Out of the ivory tower and into the real world

Advice for academics who want to be corporate trainers

Aaron W. Hughey and Kenneth J. Mussnug

Colleges and universities are becoming more involved in providing training to companies in their regional service areas. Faculty who are proficient in a traditional classroom, however, do not always excel as corporate trainers. Instructional strategies that are inherently effective in academe seldom yield comparable results in an industrial setting. Employee training programmes generally demand a more applications-oriented approach and tend to focus succinctly on immediate outcomes. Furthermore, training initiatives often encounter considerable resistance from session participants. This can precipitate serious difficulties for professors who are accustomed to maintaining absolute control via the grading process. Corporate trainees want to know precisely how the information presented will assist them in the performance of their current job responsibilities or how it will help prepare them for future assignments. This paper explains how faculty members can adapt their academic teaching styles to meet the unique needs of company employees. Included in the discussion are explicit recommendations for preparing for a specific training assignment, developing a customized training plan, dealing with critical logistical considerations, and ultimately facilitating a successful training experience. Several problems that can occur are also described along with suggestions for resolving them as efficiently as possible. Finally, the importance of following-up after the training has been completed is addressed.

Aaron W. Hughey is Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership, TPH 417-D, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101, USA. Tel: +1 502 745 4849, Fax: +1 502 745 5445, E-mail: aaron.hughey@wku.edu. Kenneth J. Mussnug is Associate Professor in the Department of Industrial Technology, EST 216, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101, USA. Tel: +1 502 745 5949. E-mail: ken.mussnug@wku.edu

During the last decade or so, many colleges and universities have sought to forge stronger ties with the private sector. There has been an increasing realization that the future of both education and business is inseparably linked by similar societal and economic realities. One of the primary ways in which higher education has aspired to enhance its relationship with industry is through the provision of employee training programmes. At a growing number of institutions, the professorate is being encouraged to become more actively involved in providing this type of assistance to local and regional companies. Unfortunately, many
faculty members are ill-prepared to be effective corporate trainers because they erroneously assume that what works on the college campus will also work on the production floor. The purpose of this paper is to expose this fallacy and achieve a functional understanding of what it takes to be a successful corporate trainer.

Indeed, it is an understatement to assert that corporate training differs significantly from college teaching. In a traditional classroom, instructors usually have a captive audience over which a certain degree of control can be maintained via the grading process. In many instances, the motivation for learning the material is merely to pass the course. But educational strategies which work quite well with college students, such as lectures focusing on specific content followed by objective tests designed to measure retention, are not particularly effective with most company employees. Training in an industrial environment requires a hands-on approach with an emphasis on applications. It is typically a much more intense experience than that found in the Ivory Tower.

For the most part, company employees are not particularly impressed with the theoretical aspects of a given subject. Although they will tolerate some theory, especially if it is used to establish overall context, most trainees instinctively look for practical implications. They tend to focus on highly specific outcomes and want to know precisely how the training relates to their current job responsibilities or how it will help prepare them for future assignments. The objective may be to learn how to solve problems more efficiently or how to achieve personal and/or company goals in a more cohesive manner. In any event, employees characteristically covet information that can help them in a timely and explicit sense, and they have little patience for concepts that seem too vague or philosophical. They are certainly not interested in grades, degrees or examinations.

Corporate training is usually a short-term proposition. In a conventional academic environment, instructors normally have ample time to get to know their students personally. Employee development programmes, by their very nature, do not ordinarily inspire the formation of such intimate relationships. Often, there is barely enough time to get to know each participant’s name and departmental affiliation. It is therefore imperative that trainers are able swiftly and accurately to assess the degree to which the material is being grasped by participants. It is equally essential that interaction patterns and potential problematic situations are identified quickly and dealt with decisively. These skills are foreign to the majority of college faculty.

Faculty as trainers
Some professors make contact with a company, sell themselves, provide a few training sessions, and then promptly disappear. When trainers are also faculty members at a local college or university, however, they will always be associated with that institution regardless of whether or not they are acting under its official auspices. This can either be a blessing or a curse, depending on their performance. If they do well, their reputation, and consequently the reputation of their school, will be appreciably enhanced. Everyone benefits. If, on the other hand, they act irresponsibly or perform at a sub-standard level, everyone is adversely affected by the experience. Academics who pursue corporate training opportunities have a special obligation to maintain a high degree of professionalism.

