

## What makes an effective on-the-job trainer?

Diane Walter

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In order to keep pace with their employees' learning needs, companies are increasingly turning to subject matter experts (SMEs) to conduct one-on-one training with other employees.

SMEs are often the more senior employees; however, they may have received little or no training in how to conduct on-the-job training (OJT). Consequently, in spite of their expertise, SMEs may not be the best choice when it comes to training others.

Why? First, expertise in a subject does not mean that you will be able to effectively teach the subject to others. SMEs may or may not have good communication and interpersonal skills and may or may not have any interest in helping others learn. They may even resent having to do so.

Second, SMEs often know the job so well that they find it difficult to convey the appropriate information at the proper level of detail for a trainee to learn. Because of their vast experience with a job or task, they probably developed short cuts over a period of time that work for them, but may not represent the best way to perform the task. And the details that trainees need to know, such as why each step is important, may have been long forgotten by the expert.

Third, chances are that the SME learned to do the job through the buddy system of OJT. The buddy system is a "follow Joe or Jane around and do what they do" method of on-the-job training. SMEs who learned by this trial and error method picked up whatever mistakes

Joe or Jane learned, as well as developed some of their own. And of course, Joe and Jane were never trained in how to conduct OJT.

How important is technical expertise for on-the-job trainers? Being competent in job tasks is certainly important for a trainer. If, however, you have to choose between a candidate who is genuinely interested in being a trainer but is not the most skilled performer, and a candidate who is an exceptionally skilled performer but has not convinced you that he or she really wants to be a trainer, you probably should choose the former, the one who wants to train. The single most important quality in an on-the-job trainer is wanting to train others. It will be worth the effort to provide more time for the candidate to get the necessary amount of technical proficiency.

#### Checklist of training attributes

When selecting trainers, you should look for certain characteristics. The person should:

- \* be genuinely interested in training;
- \* have good interpersonal and communication skills;
- \* have a positive attitude;
- \* be able to listen attentively;
- \* be patient;
- \* have hands-on experience with the tasks being trained;
- \* demonstrate willingness and desire to share job knowledge and experience;
- \* be respected by peers.

Once trainer candidates are selected, whether SMEs

## NEWS

### Three Canadian business schools rank among world's top 30 MBA programs

The Financial Times of London has ranked Toronto's Schulich School of Business at York University, the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario and the the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto as being among the world's top 30 business schools.

The Financial Times also released its first ever three-year average ranking, with Schulich posting the second best average (29th) of all Canadian business schools.

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### GeoLearning launches third Internet data centre

GeoLearning, Inc., a developer of ASP-delivered e-learning systems and Web-based training solutions, has announced that it has opened a new Internet Data Centre facility in Toronto.

The Toronto facility will provide state-of-the-art security, speed and reliability to organizations implementing GeoLearning's hosted-learning management system platforms and on-line training content.

The new facility is intended to add levels of site redundancy to support GeoLearning's main

or employees who are competent in job tasks but are not experts, they must be trained in on-the-job training techniques. The ability to train others is a skill that can be learned. Rarely does it come naturally. Most courses on the market emphasize classroom training rather than OJT, which is quite different — so choose your training provider with care.

### OJT training competencies

Make sure the following competencies are addressed:

1. Performing simple, but thorough, job task analyses. OJT trainers must evaluate knowledge and skill requirements continually as jobs change. An easy two-question technique works well and can be accomplished in one to three hours. The most effective way to do this is with a team of workers who actually do the job on a daily basis and who have a wide range of knowledge and expertise. The trainer simply poses these two questions to the team:

*Question 1.* What do you need to know and be able to do to perform the job task (insert name of job task)? The team then brainstorms and lists tasks.

*Question 2.* Can you teach and can someone learn that task in 30 minutes? This question is applied to each task listed above.

The repeated use of these questions results in a list of tasks that require no more than 30 minutes to teach and learn.

2. Writing training modules on identified tasks. Training modules, the heart and soul of on-the-job training, are short instructional guides used for teaching and learning step-by-step procedures involved in performing a skill or to present factual information. Without them, even the best trainers flounder. Having written "how-to" procedures is the only way to ensure consistency in task accomplishment and training delivery. Again, a team effort is the fastest, most effective way to write training modules. Only then can you be assured that the training is at the right level for

trainees.

3. Assessing behavioural styles and applying them to on-the-job training situations. Because OJT is conducted one-on-one, a major emphasis in trainer training should be the relationship between trainer and trainee. Understanding behavioural styles (such as "facilitator", "director", "investigator", and "promoter") enables trainers to react to what makes trainees "tick" in order to motivate, interact most effectively, and maximize learning. A common myth is that OJT trainers need to be experts in adult learning styles. However, following a structured delivery process like that detailed below automatically accounts for all learning styles — watching, discussing, doing, and listening. It is far more important that trainers be able to identify and work with various behavioural styles.

4. Conducting consistent training using a systematic, structured training delivery method. The five-step OJT cycle below provides a simple, powerful training methodology that includes hands-on performance, cueing, prompting and immediate feedback.

**Step 1** -Trainer and trainee establish a shared mental model

**Step 2** -Trainer demonstrates the task as the trainee observes

**Step 3** -Trainer coaches as the trainee performs the task

**Step 4** -Trainer observes the trainee perform the task and gives feedback

**Step 5** -Trainer and trainee debrief

Careful consideration in the selection and training of on-the-job trainers will result in a successful OJT program. ■

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## News continued

Internet facilities in Des Moines, Iowa and Ottawa, Ontario as part of a new Platinum Support Service package being made available to clients.

