



## TRAINING HAS MOVED BEYOND THE LUXURY POINT

# STRATEGIC PARTNERS: TRAINING AND HR

**A** new year is the perfect time to gather your thoughts and think about what lies ahead. Events and circumstances will shape us, but at the same time the energy and drive we bring to the table will form our missions, objectives and initiatives.

I was thinking about what 2010 will bring for the training industry when I received a note from a reader studying for an MBA at the University of Puerto Rico. Thanks to the miracle of search engines, the student had dredged up an article I'd written years ago on synergizing HR and training, and he'd wondered if the current economic conditions will affect the merging of training and HR under a collaborative talent management banner.

I'd like to throw that discussion open to anyone (just e-mail us), but let me get the conversational ball rolling. I'd fall firmly in the "necessity is the mother of invention" camp. Even if the economic realities of 2009 get markedly better remarkably soon, there's going to be residual financial spillover into 2010, and training department belts are likely to stay a little tight for a little longer. Training is a benefit that both strengthens and rewards performance, and there are economies of scale that can be appreciated by managing that benefit in step with other employee benefits.

I think the merging of training and HR will continue as a collaborative, strategic partnership. It's more and more clear that training has moved beyond the luxury point and become a relied-upon, fully expected contribution that companies are presumed to offer. This cultural need alone mandates a closer relationship between the people developers and the managers of people processes.

But perhaps most pressing is the pioneer aspect. Humans are, by nature, explorers with one eye on a horizon

and one eye on the better way to get there. The continued merging of people processes under integrated talent management solutions just plain makes sense. The companies who innovated new ways to manage learning have done very well, and the consultants who can accurately measure the impact of training are becoming celebrities. As a community we're zeroing in on the missing link between training and talent management, between theory and application, between planning, performance and production. We're on the brink of discovery, and we won't be stopping here.

Right now, learning leaders are gathered around a conference table with teams of smart professionals. They're defining and refining processes that link training to performance, assessment to compensation, succession management to knowledge management. This year's innovation will be the foundation for next year's breakthrough, which will spawn its own generations of advancements, enhancements, upgrades and improvements.

Someday some student will find that old article of mine on a search engine and he or she will stop to marvel over it. Not over the structure of sentences or the depth of data, but over the concept itself. "Aligning training and HR?" they'll ask. "How could they be separate?"

What do you think?

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