Most of the responsibility for the ultimate success or failure of any training programme lies with its facilitators. As such, trainers should always endeavour to ascertain the attitude, motivation, and overall readiness of the target audience before initiating any training activity. These factors are critical to determining which instructional techniques are likely to be most effective with a particular group of employees. Faculty who plan to become extensively involved in corporate training should attempt to work with as many different types of trainees as feasible. If they consistently present to only one particular kind of employee, or if their repertoire of topics is somewhat limited, instructors may discover that they are unable to easily relate to some participants. A group which is populated exclusively by high-school graduates requires an altogether different approach from one which contains individuals with advanced degrees. Successful trainers have the ability to adjust instantly to the unique characteristics of each training group.

Faculty members who venture into corporate training must be acutely aware of their personal strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. It is suggested that trainers determine what skills they need to enhance before initiating a particular training programme. If knowledge is lacking in a particular subject area, it is never advisable for trainers to try and bluff their way through a training session. Employees frequently know more about a topic than may be evident at least initially and can sense when trainers do not truly understand their subject. If instructors do not know the answers to particular questions, it is best if they acknowledge this by indicating that the concerns raised will be thoroughly researched prior to the next scheduled meeting – and it should never be assumed that employees will forget about such questions. Trainers should always follow-through and be prepared to revisit the relevant issues at the beginning of the next session.
A special problem can arise when some faculty members experience early success at corporate training. Occasionally, employees respond positively to training regardless of the perceived competence of the facilitator. And while this can make the trainer’s job a little easier in the short-term, it can precipitate long-term difficulties. Trainers can come to believe that the success is due principally to their efforts. As a result, they may attempt to repeat their prior accomplishment by structuring future sessions in a similar fashion. But each training group, even those within the same company or department, has unique characteristics. What works with one set of employees often does not work with another. Trainers must keep their egos in check and always strive to provide customized activities which reflect the unique needs of each group.

Perceptions and potential problems

Various constituencies within a company perceive training in distinct ways. Managers and other supervisory personnel tend to see the value of training in terms of how it can help create a more productive workforce. They perceive training as a tangible way to bolster teamwork, enhance communication, and manage conflict. In short, they view training as a valuable weapon in the company’s competitive arsenal. This being the case, those in leadership roles are usually more enthusiastic about training than other groups within the company and tend to exhibit this attitude during the sessions. As a trainer, it is important to reinforce their positive expectations at every opportunity.

When the training group contains both middle and upper management, two distinct and potentially serious problems can arise. Some middle managers tend to remain quiet, passive, studious and attentive in the presence of their supervisors. They do not want to risk much involvement and can become visibly agitated if singled out for an individual response. Other middle managers, in an obvious effort to impress their supervisors, become overly excited and attempt to demonstrate their ‘extensive’ knowledge of the training topic. They view the training session as an ideal platform to let their superiors see how smart they are.

If middle managers seem to be exhibiting either kind of behaviour, trainers must quickly find ways to overcome the negative consequences of these detrimental interaction patterns. If corrective action is not taken immediately, the training session can deteriorate into more of a sideshow than an educational experience. Activities which allow everyone to accrue some success early in the training process help to minimize the impact of this type of behaviour. When trainees experience success, they feel less threatened, more motivated, and tend to focus on learning new skills rather than on impressing others. Heightened confidence among all trainees precipitates good rapport and keeps the session flowing smoothly.

In contrast, production and other non-supervisory employees can perceive training very differently from those in leadership positions. Some see training as a way to enhance their job performance and thus help them attain future promotions or raises. They seek insights regarding better ways of solving specific problems, cutting costs, or reducing scrap. As such, they may demonstrate a genuine desire to learn. Others may view training as a potential threat to their job security and adopt a more defensive posture. Accurately assessing trainee attitudes is extremely important. Preferably, this should be accomplished prior to the actual beginning of the training programme. Once training actually starts, it is difficult to adjust if the instructor has miscalculated the employees’ perspective concerning the experience.

Sometimes employees are compelled to attend training as part of a company-wide professional development initiative. Trainers need to be apprised of this in advance since motivation can be a serious problem in these situations. If employees are forced to attend training sessions, they will most likely feel some resentment, at least initially, toward both the instructor and any ideas that are presented. Individuals who have little or no personal interest in a topic, or feel that they are there because they have to be, are prone to become belligerent and even aggressive. Unfortunately, when one or two participants become disruptive, the quality of the training experience is diminished for everyone. Rebellious behaviour from an adult is childish and immature, yet it can bring a certain satisfaction to those who see it as a way of getting back at those in charge. It is important that trainers do not take such conduct personally. The employees involved are merely rallying against whoever mandated their presence at the training session.