For more information: contact Will Hipwell at GeoLearning, Inc. (515) 222-6259 or visit [www.geolearning.com/news](http://www.geolearning.com/news)

## Implementing e-learning in ROI provable steps

There are some key obstacles that a training manager must circumnavigate in pursuit of e-learning success. Among them: uncertainty over the return on investment in e-learning technology; dissatisfaction with existing e-learning systems; high up-front costs; and internal resistance to adopting the new technology.

Now KnowledgeNet has addressed each of these issues through four, discrete programs that enable organizations to immediately start their e-learning program with entry-level, low-risk solutions that can be incrementally expanded, based on results.

Called, "Prove As You Go," this new approach to e-learning eliminates the risk associated with initiating or managing an e-learning infrastructure, KnowledgeNet says.

Prove As You Go includes: Flexible Pilot Programs that allow customers to prove the

# Training to deal with workplace violence

by Nate Hendley

Workplace violence is a growing concern, and while workplace shootings are thankfully rare, workplace violence — a set of behaviours that include verbal, physical and psychological abuse — is on the rise.

"The Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada reports that the number of fatalities and worker days lost due to acts of violence grew more than 88% from 1995 to 1997," reads the 2001 Conference Board of Canada report, *Preventing Workplace Violence*.

"The Canadian Human Rights Commission reports that workplace harassment complaints increased substantially from the beginning to the end of the 1990s," the study continues.

## Prevention

The question is: what kind of strategies and tactics should Human Resources staff and job trainers follow to prevent workplace violence and manage aggressive employees and clients?

The first step, says Glenn French, CEO of a Toronto-based social research firm called the Canadian Initiative on Workplace Violence, is to recognize that small grievances can push some people into fits of rage. French points to recent shootings in Ottawa and Kamloops as examples. "Those egregious acts were really an accumulation of a lot of indirect hostility," he says.

Apparently, the Ottawa gunman had been harassed for years by his fellow co-workers because of a verbal stutter. His complaints to higher management went unanswered. The Kamloops aggressor, meanwhile, had

complained about being under severe stress and allegedly snapped after receiving a disciplinary letter.

Companies should establish written rules and policies designed to prevent the kind of abuse suffered by the Ottawa employee, says French, who frequently lectures to employers and labour groups across Canada.

To be effective, such policies have to be backed up by action, adds Gerry Smith, vice-president of organizational health at Toronto-based Employee Assistance Provider, Warren Shepell.

To this end, HR staff should offer orientation sessions to new employees in which they outline company policy on abusive behaviour, says Smith. Companies should also adopt a mindset that makes it clear their firm "doesn't allow tolerance of any kind of abusive behaviour," he adds.

Smith, who is also the author of *Work Rage* [March 2000 HarperCollins Canada, Limited], heads a program at Warren Shepell called safe@work. As part of his duties, Smith conducts more than 100 workshops a year across Canada, offering employers and trainers insights and advice on work-related violence and aggression.

He urges HR staff to keep a close eye on working conditions in their firms. While trainers have little control over a company's hours or the pace of work, they can instruct employees in simple ways to cope with anxiety.

"Teach people to walk away from conflict, teach them how to do breathing and relaxing exercises at their work stations," Smith suggests.

HR staff can encourage co-workers to take "five-

minute 'body breaks' — removing themselves from a situation for five minutes," he continues. "Even a stretch at a work station can work wonders."

### Dealing with or defusing violence

When an incident of workplace aggression or anger does occur, HR officials should "do a preliminary investigation to find out what the environment is like within that particular work group," says Smith. "Go in and ask questions, organize little focus groups. Find out what the nature of the conflict is. Is it personality-based? Environment-based? Work-load based?"

Suggestions or sanctions — including disciplinary actions, if necessary — should follow.

HR staff also have to be prepared to defuse aggressive outbursts happening in front of them.

Smith recommends the following, to deal with colleagues who start shouting or pushing each other around: "Begin by using your voice. Slightly raise your voice, but not to the point of shouting. Assertively say, 'Guys, watch your behaviour. That behaviour is not acceptable. Stop immediately!'"

Staff should handle such situations with care. Have someone accompany you and "do not jump in to try and separate the two people," he advises.

Smith says employees should take a "calm but assertive" approach when dealing with hostile clients, in person or on the phone.

"If a person is raising their voice, tell them not to raise their voice. Say very clearly, 'don't shout at me. I'm trying to help you and you're not helping matters by shouting ...'. Let the client know their behaviour is unwelcome. They will not get service if their behaviour continues," he says.

HR staff should also be ready to deal with violent or potentially violent scenarios — such as an employee brandishing a weapon.

French, who shared some of this advice at an Ottawa conference on harassment in violence in public-sector workplaces last January, recommends having "some kind of emergency plan in place" to cope with such situations. This means establishing clearly marked exits at work, organizing evacuation procedures and making staff aware of these procedures, through orientation sessions or written memos.

It's important not to play the hero when violence erupts; "make

yourself and other people safe, then call the police," says Smith. He cites a cautionary tale to highlight the dangers of trying to overpower armed intruders in the workplace.

In January, 2000, Anthony McNaughton, manager of a Vancouver Starbucks, tried to prevent a knife-wielding assailant from attacking an employee. McNaughton was stabbed and died on the spot. The employee's ex-husband was charged with second-degree murder in connection to the case.

