edu

Presented to the Training and Development Division at the National Communication Association
Convention, November 23, 2008 in San Diego, California

Enhancing Training Application
by
Dr. Will Powers
Texas Christian University

Once a workshop or seminar is finished, it is truly (and unfortunately) finished. The trainer and participant part ways— sometimes never to meet again. Thus, the application burden falls directly on the shoulders of the participant—and the organization. However, frequently the trainer is held accountable by the participant and the organization when application does not occur. The CK Communication, Training, and Learning System now offers a tool that will allow training professionals to assist the participants to better apply the training content and to assist the organization in its efforts to motivate and support their workforce development efforts. There are three options now available partly because of technological developments that will positively impact actual participant application: Blended Training, Supervisory Mentoring, and Internal Support Programs.

1. Blended Training

The basic aspect of Blended Learning is blending the very best elements of face-to-face workshops/seminars by outstanding trainers with the consistent and systematic web-enhanced continuation of the Trainer's presence with each and every participant for an extended timeframe. While the Trainer cannot physically attend to each and every participant after the workshop or seminar has concluded, now the Trainer can maintain a presence with participants for an extended timeframe after the seminar through appropriate use of the CK System. This system allows Trainers to easily author their own programs into the online learning model. This allows each Trainer to extend their presence with each participant daily or weekly over 15 to 50 workdays or weeks.

Authoring is easy for most Trainers because the most important information units from the workshop/seminar (Concept Keys) are already contained in the Facilitator Manual, the Participant Manual, the Hand-Outs, and the PowerPoint displays. It really makes authoring a relatively simple process that may be as easy as to copy and paste of key information. The System will send a Gentle Reminder email to each participant with a link to their own account at the CK website where a new Key and Micro-lesson representing the seminar content are waiting each day/week; along with a set of Food For Thought questions. It takes less than 5 minutes to process the seminar content in the CK System because it presents a little, but important, bit of key information at a time. Weekly there is a Quiz and Most Important Key self-selection and Application Action Plan self-determination and Action Outcome Reports that assist with employee motivation to apply especially when the supervisor obtains access. There are additional motivational elements built-in along with accountability because the Trainer will allow the HRM or SBO access to employee participation in the program along with access being granted to the individual employee's supervisors.

2. Supervisory Mentoring and Appraisal

Rarely have Supervisors received any responsibility or information about their employees performance in developmental programs other than notification that they will be gone on some HR or Training program. Now, the Supervisor's skills in mentoring, appraisal, and motivating can be better utilized to enhance employee orientations toward actually applying the key information from the organizations workforce development efforts.

Participants ask themselves, "What's in it for me to change what I have been doing and succeeding at for "x" number of years?" The answer is to get the supervisors involved in a positive and supportive manner. By positioning the supervisors as mentors who really want to

help the participants improve their performance and reap the rewards for doing so, not only do the participants acquire motivation to change in a positive direction but they also establish more positive working relationships with the boss. And that is an important thing. The CK Learning System allows the program owner to delegate access to selected participant responses and engagement and action plans. When the Supervisor receives that access, the Supervisor can begin to play a significant role in enhancing the outcomes of workforce development efforts and greatly impact the ROI of the workforce development investment in each employee.

Occasionally, the supervisor needs training in this area or may just not be the right person to mentor and honestly appraise other's improvements. In that instance, the answer is to not confine the role of mentor to just supervisors but expand it to include key colleagues within the organizational system; frequently the special training required for mentorship skill is found in the HR department.

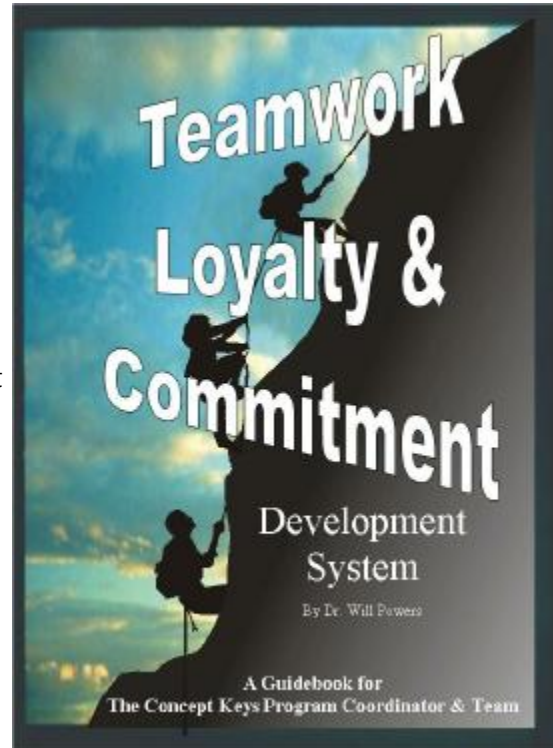
3. Organizational Internal Support Programs

There have been many books written on this topic as we all realize the significance of monitoring, observing, recognizing, and rewarding desired behavior. The CK Learning System provides a Teamwork, Loyalty, and Commitment E-Manual to organizational leaders that is filled with positive and often fun-filled program management options and support activity options that have all worked somewhere within a low cost and low time-consumption parameter. Organizational leaders are encouraged to select the activities that will work best in their culture and circumstances to keep (or make) positive change from training a highly visible cultural ingredient. And, occasionally, the organization brings the trainer in for consultation with the internal support program team as they design their support program. Here is the promotional material for this E-Manual:

The Teamwork, Loyalty, and Commitment Development System: A Guidebook for the Concept Keys Program Coordinator and Team
by [Dr. Will Powers, Project Coordinators, and Teachers](#)

This system provides you, your project coordinator, and your project team with foundational guidelines for developing an internal improvement support project. Such a project produces a maximally productive environment for improvement by everyone in your organization. With a solid, employee-determined internal support system for employee improvement, Concept Keys Programs will produce outstanding results with additional cultural development benefits. With Program prepayment, this e-manual is offered at no cost including rights for duplication and distribution in electronic or paper form to the Project Team Coordinator and Team members as well as selected leaders to aid in the success of the Project.

[\\$49.95 USD](#)



Summary

Professionals in the training and development community now have a very high quality tool that will dramatically increase the actual application of training efforts. It just doesn't get any better than this. For more information, visit the website (www.conceptkeys.com) and the materials in the bibliography.

Bibliography

Bodie, G. D., Fitch-Hauser, M., & Powers, W. G. (2008). Teaching social skills: Integrating an online learning system into traditional curriculum. In R. Zheng, & S. P. Ferris, (Eds.), *Understanding online instructional modeling: Theories and practices* (pp. 87-112). Idea Group.

Bodie, G. D., Powers, W. G., & Fitch-Hauser, M. (2006). Chunking, priming and active learning: Toward an innovative and blended approach to teaching communication related skills. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 14, 119-135.

Cook, J. and Powers, W. G. (2007). A case study on strengthening workforce training outcomes. *Training & Management Development Methods*. 21:1. 2: 1-10.

Powers, W. G., Bodie, G., & Fitch-Hauser, M. (2006). Improving training outcomes: an innovative approach. *International Journal of Applied Training and Development*. 1:1.