Resistance to training

Resistance to training can stem from a number of factors, including the educational nature of the process, the specific topic being presented, the current skill sets of the participants, the personality mix present in the room, or even the perceived competence of the instructor. Many employees may not have been in a structured learning environment since high school. While supervisors traditionally have more exposure to training activities, production workers tend to be slightly more intimidated at the prospect of returning to
the classroom. Furthermore, older employees seem to be particularly apprehensive, especially if the instructor and/or the other trainees are significantly younger than they are.

Employees usually develop personal relationships with their co-workers. Whether the company has adopted a team approach or has maintained a hierarchial arrangement, most employees interact with each other constantly throughout the workday and some even socialize after hours. To them, training can represent a threat to their self-esteem – they may be afraid that they will somehow be embarrassed during the training sessions. It is essential for trainers to recognize this natural anxiety and take steps to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and relaxed. This type of atmosphere is necessary for trainees to be open to new ideas, concepts and skills. Participants in a corporate training session can change from enthusiastic, eager learners to defensive, intimidated trouble-makers in a matter of minutes if the instructor fails to monitor correctly the response to each training activity.

Resistance to training tends to be manifest as either unresponsive or disruptive behaviour. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to predict when a particular participant will decide to act in a such a detrimental way. It can occur just when things appear to be going well. It is crucial that trainers do not become defensive and take these incidents personally. In a majority of cases, the reasons why an employee becomes difficult have nothing to do with the training per se. Disruptive or unresponsive trainees are usually unhappy about something totally unrelated to the training in progress – the instructor simply constitutes a convenient target for the venting of their frustrations. Still, it is critical to deal with this type of behaviour instantly and decisively in order to prevent the trainer's credibility from being questioned and the integrity of the training programme from being compromised.

The target audience

Company trainees tend to be distinct from their on-campus counterparts. They have typically had much more experience than the average college student and are more motivated toward specific goals. As such, they can be quite demanding and harder to reach than the students who populate a traditional academic classroom. Employees want assurance that the time they spend in training will actually help them perform their jobs more proficiently. Their tolerance for abstract, theoretical ideas which do not have immediate implications for their daily work lives is extremely low.

A pivotal first step for training facilitators involves compiling as much information as possible about the target audience. This is important regardless of whether the company's principal business consists of product development, manufacturing, distribution or provision of services. Instructors always need detailed information about the trainees who will be attending their classes. Are they primarily production workers, team members/leaders, support staff, managers and supervisors, or some combination of these groups? What is their individual and collective motivation for participating in training? Is this a voluntary arrangement or are they required to attend? What has been their previous experience with training? What has the training coordinator told them about the sessions? The answers to these questions are integral to the ultimate success or failure of any training project.

It is equally important to determine precisely how many groups will be involved in training and which shifts they represent. When will the training be conducted with respect to participants' frame of reference? Will they be completing their regular shift prior to attending the session? Or will they be coming in early to attend training, before their regular shift starts? Are they requested to attend training on their day off? Or is the training scheduled during their regular shifts? If employees from different shifts will be participating in the training, it is advisable to visit each shift personally before beginning the sessions. Not only will this provide a degree of credibility ('if the trainer is willing to come in at 2am to meet with us, he/she must be OK'), it also helps instructors to customize each session to the individual needs of participants. Trainees in a 3pm session will probably exhibit an entirely different set of characteristics from those in a 3am session.

Likewise, trainers need to understand that presenting the same content to different groups within the same company can pose a significant challenge. Many companies insist on uniformity of delivery when several groups receive training at the same location. But each group will contain participants who differ significantly with respect to their pre-existing knowledge, skills and overall commitment to the particular training topic. There is usually a wide range of distinct personality types within the groups. Such conditions demand that trainers develop multiple strategies for covering the same material. Trainers routinely have to prepare several different plans in order to ensure that each group is able to achieve the same learning objectives.

It is important to keep in mind that the constituency of training groups routinely changes without prior notice. Employees are usually given a lot of freedom to choose the dates and times of the sessions they want to attend. Vacation schedules, unexpected illnesses, set-ups and other realities of modern working life can also
The pre-training visit

In the best of all worlds, working at a company for a short period of time would be the ideal way to gain a realistic perspective on its organizational culture. Undoubtedly, the experience would provide trainers with invaluable information which could be especially useful when implementing relatively long-term projects encompassing a large number of topics and/or sessions. Admittedly, actually working at a client company is generally not a practical option. Scheduling such a significant block of time is problematic for trainers, and companies are not always receptive to having outsiders learn their proprietary processes in great detail. This is why the pre-training visit is considered indispensable.