McNaughton's death was a tragedy, says Smith, and an extreme example of the kind of violence that companies always have to be on guard for. ■

## RESOURCES

### For more information

The Canadian Initiative on Workplace Violence - [www.workplaceviolence.ca](http://www.workplaceviolence.ca)

Warren Shepell safe@work program - [www.warrenshepell.com/safeatwork/index.html](http://www.warrenshepell.com/safeatwork/index.html)

Conference Board of Canada - [www.conferenceboard.ca](http://www.conferenceboard.ca)

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety - [www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca)

### Videos

#### **Violence: Keeping it out of the Workplace**

Sale: \$295. Workwell Training Videos

Web: [www.workwelltrainingvideos.com](http://www.workwelltrainingvideos.com). Tel: 1-800-300-9323  
(Includes CCOHS *Violence in the Workplace Prevention Guide*)

#### **Be S.A.F.E. (Not Sorry) - Preventing Violence in the Workplace**

Rent: \$180 Sale: \$1,095

#### **Risky Business**

Rent: \$180, Sale: \$1,145

#### **SMART-START: Before It's Too Late: Workplace Violence**

Rent: \$195, Sale: \$495

#### **Workplace Violence: Training For Supervisors & Managers**

Rent: \$95, Sale: \$395

International Tele-Film. Web: [www.itf.ca](http://www.itf.ca). Tel: 800-561-4300. ■

## News continued

effectiveness of any component of the KnowledgeNet Enterprise Learning Suite on a small, low-risk scale. Designed for customers new to second-wave e-learning, each pilot includes pre-pilot assessments to determine program objectives, marketing support to achieve and maintain momentum, milestone evaluations to measure progress, and a summary report to recap results and recommend future plans. As well, Prove As You Go's Immediate Switch Program enables qualified companies dissatisfied with their current e-learning technology to immediately reap the benefits of KnowledgeNet's second-wave e-learning solutions, free of charge for up to one year, while their current e-learning contract expires. *For more information: contact David McCann at (888) 577-5779.*

### SITEL Corporation launches e-learning platform

SITEL Corporation, a global provider of outsourced customer support services, has upgraded SITEL University to its new GeoMaestro™ learning management system and e-learning delivery platform. SITEL originally launched the on-line component of its corporate university in the Spring of 2000.

The system upgrade includes enhanced web-based reporting and

# Tools to boost your professional credibility

by Diana Kawarsky

**A**s trainers we are always on the look out for new and innovative tools that can affect how we deliver our training products and services, give us an edge and make a difference.

As a trainer, facilitator and coach for more than 15 years, I have been on the hunt for the tools of my trade that can build my professional credibility.

In my work as a coach, working with multi-talented and uniquely experienced professionals from a variety of industries including training, I have had the incredible opportunity to share and discuss the findings of my on-going hunt for tools. And, as I and many of my coaching colleagues will readily admit, I've learned at least as much from my clients as they have from me.

For instance, over the years they've taught me that the tools we are all seeking are not tools in the traditional sense at all. In other words, they're not tangible; they're perceptual. They consist of two elements:

- how your group perceives you; and
- what you're thinking.

### They think you can...

No matter how small or large your next group may be, its members think that you are a professional. This is especially true if you've been imported as an external trainer who has expertise in your subject area. They automatically assume that you must know what you're doing if management or other decision makers have arranged for you to be there.

Trainers often underestimate the usefulness of this

inherent credibility as a tool. But used in conjunction with the fact that the group, having invested time in attending, wants the workshop to be a success as much as you do, it can be a valuable device to further enhance the group's perception of your professionalism.

You can capitalize on this simply by acknowledging their confidence in you and recognizing their investment. Doing this deliberately will do more for your professional image than adding more credentials after your name or even than delivering world-class content.

### I know I can...

"I think I can, I think I can" — sound familiar? I was recently reminded of the story *The Little Engine that Could*, by Watty Piper — one of the best stories ever written about the positive influence of self-talk.

Self-talk, that continuous inner monologue that interprets the significance of every experience we have, plays a big role in many of the goal-achievement discussions I conduct as a coach but also is one of the tools I use when delivering training.

Self-talk affects our perceptions and our responses. So managing your self-talk, choosing to make this on-going story we tell ourselves every minute of every day positive, will change how we experience ourselves as trainers.

Ever been before a group and found yourself struggling with the flipchart stand, lap top or PowerPoint? You may be thinking something like, "Just a second here and we'll be right back on track. I just need to find the right page and I don't want to

## News continued

course authoring capabilities, plus the addition of a competency management tool for planning and tracking employee certification, regulatory compliance, training and professional development.

SITEL's more than 25,000 employees operate customer contact centres in 21 countries, manage more than 1.5 million customer contacts per day, and offer services in 25 languages and dialects. "Our challenge," explains Jessica Hochstein, Director of Enterprise Communications & Knowledge at SITEL, "is to deliver training to a diverse and geographically dispersed workforce. And we need to do it cost-effectively while tying training back to measurable business results."

SITEL employees registered for more than 250,000 courses in 2002, and the company's e-learning site boasts course completion rates ranging from 80% to 90%. "The impact on our business in terms of speed-to-market, recruitment and retention, employee performance, and the direct cost savings we've experienced from reduced administrative time, travel and materials has been considerable," says Hochstein.

