

## Does training and development really improve productivity and performance?

**YES, by following these steps:**

We often do not give enough credit and attention to training and development as a means of improving both performance and productivity. I proved this to myself because a few days ago I was watching part of a training video I purchased for learning how to use my new HD video camera so I can make high quality videos for my work. This requires getting professional results from this awesome little prosumer camera.

As I was watching the video I recalled a conversation I had with my friend Peter who graciously videotaped me giving a seminar last month. He has the same camera and convinced me to buy this model after explaining the features and how great the video turns out. When we were setting up for the shoot that day I asked Peter what settings he was using on the camera and he replied none. He was completely relying on the automatic settings of the camera, and added that the camera does such a great job itself, why bother changing anything? After watching the video this morning I realized he was saying this because he had not taken the time to learn about the various options available to him, thus he does not realize the tremendous potential one has to control the camera through its manual settings and get far superior results. The video explains why one should opt for the user controls in order to get truly professional results, which of course is what I want.

As I was watching the video and learning how I could control the various options to improve the quality of the video I was thinking back to some of the things I had taped recently and how this information would have greatly benefited me at that time. In fact just 3 days before I was taping a speaker and could have used more appropriate settings to assure the best results.

Of course watching the video is not enough. I need to pick up the camera and actually practice applying the settings that is recommended. This reminds me of the steps to training that assures skill development and not just knowing something. These steps are:

1. Explain the purpose or objectives of the training and why it is important
2. Explain each task or skill that you want the person to learn
3. Demonstrate the task or skill
4. Have the person perform the task or skill while you the trainer observe
5. Provide feedback on the person's performance. Reinforce what they are doing well and redirect on what needs improvement
6. Repeat the above steps if needed
7. Provide follow-up. Agree on the level and frequency of follow-up required

Following these steps always delivers greater results. Just ask yourself how many things have you learned that actually stuck and were put into practice? The cause for this is probably reflected in the above list.

I was very impressed with the quality of the training video I watched as steps 1-3 were done extremely well. Of course the trainer could not do steps 4-7 without being there with me, so it is up to me to practice and this requires self-discipline and motivation. This is also where training often fails to produce the desired results. Those doing the training do not always consciously follow the above steps and easily forget about the follow-up. In organizations managers need to fully understand the relationship of the training to the desired improvements on the job and must develop and implement a follow-up plan with the employee and training provider in order to make sure the skills learned will be applied.



I can safely say that I will put these new camera techniques into practice. In fact I brought my camera to work with me that morning and did some videotaping that evening to practice immediately. I will soon be bragging to Peter about how knowledgeable I have become about my camera and I know he will be begging to borrow the video so he can learn too.

So you see training can help us to claim our right to brag and thus increase our self-confidence and esteem. This is a good thing as long as we don't go overboard. I also feel that my investment in my camera, which costs quite a bit more than the average models, was well worth it as I feel I now know how to use the tool to get the superior results I had originally envisioned.

What are your thoughts and experience on training and its importance to results and goal achievement? Please provide your comments or any questions regarding improving the results from your training initiatives.

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