

Management Tool #A-18: ©

The many faces of training...and a bonus idea you've likely not thought of:

There's much talk in business today about the importance of initial and on-going training, coaching and employee development...and so there should be. You can't grow your business without growing your people...and without growing yourself.

To truly embrace a program of ongoing employee education and development, keep in mind that there are many different kinds of training. Below is a partial list. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being excellent, how are you doing at each of these...and which of these 12 types of training need to be improved in your business? Use the boxes to fill in your scores.

- ☐ 1. **'Who we are'** training. Learning our history, culture, values, standards, vision, commitments and achievements. This is most important for effectively on-boarding new employees...but should be reinforced on a regular basis.
- ☐ 2. **'How we do business'** training. Learning our systems, processes, terms, customer policies, internal policies.
- ☐ 3. **'Product knowledge'** training. Learning the features and benefits of what we sell and our total compelling value proposition. This would typically be for those in sales and marketing...but all employees should have an understanding of this. It's part of their being proud of what we do and their role in it.
- ☐ 4. **'Skills and knowledge'** training. How to do their current job more effectively, more safely and more comfortably...and why their job is important to the rest of the Team, to the customer and to the bottom line.
- ☐ 5. **Training to do another job** (cross-training) to create a more flexible and efficient workforce, or because their current job will soon become redundant.
- ☐ 6. **'Learning new stuff'** training. Learning new technologies, machinery, processes, systems or policies as they're introduced.
- ☐ 7. **'Management development'** training, coaching and mentoring. This occurs in two different time frames:
 - a) Preparing employees ahead of time for subsequent promotion or increased responsibility. This would include training in effectively managing people, projects, processes and budgets.
 - b) Training and coaching employees after a promotion or addition of responsibility. No one should ever be promoted or transferred to a different responsibility without a specific training / coaching package. Otherwise, we're just setting them up to fail.

Note: This 'Management Development' training can be delivered internally, if you have capable people to do it, or it can be delivered through courses offered by Colleges, your Industry Association, or 3rd party providers. Or a combo of internal & external.

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- ☐ **8. 'Health & Safety' and 'Emotionally Safe Workplace' training.** If a business is not a physically and emotionally healthy and safe place to be, nothing else matters. Everyone on our team needs to be aware of, knowledgeable about and constantly reminded of smart health & safety practices and policies and our commitment to an emotionally safe workplace. And, they need to be encouraged to report any physically or emotionally unsafe practices or behaviour.
- ☐ **9. 'Attitude adjustment' training.** This is generally for employees who are exhibiting some kind of inappropriate or toxic behaviour. Topics could include diversity & inclusion, learning about other cultures, bullying, gender respect, anger management or the importance of our standards of performance, appearance and behavior.
- ☐ **10. Ongoing communication re, 'How we're doing and where we're going as a business...and why their particular job is important'.** This is one of the most important aspects of employee engagement.
- ☐ **11. Daily ongoing informal coaching** on how to do any aspect of their job more effectively in a way that instructs, grows, encourages and engages employees to be more effective and to prepare for more or different responsibility.
- ☐ **12. What management development and coaching do you need,** as the business owner, leader or manager, to perform more effectively in your role? So many business owners, leaders and managers understand that their employees need training, coaching and development, but they, themselves, are a perfect piece of finished work, just the way they are. Not true! As I said at the beginning, you can't grow your business without growing your people...and without growing yourself.

Bonus note: There's one more type of 'staff training' that nobody talks about. That's the one where you give your staff the opportunity to 'train' top management about what's *really* going on in the company, from their perspective.

This can be done by asking individual employees at all levels for their honest insight as to:

- a)** What do we not do as well as we should? What's not working so well in the business...and what they suggest we could do to fix it?
- b)** What frustrates them or prevents them from getting their job done effectively...and what they suggest we could do to fix it?
- c)** What frustrates or alienates our customers...and what they suggest we could do to fix it?
- d)** What we could do to help make you more excited to come to work each day?

A second approach to giving your staff (especially front-line staff) an opportunity to 'train' top management about what's *really* going on in the company, from their perspective is to give them an opportunity to put together and deliver a presentation on what they believe could be improved in the areas of the customer experience, employee safety, efficiency, communication, policies and processes, facilities and working conditions.

Select a few of your top front-line and front-line supervisory people and give them time to put together a one-hour session in which they will give you the wisdom of 'their truth' about the challenges and

frustrations they face...and their suggestions for fixing it. Do you have guts to give this one a try? You'll be amazed at what you learn and what needs fixing.

So, there you have it. **'The 12 faces of training'** and a gutsy bonus suggestion. How will you use these insights to improve your understanding of and commitment to training, learning and people development...and when will you start?

Donald Cooper, MBA, CSP, HoF, has been both a world-class manufacturer and an award-winning retailer. Now, as a Toronto-based international management speaker and coach, he helps business owners and managers rethink, refocus and re-energize their business to sell more, manage smarter, grow their bottom line...and have a life.

Donald can be reached at 416-252-3703...or by email at donald@donaldcooper.com. For more info , or to receive our free, weekly 'straight talk' Management Blog go to donaldcooper.com.