For more information, visit [www.geolearning.com](http://www.geolearning.com) or [www.sitel.com](http://www.sitel.com).

forget my next point. Come on now, why won't this page turn." That's what's going on in your head while you physically struggle with the equipment. Then you say, "Geez. Please stay with me."

But that's the last thing you should say. Even though your head is one constant monologue of negativity, you should not verbalize it while you are presenting. Remember, they think you can, so don't let them in on the fact even momentarily that you aren't convinced. You will sabotage your professional credibility very quickly if you do.

So, what do you do? Listen to your self-talk. What are you telling yourself? Are you discouraging or

encouraging? Even the most negative anxious inner voice originally may have originally had a positive intention behind it. If you can, learn how to emphasize the positive to yourself. Take a lesson from that little engine and tell yourself, "I know I can, I know I can."

Because they're intangible, these tools may seem subtle but they're very powerful and using them will give you a perceptible edge. ■

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*Diana Kawarsky is a facilitator, coach and consultant with more than 15 years of management and corporate training success working with diverse clients across Canada. You can reach her at [www.softskills.ca](http://www.softskills.ca) or (416) 524-5894.*

## Training will accelerate in 2003

The Herman Group, a Greensboro, N.C.-based consulting firm that focuses on workforce and workplace issues, has found that corporate training will accelerate in 2003, among other top ten forecasts for the workplace in 2003, including:

1. Employers will face the most severe shortage of skilled labour in history as the economy picks up. Skilled labour shortages in the United States will move even more jobs to other countries.
2. More people will become independent contractors, selling their services to employers on a project or set-term basis.
3. As the economy picks up, employers who have treated employees badly during the tight economy will be in serious trouble.
4. Workers who are fortunate enough to have found their preferred work environment will tend to stay longer.
5. Corporate training and education will accelerate to accommodate new employees and the

redevelopment of existing staff. The demand for vocational education will begin to grow as people realize the increasing need — and higher income — for skilled workers.

6. Portable benefits will come into vogue, as employees negotiate individualized compensation arrangements with employers.
7. Fewer people will retire completely. Retirees will move into jobs in other fields, start their own businesses, and engage in other activities.
8. Re-emphasis on telecommuting will inspire substantial changes in where and how companies do business. Space allocation and management styles will shift to accommodate this flexibility.
9. Employers will be more selective in hiring. Culture "fit" will become as important as skills, experience, and attitude.
10. Leadership development will take on new importance, as employers discover serious inadequacies. ■

## New in video

**Whale Done!** This new 30-minute video, based on Ken Blanchard's best-selling book, shows managers and leaders why they should — and how they can — connect better both with their employees and their co-workers. It also demonstrates how to build stronger, more productive relationships through proven ideas and techniques for a positive and motivated workforce. It explains the impact of positive relationships and identifies ways to build trust with others in the organization. Also included is the implementation video, *Whale Done! In Action*.

Cost: \$1,495. Rental: \$295. Contact: International Telefilm. Tel: 800-561-4300  
Web: [www.itf.ca](http://www.itf.ca)

**How Do You Put a Giraffe into a Refrigerator?** From the animators of the best-selling video *Who Moved My Cheese?* If meetings and training sessions are an essential part of your organization, you know the importance of getting off to a good start. If your goal is to get everyone to contribute, this quick and quirky video is the way to achieve it. It will challenge your employees to think right out of the gate - and out of the box. Using fun riddles and entertaining animation, this five minute video will supercharge everyone's brain before the real business of the meeting begins.

Cost: \$450. Includes User's Guide.  
Contact: Marlin Westwood Training.  
Tel: 800-865-7617  
Web: [info@marlineducation.com](mailto:info@marlineducation.com)

# Training for effective feedback

by Bina Feldman

"Feedback" can be defined as "information about past or current performance that guides a person to maintain or change a specific behaviour."

Giving and receiving feedback is a life skill we use frequently at work and at home. Sometimes we give and receive feedback in a training session, while at other times we give feedback to colleagues during the business day. Just think about all the times you give casual feedback: "Hey, Bruce, good meeting!" Or, "Marcie, this report needs work." Even, "Mom, great dinner!" is informal feedback.

But has anyone ever taught you how to give feedback professionally? Have you ever evaluated how well you deliver feedback?

In today's team environment, business people have to communicate good and not-so-good news to their direct reports, their peers and leaders daily. When such feedback is well given and well taken you can expect to see higher productivity, fewer mistakes and higher morale.

Consequently, there is a resurgence of interest in giving and receiving effective feedback and trainers are responding. Here are some strategies that will help you to deliver successful training programs that develop this skill.

### Anticipate mild resistance

Typically, participants think they already know all about feedback and they'll let you know either directly or through their body language. Because they give feedback all day long and usually get the results they need they don't want a complex, time-consuming model, so your first steps are to:

- acknowledge their experience and
- validate their success.

### Define the framework

Frame the course as a "refresher." Let participants know that it is an opportunity to take stock, review and upgrade. You'll be asking them to self-evaluate and set one small goal for improvement. Set aside time for participants to:

- assess their skill and
- identify one area for development.

### Work from a model

There are many models available. The model I use is the observations/thoughts/feelings/wants model. Both positive and constructive feedback are more meaningful when we express our observations, thoughts, feelings and wants. Here are some examples of how the model works:

1. "Hey Bruce, I noticed that you came to the meeting with an agenda. I think that helped you stay focused and finish the meeting on time. I was so grateful to be done by 3 p.m. I really want you to come prepared with an agenda every week."
2. "Marcie, I see that this report doesn't have the categories that are usually found in year-end reports. I think that will make it harder for people to compare this year's results with last year's. I'm concerned that you didn't follow the format we talked about. I'd like you to re-do those pages that have missing categories."
3. "Hi Mom, it's great that you made a beef dish *and* a vegetable dish for Sunday dinner. It really helps those of us who want to stay away from red meat. Personally, I was delighted to have the choice. Will you do that every time from now on?"

