

Transfer of Training

Increasing Behavior Change Back on the Job

Most classroom-based and off-site training is wasted. When the learner returns to work there is usually little or no support for their new behavior. Generalized classroom training is often not specific enough to the trainees' actual job, nor can it provide enough opportunity for actual practice of new skills.

In addition, human beings forget new learning rapidly, so review and reminders are needed for long term learning. Following are some suggested steps for helping increase the transfer of learning to the job:

- 1) Reward supervisors for developing their subordinates.
- 2) Train supervisors in coaching skills so they can effectively reinforce subordinates' new behaviors.
- 3) Involve both supervisors and trainees in planning the training program.
- 4) Include prior trainees in the training programs to give "testimonials."
- 5) Utilize participatory training methods, relevant case studies and work-related examples in the training. Generally use more hands-on and skills practice methods during instruction.
- 6) Have trainees develop and sign a "learning contract."
- 7) Have supervisors develop and sign a "support contract."
- 8) Clarify why the training is important and what the benefits are to the trainees at start of program.
- 9) Create a learning "buddy" system and/or peer coaching or learning network to follow training.
- 10) Consider developing a formal mentor program. Brief mentors about trainee programs.
- 11) Discuss the issue of learning barriers and transfer challenges during the program.
- 12) Provide easy-to-use job aids in the materials and back on the job that summarize, remind, encourage the new learning.
- 13) Conduct a shortened review program within a few months after the initial program.
- 14) Send follow-up materials to trainees after the program.
- 15) Make sure there are positive role models back on the job; the supervisor and/or other employees.
- 16) Create opportunities for trainee reunions.
- 17) Create opportunities for the trainees to themselves teach the knowledge/skills learned.
- 18) Do formal testing of trainees after the program; written quiz, observation, demonstration.
- 19) Reward and recognize trainees for their new behaviors. Leaning incentives, supervisor recognition, eligibility for promotion, new assignments, etc.
- 20) Communicate examples of success using the new learning. Include stories in newsletters, on bulletin board, in memos, e-mail, etc.