

Throwing the Baby Out with the Bath Water: Should instructor-led training be tossed? Part 3

By: Bobby Butler, June 18, 2013

Editor's note: This article is the final part of a three-part series. The first segment discussed how the idiom "don't throw the baby out with the bath water" is analogous to threats to instructor-led training. Additionally, the seven problems inherent in using traditional instructor-led training today and how ILT's problems impact training's stakeholders were discussed. Part Two discussed four of the six attributes of a revolutionary systems approach to ILT that fixes its problems and how to make it more workable and impactful in today's workforce. This segment discusses the final two attributes to fix ILT's problems and make it more workable and impactful for today's workplace.

The problems inherent in using traditional instructor-led training today are pervasive and impact all stakeholders. However, given its long-tenured utility, I contend that before we get rid of ILT (throwing the baby out..., if you will), we fix the problems and make ILT much more workable and impactful for today's workplace by making revolutionary changes.

This can be done by first building a training system and not a program, and setting up a platform better suited to today's working conditions. Additionally, standardizing the delivery timeframe and format, incorporating a participant-centric training approach, and including the components and tools needed to engage all parties responsible for employee development. And lastly, building in better cost controls.

Provide all Needed Components and Tools

As it relates to a "training system", when building your workshops I strongly recommend developing four core components to successfully engage all three stakeholders: a facilitator guide, an accompanying PowerPoint slide deck, a coaching guide and the participate workbook. In doing so, you will incorporate everything instructors, participants, and their supervisors/managers need to carry out their respective training related responsibilities. Following are my recommendations on what each component should consist of:

Facilitator guide – Design as a turnkey resource (25-40 pages) consisting of all the content needed by the instructor to prepare, deliver, and support the training. Include:

- A cover letter explaining the workshop's philosophy and approach
- The workshop purpose and learning objectives
- A classroom setup guide
- A sample registration response letter
- Lists of the participants and coaches resources
- The workshop's flow, agenda and conduct guide
- All applicable in-classroom and post-workshop support materials; e.g., handouts, exercise materials, job aids, and personal development planning and level-three evaluation tools
- The background materials utilized to develop the workshop formatted as articles

Accompanying PowerPoint slide deck – Design as a compact resource (five to 10 slides) to be used by the instructor to draw participants' attention to key learning points, at specific times, throughout the workshop's delivery. [Use deck only as a reference tool and not a teaching instrument]

Coaching guide – Design as a compact resource (4 to 6 pages) to be used by participants' management 1) to facilitate a brief post-training “coaching conversation” following the workshop and 2) to observe/evaluate the utilization of the training on the job. Include:

- A cover letter explaining the value of supervisors/managers involvement in post-training reinforcement
- A sample copy of the personal development plan; including subject matter related questions supervisors/managers may use to start the coaching conversation [Coaching should take place within a day or two of the training]
- Job aid sample(s)
- A level-three evaluation instrument [Evaluation should be completed within five to seven days of the training]

Participant workbook – Design a comprehensive resource (20 to 35 pages) consisting of all the content needed by participants to fully engage during training and to effectively and efficiently implement their training immediately following the workshop. Include:

- A welcome letter explaining the workshop's philosophy and approach and how best to get the most out of the training
- The workshop's purpose and its learning objectives
- Any applicable pre-work materials
- The workshop's core concepts briefing, interactive and collaborative Q&A discussion, applications exercise, and action planning/closing activity
- All applicable in-classroom materials and post-workshop implementation and support materials; e.g.; handouts, exercise materials, job aids, the personal development planning tool. Also, a sample copy of the workshop's level-three evaluation
- The background materials utilized to develop the workshop formatted as informational articles

Build in Better Cost Controls

When utilizing traditional instructor-led training there are a number of different costs. The most obvious are, of course, material and instructor costs. However, there may be others including:

- Facilities, equipment and props
- Training day meals, refreshments and snacks
- Transportation, lodging and other meals; e.g., breakfast, dinner
- Lack of or lowered productivity

A key problem related to training's costs is while some elements are easily identifiable, quantifiable, and/or allocable, some are not. And, that is the rub; because the inability to identify, quantify or allocate all the costs makes controlling them difficult, if not impossible.

So, how does one get better control? It is simple. Build into your system a platform that allows you to eliminate some costs and manage others better.

For example, a one-hour workshop platform allows you to eliminate all meals, refreshments, travel and lodging costs should you take advantage of the scheduling flexibilities. Moreover, the hour long platform allow you to implement better controls over material, instructor and facilities costs, and perhaps cost for equipment and/or props, as a result of its inherent cost-saving, cost-reallocation and/or cost-deferment properties . Finally, your operational managers and leaders will gain greater

control over their lack of/lowered productivity concerns because their direct reports will spend an hour only each time away from their jobs in training verses a day, two, three or more at a time.



Closing

Perhaps now would be a good time to pose a question alluded to early-on in Part 1 of this article: Ask yourself what is it you really want to rid yourself of, Instructor-led training or the problems surrounding it?"

If I have done a good job stating my case for not only keeping ILT, but more important, revolutionizing it to make it much more workable and impactful for today's 21st century workplace, my expectations are that you, like me, want to rid yourself of the problems. Therefore, you also agree the threats of ILT's extinction are unwarranted.

So, let us both do our part to squelch the hoopla about throwing Instructor-led training out [along with its problems]. And instead, let's work together to fix the problems.

*About the Author: Bobby L. Butler is CEO of **IMPACT60** Learning Systems™, LLC. He is creator of the **60 MINUTES for IMPACT™** Workshops Training Platform: a revolutionary approach to instructor-led training which addresses the seven (7) problems inherent in traditional training programs' platforms. He can be reached at blb@impact60learning.com. Learn about **IMPACT60** at www.impact60learning.com.*