## New in books

### ***Managing Generation X: How to Bring Out the Best in Young Talent***, by Bruce Tulgan.

This book, an update on Tulgan's 1995 guide to the new workforce, explains Generation X to employers by tuning into the independent mindset that has affected the entire workforce. The willingness of GenXers to walk away from unsatisfactory employment relationships has caused a staffing crisis for employers while, at the same time, creating the most entrepreneurial generation in history. *Managing Generation X* shows employers how to tap this valuable labour pool by taking advantage of their skills. In more than 100 interviews, GenXers offer first-hand experiences along with concrete advice on how to and how not to manage them. Tulgan found that GenXers are not slackers, but flexible, technoliterate, information-savvy and self-confident employees. Tulgan, himself a GenXer and considered the foremost expert on the subject, left a Wall Street law firm in 1994 to start RainmakerThinking Inc., a consulting firm that studies the working life of the generation born after 1963.

Cost: \$13.95 U.S. Publisher: Capstone Ltd.

Familiarize participants with the model and ask them to use it many times throughout the training. Demonstrate the model by using it in a natural, conversational way. Participants can practise:

- writing out the feedback;
- delivering feedback aloud in pairs; and
- practising the skill in triads.

### ***Demonstrate and discuss the benefits of the more structured approach***

When you use a more structured approach like this:

- People will be more likely to give you what you want the next time.
- It's more likely that you will describe behaviour and not become judgmental.
- People will feel less defensive.

### ***Frame the model as part of the learning curve***

Using a model like the four-part one above may sound cumbersome initially. Remind people that it takes time to become comfortable with any new skill. Tips you might share with participants are to:

- practise out loud;
- use contractions to sound less formal; and
- use a tone of voice that sounds natural.

### ***Watch out for non-verbals***

Feedback can easily be waylaid when verbal and non-verbal messages are even slightly mixed. This is when self-assessment and peer feedback are critical in the training program.

For example, when giving positive or constructive feedback, do you:

- look away from the person?
- sound or look apologetic?
- smile or laugh from your own discomfort?

Strong body language is crucial to delivering effective feedback, so review these common pitfalls and best practices for assertive non-verbal communication. Be sure to pay attention to tone of voice, gestures, eye contact, posture and physical proximity. Structure the

practice session to include feedback on non-verbal delivery.

### ***Frame "role-playing" as "skills practice"***

Many participants shy away from "role-playing." Framing role-playing as "an opportunity to practise this skill" gives it a positive twist. Divide participants into groups of three, in which one participant is the feedback giver (FG), one receives feedback (FR) and one observes (O).

After a relevant case study exercise, the FG practises self-assessment — "This is what I did well; this is what I can do better next time." The FR and the O practise giving feedback to the FG. The FG receives the feedback non-defensively. Everyone has a turn at each position.

### ***Can you take it as well as you give it?***

Feedback training also provides an excellent opportunity to review the guidelines for receiving feedback without defensiveness. All professionals need to review what's expected of them when on the receiving end of feedback. Framing the following guidelines for receiving feedback as "professionalism" will help participants feel less defensive.

- Listen actively.
- Own what you believe to be true.
- Thank the giver for the feedback.

Whether you deliver a training program on effective feedback, whether you are a trainer of other courses who both gives and receives general feedback from participants, or whether you are a professional seeking to upgrade your own communication skills, these guidelines will serve you well.

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*Bina Feldman is an independent training consultant delivering a wide variety of training including Giving & Receiving Effective Feedback, Train the Trainer among other communication skills programs. Contact Bina at: [www.BinaFeldmanConsulting.com](http://www.BinaFeldmanConsulting.com)*

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## COMPANY FOCUS

# Digital printing helps deliver training materials anywhere

John Penner has quite a challenge. As the Training Product Specialist for Bolton, Ontario-based Husky Injection Molding Systems Ltd., he is responsible for creating 30 different training courses for more than 2,400 trainees worldwide. And since Husky is a manufacturer of complex machinery, the training courseware is very technical in nature.

"Our injection molding machines are customized for each customer, depending on their end use," says Penner. "Furthermore, we support courses in 19 different languages to customers whose experience ranges from basic education to Ph.D's in engineering. All of this makes for a very complex training operation."

Penner enthusiastically attacks his task by combining electronic information in Adobe PDF format that is projected from a laptop during classroom sessions, with printed courseware books that the students use to follow the instructor.

"We have been training our customers for more than 50 years and we have found that unless there is printed material that follows what is being presented up front, the material goes in one ear and out the other," said Penner. "Therefore, printed course books are imperative."

The course books consist of a core set of materials for each machine at the front of the book, followed by customized sections that are created for each customer's specific machine.

With all the different versions of the courses being offered in various languages worldwide, one of Penner's biggest challenges is revision control and ensuring that courses are up to date and delivered to

instructors complete and on time.