A pre-training visit should be standard procedure for all corporate trainers. The visit must be carefully planned and scheduled several days in advance as it is never appropriate to show up at a company unannounced. The primary aim of the visit is to secure background information about the company, the products and/or services it provides, the nature of its operations, and the current state of employee relations. This type of qualitative information cannot be obtained through phone calls, websites, or e-mail. It can only be acquired through the personal interaction that takes place when trainers spend a significant amount of time on-site conversing with company personnel.

It is always prudent to talk with as many people as possible while visiting the company. Moreover, having a set of structured questions prepared prior to the visit is strongly recommended. Managers and other supervisory personnel can provide trainers with an overview of the company environment. And while their perceptions are indeed important, trainers should also seek out the human resources director, the training coordinator, and as many representatives from as many different departments as time permits while at the company. Certainly, those who will be directly involved in the training should be interviewed. Trainers should listen very closely to their perceptions as they are perhaps the most relevant. The reasons for instituting training should be explored as should the anticipated outcomes and any problems that the various constituencies think might arise. Look for differences as well as points of agreement within their answers. It is important to solicit maximum support for the training before it actually begins. There is no substitute for good rapport.

Along those same lines, it is not atypical for training to involve specific, technical information that is germane to an individual company. Many companies have their own language to describe various operations. It is also common practice for companies to develop standards that can vary considerably from those of the industry in general. Trainers should use the pre-training visit to familiarize themselves with any terms (‘buzz’ words) that may be endemic to the industrial processes used at the site. Aside from making sure that these unique terms and standards are reflected in the training sessions, such awareness gives trainers instant credibility with company employees. An extensive knowledge of company jargon allows trainers to relate to session participants on an interpersonal basis.

The training plan

After the pre-training visit, it is time to prepare seriously for the individual training sessions. To this end, the cardinal rule is customization. Employees do not respond favourably to trainers when they feel that their presentations are canned — using the same assessments, activities and even jokes regardless of where the training is being conducted. During the pre-visit interviews, several goals and objectives typically surface. Although most of these are rather overt, those which allude to underlying deficiencies are likely to require interpretation. Experienced trainers can instinctively ‘read’ the implicit needs of a company and subtly incorporate this information into their instructional strategies.

After the goals of the training programme have been identified, specific (measurable) objectives need to be formalized for each component of the experience. These are normally based on the idiosyncratic characteristics of each individual company and tend to be unique for each training session. Furthermore, intended outcomes should be put in written form to facilitate the development of a functional training plan. It is critical to have an overall game plan before initiating any corporate training; countless programmes have disintegrated into virtual chaos due to trainers who insist on perpetually ‘winging it’. By the same token, it is crucial to remember that any plan is subject to modification depending on what happens as the training progresses.
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A formal training plan demonstrates and helps to ensure accountability. The company has a legitimate right to expect a tangible return on the resources it allocates for corporate training. A well-defined training plan goes a long way toward alleviating client concerns. When completed, the plan should be shared with appropriate company representatives and training should proceed only if it receives their full and unconditional approval. Those responsible for contracting for training services should understand exactly what is scheduled to take place during each session.

Finally, when developing a training plan, note that a few topics could be considered ‘off-limits’. In some companies, for instance, trainers are told emphatically to stay away from any discussion of unions. Similarly, companies which employ the team approach may insist that terms such as ‘supervisor’ and ‘manager’ be replaced with ‘team leader’. These requests fall squarely within the company’s prerogative and must always be honoured. Sometimes employees will attempt to elicit the instructor’s support for an idea or concept that has not gained much acceptance with upper management. When these solicitations occur, trainers should avoid stating their personal opinions. They should be polite, of course, but work to change the subject without delay. These situations are tricky and can jeopardize relations with the company.

Logistical considerations

Once the formal training plan has been created and approved, the logistics of each session should receive careful attention. Except in the case of a dire emergency or unanticipated disaster, it is absolutely essential that trainers are not late and do not miss a scheduled training class. First impressions are often lasting impressions and this is one of the surest ways to guarantee that training will not be successful. It is always discerning to arrive at the company at least a half-hour before the beginning of each session. For the initial session, an hour in advance should be the rule.

