

PCA article series

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Training without coaching is just entertainment!

That was fantastic – I learnt so much

Can't wait to get back to work to put it into practice

Best workshop I've been on for

New concepts that will make a real difference to the way we work

Sound familiar?

These quotes are taken from feedback forms after training events and workshops – and everyone **really** meant those comments. So what happened when these enthusiastic and committed people got back to work? Did they put the lessons in to practice, was the impact on the business worth the time, effort and cost?

Frequently no – in reality most people get buried under the day to day problems that accumulate while they're away and people rarely get round to implementing what they've learnt. This is particularly the case with the so called 'softer' skills learning around leadership, management, or team building, because, in reality, these 'softer' skills are the hardest to understand, absorb and apply.

Take leadership as a specific example – there are probably more articles, courses and books on leadership than any other business subject. With flatter organisational structures, constant change and the need to get more from less, the concept of better leadership has taken on an almost holy grail persona in the quest to create high performance working environments which make the most of the businesses human capital. Good leadership is a topic of constant study and discussion in an attempt to gain competitive advantage. **So**, leadership learning should be pretty effective then? Well no, the Gallup Organisations ongoing research confirms that millions of dollars spent on leadership development has little impact on increasing employee engagement.

Why is that? Common sense tells us that you can't turn someone into an effective Leader or Manager after one training event. Despite this, most management / leadership training is an event, with little or no reinforcement or follow up coaching. Then it is usually entirely up to the participant whether they actually use what is learnt or not!

Leaders and managers, whether they like it or not, do have a huge impact on employee engagement, so they need to develop the right skills and tools to create a work environment for high performance.

Learning is increasingly expected to equip people to help their organisations become 'strategically unique' So learning should be aligned to the strategic priorities, and is therefore about achieving strategic differentiation as well as operational efficiency and effectiveness.

So how can you ensure your learning and people development processes are really value for money, effective in addressing the real business issues and actually change the way people work?

- Recognise that softer skills learning is a **process not an event**, it takes time, application and action for the learning to become effective
- Use structured 1-2-1 coaching programmes to support individuals to explore, develop, personalise and embed their learning.
- Use appropriate instruments such as **DISC behavioural profiling** and **360-degree** assessments to provide people with objective feedback.
- Use a **range of learning events and methods** appropriate to the people and business needs.
- Ensure that any learning and development is clearly aligned with the **strategic goals** and people apply their learning to real business issues of significant value.
- Find the right **measures** to track the desired changes and performance improvements

This is the methodology used in PCA development programmes, it is effective because it is designed to change the way people think - why? Because if thinking doesn't change then behaviours and habits remain the same and little or no progress is made in changing business performance.