

LEARNING THAT STICKS

By Robert T. Sicora, Principal Sicora Consulting, Inc.

Having managed learning and development budgets that have been as large as 22 million dollars, and as little as \$0, I have learned the value of a well constructed learning intervention that has ‘stickiness’.

What is stickiness? It is the ability for a learning intervention to have “legs,” that has a “half life” that last longer than the next day when your staff goes back to their “real jobs” and forgets about what it is they just learned. It is when I can go back to a company 9, 12, 18 months later, and the staff is still referring to the elements of the techniques they learned, and they are still being applied with the same passion as when they were first learned. It is just one way that I go about measuring the return of investment (ROI) of learning.

In an excerpt from last month’s [CLO Magazine](#), Kerry Patterson writes:

“Ensuring that learning and development initiatives facilitate real change in a workforce requires deliberate follow-up and follow-through.

The foremost challenge in designing learning and development initiatives is effecting real change in a workforce. This is difficult but absolutely necessary for training to achieve solid ROI. After all, any training program likely not only cost money, but it also took time to design and attend, and therefore spent productivity. If a learning and development program didn’t change employees’ behavior, then it was a waste — even if they liked the course.

But the ability to transfer knowledge and skills learned in training back to the office is never easy. The training finishes, participants return to work, and they’re immediately pulled in a dozen different directions — none of which are designed to help them transfer what they’ve just learned into part of their daily routine.

Without skill transference, training is merely an expensive vacation that employees take from their daily responsibilities. So what can learning and development professionals do to ensure learning translates into action? Better still, how can they manipulate the forces that draw people away from adopting new skills to both motivate and enable a genuine change in behavior?

Successful learning officers know that learning is not enough and find ways to ensure their training graduates implement new ideas and skills soon after the training ends. They supplement their learning experience with a host of strategies that both motivate and enable graduates to adopt the skills taught in training. Skill transference is acquired by combining multiple sources of influence into a cohesive change strategy.”

In my nearly 20 years of human development and organization effectiveness experience, I have come across many different interventions to help teams, leaders, sales, and individual employee engagement. Never have I experienced a set of tools like Insights Discovery, the ROI has

consistently come in around 800 to 1200%, and the organizations that use it continue to talk and apply the learning for years after the event.

If you like to learn more about how to make your organization more effective, or to experience Insights Discovery first hand, contact me directly at: robert@sicoraconsulting.com.