The training facility should be thoroughly prepared before participants arrive. Arrange the room in a manner which best supports the planned training activities. Adjust the lighting and sound systems if applicable. Always check any audiovisual equipment that will be used to make sure it works properly. Not only is it embarrassing if the TV/VCR does not function correctly when a tape is inserted, but such a mishap can seriously compromise the trainer’s credibility. Make sure that the bulb in the overhead projector is not burned out and that the markerboard, chalkboard, or flipchart is ready for use. Computer equipment should receive special attention. The point is that no detail, regardless of how trivial it may seem, should be overlooked.

Hand-outs should be prepared which reiterate and reinforce session content. These can either be distributed during the session or upon its conclusion. Additionally, hand-outs can serve as back-ups if audiovisual equipment fails. If the computer suddenly crashes, a detailed set of hand-outs can salvage the presentation. Hand-outs can also provide trainees with more detail than is covered during the session; they are ideal for illuminating core concepts and elaborating on specific applications. Above all, trainers need to make sure they bring enough copies with them for each session.

Trainers must recognize and accept that most sessions seldom go exactly as planned. It is always better to be overprepared than underprepared. If training is scheduled to last two hours, instructors should have at least three hours of activities available. Two major dilemmas can arise with respect to time. First, trainees may complete an exercise in less time than anticipated due to minimal discussion or interaction. Second, trainees could respond adversely to an activity or complain that they have encountered something similar in a previous training class. Either problem requires immediate deviation from the training plan. The ability to alter the course of a training session at a moment’s notice in a completely seamless manner is an integral skill for trainers to possess.

Along with arriving early and starting each session on time, it is equally important to bring the experience to a close when the allotted time has expired. It is never advisable to finish prior to the announced ending time. Companies go to considerable trouble and expense to make training available to their employees and it can be extremely disruptive if trainees are dismissed early. Going beyond the announced ending time is even worse. Employees tend to lose their motivation and company officials tend to lose their patience if trainers do not bring their sessions to a close on time.

Conducting the training

Versatility is truly the key to effective corporate training. Trainers must be able to change direction instantly if conditions warrant. Material should be presented in modules that are rather brief, to the point, easily digested, applications-oriented, and perhaps even mildly entertaining. While a few audiences respond well to the lecture format, most employees favour a
more hands-on, interactive approach. This is why problem-solving and consensus-building exercises are so popular among corporate trainers. The goal is to strike a balance continually between meeting stated objectives and maintaining sufficient involvement.

It is good to have some type of ‘icebreaker’ activity planned for the initial session, especially if the trainees do not work together on a consistent basis. The purpose of these introductory exercises is to establish rapport among the trainees and reduce their collective apprehension. Jumping straight into content-driven training without allowing time for participants to get to know the instructor or each other sets the stage for problems to surface later. If the training session is technical in nature, the trainer can develop a crossword puzzle using terms that trainees will be exposed to throughout the remainder of the programme. This type of activity helps to ease trainees into the proper mindset for what is to follow.

Discussion groups work particularly well as a vehicle for facilitating corporate training. Most adults instinctively like to talk to one another. The composition of the groups should receive a great deal of preliminary consideration. It is always advantageous to get to know the trainees before forming discussion groups. Groups should be balanced with respect to knowledge and skills, attitude and motivation, and personality and disposition. Since they thrive on differences of opinion, the best groups seem to consist of employees who do not normally work together in the same department. Employees who do not interact with each other on a consistent basis have different frames of reference. Moreover, they are not as comfortable with each other, at least initially, as they are with their departmental peers. This anxiety, if channelled appropriately, can be a powerfully creative force.

At the same time, there are situations in which having a discussion group comprised of employees from the same department is desirable. When training entails highly specific, technical information, employees who are already familiar with the germane concepts and terminology have a distinct advantage. It is important to determine which type of discussion group is most appropriate for a given training objective. As with everything else associated with a successful training programme, experience seems to be the best teacher.

While working in groups is an excellent way to facilitate training, there is always a chance that trainers may lose touch with some participants. Even if a training session seems to be going well, it is important to keep in mind that all employees do not learn at the same rate. Some will be able to absorb the subject matter comparatively quickly, while others can take significantly longer to assimilate the same content. If trainees seem unusually quiet, the chances are they are not adequately grasping essential concepts. These individuals generally do not want their peers to be aware of their plight and may go to considerable lengths to disguise their lack of understanding. Since corporate training is, by design, a rather intense experience, it is imperative that trainers are able to spot these situations quickly and intervene promptly. It is always better to frustrate the faster learners than lose the slower ones. Trainers must always be willing to adjust the pace of a session to ensure that a positive learning environment is consistently maintained for all participants.

