

# Training Course

## How to develop your first employee course

By J P Medved

It's the third time this week. You've come home for the day, gone through your normal, relaxing routine, put yourself to bed and shut your eyes. However, you can't sleep. As you lay there, contemplating all the possible reasons you're still awake, one thought echoes in the back of your mind: your employees are underperforming.

You sigh aloud. "Maybe it's time to implement a training program," you think to yourself. "But, is it really worth the effort?"

Yes, actually. Considering that studies have shown that employees with "poor" training opportunities are [three times as likely](#) to want to leave their job as those who categorize their training opportunities as "excellent", and that companies with comprehensive training programs have [218% higher revenue per employee](#) than those without, the benefits of training courses far outweigh the effort it requires to put them on. But where do you start?

### Chapter 1. Do you NEED a Training Course?

This first step is an incredibly important one. You need to determine whether or not your employees are underperforming because they *can't* perform better, or because they *won't*. If it's the latter, no amount of training is going to help. You may consider incentivizing your employees, or you may decide they're just not worth keeping around. However, if it's because they *can't* do better, then you have a pretty good chance of fixing the problem.

Of course, you are probably wondering *how* to determine whether it's *can't* or *won't*. Here are a few ways to do that:

- A) **Uncover the situation:** Try talking to your employees. There are several ways to go about this, from conducting interviews to anonymous surveys. Many times, however, going straight to the source is the easiest way to find out why an employee is underperforming.
- B) **Analyze the situation:** [Work observation](#) is an excellent tool, but can be really rough on employees. You may want to come-up with some low-pressure versions of this, as many employees tend to make nervous mistakes in front of a boss, which they wouldn't make otherwise. Try listening to recorded phone calls or spending a day observing multiple employees in a single area, rather than sitting in on just one employee all day.
- C) **Connect the dots:** Look into employees' performance records. If you see anything indicative of skill gaps, such as long hours spent using one piece of software or a consistent lack of performance in one area, then you definitely know you have a fixable problem in your hands when you begin a training course.

### Chapter 2. Develop Your Archetypal Learner

Having determined who your learners are, figure out how exactly they learn. Sort [your learners' traits](#) into these categories:

- The learners' habits and tasks
- Their opinion and frustration on the subject
- The skills they already possess
- Skills they need to know immediately

Once you figure these things out, you will have a much clearer picture of the holes you need to patch in their skill sets.

### Chapter 3. Course Creation

The very first step in course creation is defining your objectives.

Having [clearly-defined, measurable objectives and metrics](#) is absolutely tantamount to having a successful course. Setting goals while help determine how your employees are progressing as well as the efficiency of your course. You should have one or two final major objectives for the overall course, and you should make milestone objectives to meet throughout the course. You may even consider additional goals to meet after the course has ended to ensure skills continue to develop. If you need help creating measurable objectives, use the [SMART criteria](#).

Having set out your objectives, you can move on to outlining the actual course material. Here you'll need to decide the sequence, content and pacing of the course. You need to have very clear objectives for every section of the course. These should be your milestone objectives. To track progress, you should [test your employees throughout the course](#). Like goals, employee test results will also make sure that your employees are meeting these objectives (and that your course is actually effective! – if they're not doing well, don't assume the course is perfect and only the students are flawed).

Next, you need to actually create and then author the course. For the creation of the course content, whether you're building games, shooting videos, or writing content, you can use [these free and cheap resources](#). Course authoring is often a function of an [LMS](#), if you have one of those, or you can purchase a [course authoring system](#).

### Chapter 4. Evaluate Your Course

If you've set up clear, measurable objectives for your employees, this aspect shouldn't be that hard. It's important to remember, however, that the course you've created is not set in stone and can be adjusted to employee performance. If your employees are meeting all of your objectives quickly, consider picking up the pace of the course or setting more difficult objectives. On the contrary — if your employees are not meeting their objectives, the course keep too aggressive a pace. That said, it's also possible that the course you set up does not actually solve the training gap you set out to patch. Employees may be meeting their course goals, but not improving in their performance, in which case your course may not be effective.

### Chapter 5. Make them Practice

The most important thing to remember is that skills are not concrete; they are developed. You absolutely need to make sure your employees apply and practice the skills they learned starting immediately after the course is done. [79% of information](#) learned is lost within a month, if not practiced. One option is to consider periodic testing of the skills. Regardless, continual focus on ensuring your employees have the skills they need to perform at the highest level is the best way to ensure success. **TEL**



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