

From the Editor's Desk



Dear Readers,
Greetings From SmartEdge!

This August Issue of SmartBulletin presents the readers with a huge cache of stimulating pieces. In the Learning Point section, the article transpires how game-based learning applications can draw us into virtual environments that look and feel familiar and relevant. Read on and make training a platform for fun learning.

An organisation's greatest asset is its skilled human capital; constant change in technology is making training an integral part of any business. Therefore, it is essential for an organisation to measure the effectiveness of its training. For better insight read our Spotlight section.

Special-Focus showcases an eye-opening story that provokes each one of us to realize that success lies not in the result but in the effort, Being the best is not at all important, doing the best is all that matters.

There's much more to keep you updated. So read on.....

We would be happy to know your views in the articles in this issue. Email us your suggestions and constructive ideas as they help us become more focused and relevant to the HR community.

Happy Monsoon!!!



Riabelle Fernandes

LEARNING POINT

Training Games

by, Preeti Sharma, Language & Behaviourial Skills Trainer

As Children we learned through play. When we became adults, we did not suddenly begin to learn in a different way- instead we were taught in a different way, which often involved no play at all. Learning that used to be fun suddenly became dull. As a result, we learned less or more slowly and often not at all.

For me, the sight of a group of senior executives, up to their elbows in bread dough, or a group of middle managers singing their hearts out is utterly splendid. When I tell a story, I see all the physical signs of age regression in the groups – they take to the floor, sit cross-legged and childlike and their features smooth out, as though recapturing lost moments of their youth. Through the engagements of their senses, they learn and they remember what they have learned. They leave the training session on a high, and months later still talk about what they did.

More importantly, they apply their learning immediately back in the workplace, because the learning took place at a deep level – way beyond anything they might have achieved by attending the lecture, or through a dull follow-me training session.

I do not only play games in my workshops and classroom training events – I also spend time in more traditional pursuits of demonstration, discussion and debate – but the games and the debrief that follows them are a vitally important part of training methods.

So what is it that makes training games work so well?



Primarily, a well-designed training game engages the emotions insofar as participants are actively involved in achieving a pre-set objective, no matter how frivolous that might at first appear. The cagey and the cautious (and even the downright antagonistic) cannot help but

Whatever the initial level of commitment, most participants recognise that they have a contribution to make and rapidly become immersed in achieving the group objective. Because they can be a miniature representation of reality, games can generate real issues of concern, such as poor communication skills, inappropriate behaviours, poor interpersonal skills, and so on. Nevertheless, because these arise within the context of the game, participants feel less apprehensive about confronting them. The accomplished facilitator can usually broach these issues in a way that leaves participants' self-esteem intact.

Another factor that contributes to the effectiveness of training games is that the learning is “owned” by the participants. Although the trainer may have specific reasons for including a particular game in a training session, often the most important lessons derived from the experience of playing the game are generated by the participants themselves. This potential for diversity should not be seen as a threat by trainers but as a major strength of the genre. Another strength of training games is that they suit all types of learning style. Indeed, one would hardly expect it to be otherwise, as the well-designed game will be based on Kolb's learning cycle, which focuses on having an experience, then reflecting, theorising and applying the learning inherent in that initial activity.

Games, or similar light-hearted activities can also be used as effective ice-breakers. In this instance, the facilitator needs to take account of how well group members know each other (if at all); how easily they can be persuaded to take part; how comfortable they will feel participating; what their initial responses to the activity might be; and whether there is a purpose to the exercise. At the beginning of a day, flung together with a group of people you have never met before, you do not want to be crawling around on the floor making animal noises – even if it will help to “break down your inhibitions and help you get to know one another”.

Of course, we have all heard our fair share of “horror stories” relating to training games: unwilling participants being forced into embarrassing situations; disgruntled group members “switching off”; sensitive trainees being left in tears; and worse. Most of us have experienced being “jollied along” or cajoled into something with which we were not comfortable. This serves no useful purpose and can serve to alienate trainees. Trainers need to remember that some participants will be a little reticent and should provide opportunity to opt out: most games will benefit from having an impartial observer or two who can bring a different dimension to the debriefing discussion. To be most effective, observers should be provided with a summary of the behaviours they are looking for: a simple matter for the well-prepared trainer.

Quarter



“Managing Conflicts”
Sanofi India Limited



Open-house Program
“Critical Skills for First Time Leaders”



“Out To Synergise”
Azure Power, New Delhi



Open-house Program
“Train The Trainer”

SnapShot

SPOTLIGHT

“Effort is important, but knowing where to make an effort makes all the difference!”

A giant ship engine failed. The ship's owners tried one expert after another, but none of them could figure out how to fix the engine.

Then they brought in an old man who had been fixing ships since he was a young. He carried a large bag of tools with him, and when he arrived, he immediately went to work. He inspected the engine very carefully, top to bottom.

Two of the ship's owners were there, watching this man, hoping he would know what to do. After looking things over, the old man reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He gently tapped something. Instantly, the engine lurched into life. He carefully put his hammer away. The engine was fixed!

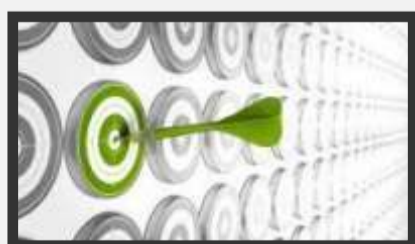
A week later, the owners received a bill from the old man for Rupees ten thousand .

“What?!” the owners exclaimed. “He hardly did anything!”

So they wrote the old man a note saying, “Please send us an itemized bill.”

The man sent a bill that read:

Tapping with a hammer..... Rs. 2.00
Knowing where to tap..... Rs. 9,998.00
Total amount.....Rs. 10,000.00



workshops on leadership, team effectiveness, attitudes, ethics, integrity and diversity are focused on the intangibles. It is tough to gauge the benefits of the latter, as results vary from individual to individual.

In such a backdrop, what can companies and trainers do to ensure effective corporate training? The key to effective training function is active participation by all stakeholders, including learning managers, HR managers and learners’ managers. Senior leaders should be actively engaged at every stage, right from need identification, and conceptualising the training programmes to conducting sessions. HR managers or the team that assesses training needs in an organisation, designs and manages such programmes must remember that while the main ingredients of a training module may remain constant, the methodology used needs to evolve continuously.

Another important aspect is to track the impact of a particular training procedure. Managers should ensure that the learning is well directed and yields effective results. They must also quantify abstract data such as how employees are responding to the programme and how it is translating into everyday work. Hard data can be used to review if the training is working or requires improvement.

Thanks to the focus on building a sustained learning environment, employee training in India is big business and has grown into approximately Rs. 5000 crore businesses, with potential to grow further. But unless companies take steps to ensure effectiveness of training, they would be throwing away good money.

Upcoming Programs for August - October 2016

- ➔ 7 Quality Control Tools
- ➔ Import - Export Documentation
- ➔ Stores Management
- ➔ Strategic Communication
- ➔ Supply Chain Tools & Techniques for Productivity Improvement
- ➔ Discipline at Workplace, Disciplinary Actions & Domestic Inquiry

SPECIAL-FOCUS

Corporate Training With a Difference

An organisation’s greatest asset is its skilled human capital. Constant change in technology is making training an integral part of any business. But despite the huge jumps in corporate training, there are gaps in implementation. Tracking the training process, getting optimum feedback and understanding whether the process has been successful in delivering real-time results.

Effectiveness in Gauged on two Parameters

- The degree to which the programme achieved the stated objective; and,
- The ratio of the cost of the training to the return.

There are also different types of training. While, product, sales or technical training, teach specific skills