A functional understanding of adult learning principles is a necessary prerequisite for effective corporate training. Research indicates, for example, that it is wise to change the method of presentation at least three times every hour for the duration of a training session. If an activity lasts for more than twenty minutes, participants’ minds slowly but surely begin to wander. Most employees have a relatively short attention span and prefer information to be presented in brief, digestible fragments. Intense, focused deliberation can quickly degenerate into trivial, meaningless chatter when trainees are pushed beyond the twenty-minute barrier.

While varying the presentation style helps maintain interest, it is just as important to keep the discussion fairly narrow in scope. Situations invariably arise which cause the dialogue to range rather far from the primary objective of the session. In fact, this is a common occurrence with training groups that are particularly responsive. Trainers must work to make sure that all comments are perceived as relevant to the discussion at hand, regardless of how unrelated they may seem on the surface. This helps participants feel more connected to the training process, which has a positive effect on their retention.

Ultimately, the best strategy is to have participants feel like they are training themselves. Employees are naturally more receptive to new ideas if they feel they have played a major role in developing those ideas. Obviously, trainers are still in control when using this technique. They merely provide the framework in which participants explore predetermined possibilities. When this procedure is employed, however, trainees inevitably take ownership of their ‘discoveries’. As stated earlier, employees come to most training sessions with an extensive set of experiences and prior knowledge. It is the trainer’s job to tap into this reservoir of information and guide trainees to a higher plane of understanding.
Final considerations

Once the training programme has been officially completed, additional guidance may be required to implement successfully the concepts and skills presented. In such instances, trainers might consider offering a series of training sessions designated as ‘applications’. These frequently consist of intense discussions regarding how the ideas presented in the previous classes can best be instituted in the trainees’ respective departments. Applications sessions should not follow immediately after the initial training, as employees need a little time to think about what they have learned and how it applies to their individual circumstances. Ideally, though, these sessions should be facilitated by the same instructors who provided the original training. Familiarity with the participants allows trainers to move quickly when demonstrating potential applications – there is no need to spend valuable time going through the ‘getting to know each other’ phase all over again.

Employees deserve some type of formal recognition once they have completed a training programme. An extraordinary amount of time and energy is often spent on training activities; the investment for both the company and the individual can be substantial. It is therefore fitting to acknowledge those who manage to complete the training and are subsequently able to demonstrate mastery over the material presented. Some companies make this a very elaborate process by hosting a reception or banquet and presenting certificates at a formal graduation ceremony. Other companies take a more informal approach and simply post the names of those completing the programme on bulletin boards or in newsletters. The point is that employees should feel that they have accomplished something worthwhile when they complete a training programme. This lends integrity to the process and helps ensure enthusiasm for future training projects. It also helps to put closure on the experience.

When faculty members have completed a training assignment at a particular company, a ‘thank you’ letter should be sent to the appropriate company representatives. Likewise, it is a good idea to call some of the participants after a little time has passed to see if they are having difficulty implementing the training. Concepts which seem relatively simple and straightforward in the training room are typically much more difficult to apply on the plant floor. Supplemental explanation and support might be needed. At the very least, trainers should always provide employees with a phone number where they can be reached should problems arise. Not only does this demonstrate accountability, it sends a signal to the company that trainers are willing to stand behind the information they have disseminated. It is also a good way to ensure that they will be invited back in the future.

In the final analysis, the primary purpose of corporate training is not to relieve companies of excess financial resources or to receive community service credit that can be used to gain promotion and tenure. The only legitimate reason companies engage in training is to enhance employee performance. This, in turn, helps the company to be more competitive. Companies do not exist to make their employees better human beings – but at the same time it is important to realize that better human beings almost always make better employees.

The partnership between higher education and private industry will no doubt continue to grow stronger in the next century. It is fuelled by inescapable economic and philosophical realities that are increasingly global in scope. The provision of training services is one way colleges and universities can better serve the communities that support their existence. The reality is that most college faculty have the potential to be excellent corporate trainers. With patience, perseverance, and the right attitude, they can offer a tremendous advantage to any company seeking to improve the quality of its goods and services.
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