To help him manage, Penner started using on-demand digital printing from Mimeo, Inc. ([www.mimeo.com](http://www.mimeo.com)). Mimeo enables customers around the world to use their browser to assemble and proof complex, color and black & white documents and then print over the Internet to Mimeo's high-speed digital printer, which is located next to the runway near the major Fed-Ex and UPS shipping hubs in Memphis, Tenn. The material can be delivered by as early as 8:30 the next morning as long as it is printed by 10:00 p.m. eastern time the night before.

Prior to using on-demand digital printing, Penner printed his books on the in-house copier or used a local print shop. Both were time consuming and far from perfect.

"Changes can lead to errors," says Penner. "We could never be sure that people were working from the absolute latest version of the file and if there was a problem, we wouldn't find out until the finished book came back to us or worse, after it reached the instructor. Correcting these mistakes took time and money."

### **Product quality reflects training quality**

With digital printing, Penner can arrange and see what the finished document will look like in his browser — binding, tabs and all — before he commits to printing. Also, on-demand digital printing provides the highest possible quality document printing while costing substantially less

than offset.

“Perception is reality,” says Penner. “A quality package and presentation of our course materials demonstrates to our customers that they are not only receiving the best machines, but also the highest level of training to go with them.”

Other advantages, says Penner, are the ability to make last-minute changes at no additional cost and the ability to price out different options — color versus black-and-white, for example — and to decide which best meets a project’s training and budget needs.

Finally, shipping directly from the printer and using its tracking system, which is tied in with the shippers, provides Penner with the confidence that the materials will arrive wherever and whenever they need to be in the world, without any cross-border or customs hassles.

For more information, visit Mimeo, Inc. at: [www.mimeo.com](http://www.mimeo.com) or contact Bethany Bolling, [bbolling@mimeo.com](mailto:bbolling@mimeo.com).

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## The workforce is changing... what we need to know

- A large percentage of the working population will be retiring during the next five to 10 years, potentially creating a serious knowledge gap and labour-supply shortages in many sectors. For certain industries this is already a problem; the average age in a sample of ten skilled trades is 45 and increasing;
- There will not be enough young people to replace the current labour force. By 2020 the annual growth rate in the supply of labour will be as little as 0.3% — less than one third its current rate.
- The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) [[www.cfib.ca](http://www.cfib.ca)] reported in their survey *Hard Facts* that in the year 2000 up to 300,000 jobs were vacant because of a lack of suitable skilled workers.
- The Conference Board of Canada’s study *Performance and Potential* [[www.conferenceboard.ca/pandp](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/pandp)], 2000-2001 forecasts a shortfall of nearly one million workers within the next 20 years.
- With one-half of the labour force of 2015 already working, it is estimated that close to five million people will need skills upgrading over the next 15 years;
- The Government of Canada’s paper *Knowledge Matters Skills and Learning For Canadians* [[www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/stratpol/sl-ca/home.shtml](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/stratpol/sl-ca/home.shtml)] reports that by 2011, immigration will account for *all* net labour force growth in Canada.
- According to the Conference Board of Canada study *Exploring The Learning Recognition Gap in Canada* [[www.conferenceboard.ca/education/reports/default.htm](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/reports/default.htm)] (January 2001) “Nearly half of the immigrants being accepted into Canada enter as “independent” or “skilled workers,” yet many of these workers are experiencing problems in gaining adequate recognition of their learning to enter the professions or trades for which they hold foreign credentials when they actually enter Canada as immigrants.”

New immigrants will become an essential part of our labour force, with many of them seeking skills upgrading

[Source: This article is reprinted with permission as an unofficial version of materials provided by Industry Canada. This article has not been made in affiliation with or with the endorsement of Industry Canada.] ■

# Setting the stage for learner-centric instructional strategies

by Catherine Chambers

## The sage on the stage

I often tell my students that trainers are a lot like actors. Trainers are on view, front and centre, entertaining audiences by making even the most mundane topics interesting enough to hold their attention.

And, as actors must vary their roles to avoid being typecast, so too must trainers vary their methods to avoid becoming facilitator-centric and remain learner-centric.

Why? Facilitator-centric strategies, such as lectures, result in significantly lower retention levels than training that involves the learner. A wealth of data indicates that training that relies on lecturing results in a mere 5% retention rate — well behind the 90% that is attributed to more interactive methods, such as learners teaching learners through small group activities and discussions.

Such data isn't surprising. Just think of the last time you made a presentation or facilitated a session. You probably made sure that you knew things inside-out — just in case you received a casting call to be a special guest star on every trainer's favourite show, "Stump the Trainer"!

## The guide on the side

The idea isn't to turn workshop participants into conventional trainers or lecturers but, rather, into individuals who engage in lively activities with their fellow participants in order to acquire, test, and transfer knowledge.

To be effective, these activities must be highly structured; the "talk among yourselves" approach isn't likely to work. Activities need to be planned and monitored by the "Guide on the Side," a trainer who facilitates the acquisition of skills and knowledge by making things easy and interesting.

## Learner-centric exercises

Here are a few ideas for reducing lecture segments and increasing interaction among workshop participants:

### Jigsaw

Jigsaws are particularly effective when you need to cover a significant amount of content in a short time.

The basic premise of jigsaw is to divide a problem or topic into sections, one for each group member. Each participant receives resources to complete only his/her part of the "puzzle" (e.g., a portion of a policy or procedure). Participants who are

responsible for the same section join together and form subgroups whose purpose is to master the concepts in their section and develop a strategy for teaching what they have learned to the other participants in their original collaborative learning group.

Once the subgroups reconvene into one group, they can teach each other what they've learned.

