

Real People's Tips for Delivering High Impact Learning & Development on a Shoestring

Training and development budgets are often the first to suffer in an economic crisis, but ensuring your workforce are fully skilled to deliver maximum performance is one way to ensure that you remain in a strong position against your competitors.

If your budget is tight this year then why not consider other development methods? Many people fall into the trap of thinking that a training course is the answer. There are so many other learning methods (both on and off job) available which may be more suitable to the learners needs and many of which can be delivered at virtually no cost.

For example: On the job coaching, project groups, work shadowing, secondments, mentoring, research on the Internet, networking and action learning sets.

Here are some of our top tips for providing high quality learning and development in a tough economic climate:

1. Encourage staff to network – Seek out the creative and like minded

Exposure to new ways of doing things and different people is crucial to our learning. Creativity and innovation are essential skills for all staff if we are to survive the recession. Don't be afraid to take other people's ideas and make them work for you. Be bold and experiment with new ways of doing things.

2. Maintain enthusiasm for training – create a hook

When drafting course advertisements or joining instructions, raise their curiosity by saying something a little different. This may involve changing the course title or adding a strapline. For example: "*Time management – work smarter, not harder*" may be more appealing than simply calling it "*Time management*". Be careful not to get too carried away with glamorizing the title itself though. It's much more important that the content achieves what it is intended to.

3. KISS

The key is keeping it short and simple! We're all busy and under pressure to deliver on our targets and in these circumstances it is all too easy to think, "I don't have time for training". Don't give them a reason not to attend, give them a reason to attend.

to learning. Sometimes a training course can be divided into bite sized chunks so that learning can be delivered in short bursts rather than a full day or two-hourly sessions. This provides much more flexibility for the learner and often means that the learner is more focused during the session.

Real People can run many of our training courses in bite sized format. Why not speak to your consultant to find out more about how this could work for you?

4. Adapt a person centered approach to learning

For many people training is something that is done to them. This should never be the case! It is important that you take the time to consider and agree the course aims and objectives.

Is the content and style of the session able to be adapted to meet individuals learning needs/preferences? Getting this right can help to ensure people buy in right from the start.

At the beginning of your session run through the published objectives and ask participants to discuss and write down their take out items. What they want to take away from the training. Ask them to reflect on this half way through and at the end of the day to ensure the learning is meeting their needs.

5. Know your audience/environment

The most effective training is when there is a clear rationale for the training to take place. It is vital that development opportunities are linked to a clear business need. When money is tight it is even more important that we do not waste our training budgets. Training is a precious resource!

Instruct a course sponsor, a senior member of staff who is ultimately responsible for ensuring the training meets the operational needs of the organisation. Consider the learning outcomes and ensure there are adequate opportunities to put the learning into practice. Measure whether the learning intervention has been successful. What difference has it made? What was the added value? Was it really worth the investment?

Ensure line manager buy in. They are responsible for monitoring their staff member's progress and for providing follow up coaching.

6. Find your own in house experts

It isn't always necessary to bring in external consultants to do the work for you. It is quite possible that you have someone within your organisation with the necessary skills/knowledge who can deliver this for you. Some of the most successful course programmes are those which are delivered by real experts who operate within the field itself. Consider using this as a development opportunity by enrolling them onto a train the trainer course and give them the opportunity to put it into practice as soon as possible.

Costs of training?

at cost to our budgets. This includes all the direct and indirect financial costs of training.

If training is perceived to have a negative effect then morale costs may also arise. Delegates may have their expectations raised during a workshop and then whisked away when they go back to the workplace and find they do not have the resources or opportunities to apply their learning.

A poor perception of the HR/Training function itself is a further result of wasting resources. If training is perceived as wasteful and fails to produce satisfactory outcomes, the training function will lose its credibility and relinquish its ability to influence future developments within the organisation.

Real People has successfully supported a number of organisations in delivering a variety of learning interventions. Contact us to find out more.

For more management tips and tools, go to: www.realconsultancy.com/realtips

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