

# Changing Results Through Building People Capability

## BRIEF

*So often investment of time and money in training is wasted. Why? Because prior to the training, there was not a clear link established between results, capability that will drive those results, and current capability. Training should only occur because the business is not getting, or will not get, the results it requires.*

## INTRODUCTION

Why do we train people in our workplaces? This simple question is all too often not properly answered, and thus not properly understood. To effectively answer this question we first need to step backward.

There are a lot of “nice” reasons for “training”. However, from the point of view of the business, and the business shareholders, whoever they are, there is only one reason for undertaking training. That is *to change some aspect of the business performance that is not currently where it needs to be*. Either it has slipped below standard, or the standard was OK but has been raised to a new level. The nice reasons for training include building knowledge, strengthening individuals etc. The real and perhaps selfish fundamental driver of the need for training should be because *an aspect of the business performance needs to improve ... simple*.

Assuming we accept the above, then we must tackle the real question of changing results through people. The real opportunity then presents itself. How do we build the capability of our people such that they sustain ongoing improvement of the business's performance as customer needs develop and change? (Remember, the customer has much choice now. Meeting their needs is now imperative. If you don't, they will go elsewhere.)

### **Change People → Change Workplace → Change Results**

Let us now look at what needs to happen, and how, if a change in business performance (results) is required, and is required to be sustained, and is likely to need ongoing improvement.

## WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

Firstly, as per the heading above, people need to change. Their habits, behaviours, actions based on using new skills will need to be developed. In this we thus see that only a skill is of value to the business. Knowledge is nice to have, but from the businesses viewpoint, perhaps again selfish, knowledge is of absolutely no value unless it supports a skill.

The need for people to change (in order to eventually get results to change) sits well with Albert Einstein's definition of insanity – *doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results*.

If people change, then the workplace will change. If the workplace changes, then results will change. Clearly of course this can work in the negative just as easily, perhaps more so, than in the positive! Thus this change in people must be closely managed over time.

## HOW

Most “training courses” people are sent on achieve far less than the organiser wanted to achieve. In worse cases, which occur far too often, nothing changes. The reason for this is quite simple. Knowledge was gained, but this was not transferred into a new or strengthened skill which was actually the real need of the training course.

It is at this point we therefore need to drop the word “training”. Why? Because training, as it is commonly viewed, is just the start. At this point we replace the word training with “capability development”. That is the capability of applying a new skill (or a strengthened existing skill). Remember, it is the skill only that is of value to the business. The skill will directly create value in a business, or improve results, or better manage risk. Capability development is the gradual and continual development of new skills in line with the needs of the business.

Capability development occurs in four phases as per the model following.

Training = Knows

Training + On Job Development = Understands

Training + Understands + Practice = Can Do

Training + Understands + Practice + “Work Easier” = Will Do

The development of capability *starts* with “training”. This is where knowledge is acquired, and perhaps, where made possible and practical, some skill development starts.

Following “training”, the person starts using the skill within their job. At some point (not with everyone) “the light comes on”. (This can occur in the training room where skill development starts.) The person now understands.

With knowledge and understanding and then practice, the person will develop the capability of applying the skill. Now they can do it. If their work then becomes easier, they *will* do it.

Some people ask does the work always become easier? Yes it does, but that may have meant the business redefined their work role right back at the start such that new skills were required.

The development of the capability after “training” does not occur on its own. It only occurs with solid mentoring and coaching as per below.

Training = Knows

Mentoring and Coaching

Training + OJD = Understands

Training + Understands + Practice = Can Do

Training + Understands + Practice + “Work Easier” = Will Do

Mentoring and coaching is a key requirement of capability development. *Without mentoring and coaching the original intent of the “training” rarely sticks.* A change in results is rarely achieved. The learner needs to apply the new skill. They then need to discuss their experiences with someone who has a vested interest in their capability development, and someone experienced in the skill. It is through the cycle of “try, question, try again” that capability is developed.

From the point of view of the business, mentoring also presents another golden opportunity. Mentoring permits the identification of the 10 to 20% of people who will really make the difference in whatever results are being aimed at. Once identified, further capability development can be targeted.

## SUMMARY

If you want to change an aspect of a business's performance, a result, you do so most effectively long term by building people capability. Building people capability is so much more than "training". It is a journey that starts with training and is sealed with the cycle of "try, question, try again" underpinned by mentoring and coaching. Thus, look well beyond "training" if a change in result is the ultimate aim.

Imagine if you developed the capability of your staff and they left ... Imagine if you didn't develop the capability your staff and they stayed!

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