### Travelling file

This technique provides participants with the opportunity to react to provocative statements or questions while taking into consideration other members' viewpoints. The technique is practised as follows:

Questions/statements that are related to the topic at hand are attached to three file folders. Each group is allowed 10 to 15 minutes to discuss the questions/statements and to record a response on the folder. At the end of the 10 minutes, each group is asked to give its

**Good teaching is  
one-fourth preparation  
and three-fourths theatre.**

*Gail Godwin, author*

folder to the next group. That group can then read the response on the folder prior to formulating a new response. Once each group has had the opportunity to respond to two or more folders, share the responses and ask individuals to discuss the implications of opposing points of view.

### **The one-minute paper**

This is a highly effective technique for checking individual progress and acceptance of course material. Participants are given a blank sheet of paper. A question is posed to the group (either specific or open-ended), which is given one or two minutes to respond. Some sample questions include: "What was the most important concept covered during today's session?" or "What are some of the key challenges that you might encounter when you return to work?"

### **The slack at the back**

These exercises may be a departure from the norm. Be prepared for a bit of resistance from people who are expecting you to prove what you know by giving them a lecture. You might also encounter resistance from people who perceive your techniques to be mere games, and you as the "Slack at the Back."

First, explain why you won't be lecturing. Tell participants that you aren't playing a game or using them for experimental purposes. You can even cite some of the available research, and explain the differences between learner-centric models at the heart of progressive adult/workplace learning strategies and the instructional/teacher-centric models associated with traditional or academic learning. You can even ask them to discuss some of the inherent weaknesses associated with the lecture style of instruction. Ask, "How many of you have listened politely to a lecture or presentation while thinking, 'I'll learn it as soon as I have a chance to practise it,' or even worse, 'What do I need to purchase from the grocery store on my way home from work?'"

Once you have sufficiently explained and proven the benefits of alternative techniques that shift the spotlight from what you say to what people do, exit stage left — and take a bow for your efforts! ■

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*Catherine Chambers, M.Ed., specializes in instructional and learning innovations. She is an associate of The Coaching Clinic ([www.coachingclinic.com](http://www.coachingclinic.com)) and a part-time faculty member of the Teacher of Adults program at Centennial College. You can reach Catherine at: [cc@coachingclinic.com](mailto:cc@coachingclinic.com).*

## **Gender and work in the new economy**

A study from CPRN's Work Network provides new evidence on what women and men want in a job and how they are experiencing the transition to a knowledge-based economy.

*Men's and Women's Quality of Work in the New Canadian Economy* draws on data from two recent surveys; the 2000 CPRNEKOS *Changing Employment Relationships Survey* and Statistics Canada's *2000 General Social Survey*.

The authors say measures like access to jobs and equitable wages suggest we are closing the gender gap and that there are areas where the experiences of men and women coincide.

The study calls the shortfall between what employees desire and what they actually experience in a job a "job quality deficit". Among workers with a high school education or less, both men and women share a number of job quality deficits. Some examples:

- 35-40% say their jobs allow less flexibility to balance work and family than they desire;
- 25% say the level of trust and commitment they experience in their workplace is less than they prefer, and
- 15% say the quality of communication at work falls short of expectations.

Among workers with post-secondary educations it's a different story. A gender gap emerges. Women experience higher job quality deficits than men in a number of areas.

Among university-educated women:

- one-third report a job-quality deficit in the area of work/family balance;
- one-quarter say commitment and respect on the job fall short of expectations;
- one-quarter receive lower pay, benefits and security than desired, and
- one in seven is dissatisfied with the level of communication in the workplace.

These deficits are significantly higher than those reported by university-educated men.

The study concludes that female knowledge workers are more likely to experience frustration in finding a job that meets their expectations. The report can be viewed or downloaded at: [www.cprn.org/cprn.html](http://www.cprn.org/cprn.html). ■

## Announcement

### Call for speakers.

The Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario is now accepting applications from experts in various areas of business and human resources management to speak at its 2004 Annual Conference, February 18-20 in Toronto. Deadline for submissions is March 31, 2003.

For more information, or to receive a submission form, contact: HRP AO 800-387-1311 ext 345 or web: [www.hrpa.org](http://www.hrpa.org).

### Invitation to Join CPsquare, a community of practice on communities of practice

Practitioners worldwide are invited to join CPsquare, an on-line community of people who are cultivating communities of practice in various sectors — industry, government, education and non-profit. Initial sessions will serve to launch practice groups for community coordinators, technologists, and support team members.

Register to join CPsquare online at [www.cpsquare.org/](http://www.cpsquare.org/) Membership. Regular membership dues are \$450 U.S./year. Discounts are available.

# Advisors appointed to lead Learning Institute consultations

The Honourable Jane Stewart, Minister of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), has appointed Dr. Benjamin Levin of the University of Manitoba, and Shirley Seward of the Canadian Labour and Business Centre to lead consultations regarding the design of the proposed Canadian Learning Institute. The consultations include provinces and territories, national learning organizations and business and labour organizations.

"I am very pleased that Dr. Levin and Ms. Seward have agreed to lead these consultations. As we move forward with this initiative it is very important that provinces and territories, and other stakeholders in the learning sector have an opportunity to express their views on how we could collaboratively proceed with establishing an independent, pan-Canadian learning institute," said Minister Stewart.

At the National Summit on Innovation and Learning held in Toronto in November 2002, the Government of Canada announced its intention to work with the provinces and territories, as well as with other partners, to develop the Institute.

A Canadian Learning Institute would help ensure that Canadians have access to an objective source of information about the effectiveness of skills and learning investments, and the results being achieved. An Institute would also support the testing and analysis of innovative approaches to learning, and would help co-ordinate information but not duplicate or overlap any existing activities by governments or third-party organizations.

The government said that it would explore ways to further research and support the development and

dissemination of knowledge about skills and learning when Canada's Innovation Strategy was launched in February 2002.

Some of HRDC's early actions announced at the National Summit include:

- working with partners to develop the Canadian Learning Institute;
- realigning resources within the Youth Employment Strategy to assist youth to develop the skills of the future and fully participate in the labour market;
- working with partners towards establishing transparent and efficient processes for the recognition of foreign credentials; and
- working with partners to promote skilled trades as a first career choice.

During the process leading up to the November Summit, more than 10,000 Canadians provided their views and recommendations for actions to advance Canada's innovation and learning capacity.

Canada has committed to reporting to Canadians on approaches to skills, learning and research as outlined in the 2002 Speech from the Throne and Canada's Innovation Strategy. At the November 2002 National Summit on Innovation and Learning, Canada announced that the Canadian Learning Institute could be a step towards this goal. ■

*Source: Human Resources Development Canada, January 9, 2003*

# EVENTS

## March 27 - 28

### Partners in Training Take Flight

In this OSTD sponsored conference and partnering event for Canadian and U.S. training providers, you will be able to meet across-border companies and individuals to exchange ideas, find out about industry trends and enjoy keynote presentations, such as "Changes Coming in the Way Business Buys Training." Price includes pick-up and return bus service from Toronto, Cambridge, London and Windsor, Ontario.

Fee: \$275 (members); \$350 (non-members)

Place: Dayton, Ohio

Org.: OSTD

Tel.: (416) 367-1642

E-mail: [info@ostd.ca](mailto:info@ostd.ca)

Web: [www.ostd.ca](http://www.ostd.ca)

## March 31 - April 2 Training World 2003

Find out how winning training organizations: ensure that the training function supports the overall goals of the business and that investments in training technology deliver maximum value to the company; identify and implement fast-payback training projects & activities; build effective training business partnerships;

measure the value of training from a CEO's and CFO's perspective; develop and institutionalize training scorecards; and convert identified internal best practices into systematic, well-organized learning programs.

Fee: \$1,899 (U.S.)

Place: Ritz-Carlton Hotel, San Francisco

Org.: [hrevents.com](http://hrevents.com)

Tel.: (800) 882-8684

E-mail: [info@hrevents.com](mailto:info@hrevents.com)

Web: [www.hrevents.com](http://www.hrevents.com)

## April 7 - 9

### Basic Project Management

In this three-day workshop, you'll learn to: set practical goals for your projects; stay on top of schedules, workloads and people problems; cope with squeezed budgets and stolen time; deal productively with different personalities; delegate in a fair and practical way within the project team; be a leader who keeps the group going even when times get tough; make faster, more effective decisions at every step of the project life cycle and break down a project into smaller, less intimidating tasks.

Fee: \$1,895

Place: Calgary, Alberta

Org.: Canadian Management Centre

Tel.: (416) 214-5678

E-mail: [cmcinfo@amanet.org](mailto:cmcinfo@amanet.org)

Web: [www.cmcamai.org](http://www.cmcamai.org)

## April 21 - 25

### Project World Canada

Explore great networking opportunities, see leading industry exhibitors, choose from 28 in-depth workshops, hear what's worked at Canada's leading organizations, evaluate the latest products and technologies and hear inspirational keynote speakers at this year's four-day ProjectWorld Canada event.

Fee: various

Place: Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Org.: ProjectWorld Canada

Tel.: (888) 443-6786.

Web: [www.projectworldcanada.com](http://www.projectworldcanada.com)

## April 26

### How to Market and Sell Your Expertise as a Personality Type Practitioner

This one-day workshop is aimed at leveraging your expertise with personality type (whether it's the MBTI® instrument, True Colors®, Personality Dimensions, Temperament, or DiSC®). You'll learn how to: determine your market; create effective marketing plans; sell your services and yourself with integrity; and handle contracting issues.

Fee: \$135

Place: Toronto

Org: Career/LifeSkills Resources

Tel.: (905) 760-0111

Web: [www.clsr.ca](http://www.clsr.ca)

## April 28 - 29

### Diversity Canada 2003

In this two-day conference, you will learn how leading organizations are: developing strategies to build an inclusive culture; measuring and managing effective diversity initiatives; identifying effective partnerships to recruit and retain a diverse workforce; and linking diversity initiatives to overall business strategy.

Fee: \$2,138.93 (conference only)

Org.: IQPC

Place: Metro Convention Centre,

North Building, Toronto

Tel.: (800) 882-8684

Email: [info@iqpc-canada.com](mailto:info@iqpc-canada.com)

Web: [www.iqpc.com](http://www.iqpc.com)

## April 29

### OSTD Symposium on Measurement and Evaluation with Dr. Jack Phillips

This OSTD-sponsored event includes a morning keynote and case study, an afternoon workshop and the launch of the Canadian ROI Network.

Fee: various

Place: Sheraton Centre Toronto

Org.: OSTD

Tel.: (416) 367-5900

Email: [info@ostd.ca](mailto:info@ostd.ca)

Web: [www.ostd.ca/events/symposium](http://www.ostd.ca/events/symposium)