

The Three-Legged Stool for Training Success

By Rebecca Morgan, CSP, CMC

The 16-session manager training program was phenomenally successful. Ninety percent of the attendees were offered promotions within a year of their graduation. Why was the program so successful? Because all of the legs on the Training Success 3-legged stool were strong.

For training to be successful, all three legs of the development stool must be strong. If one of the parties doesn't do their part, the stool is wobbly or collapses.

Most training puts the onus of success solely on the instructor. Occasionally a training will include participant accountability for learning of information and having the ability to show proficiency in behavior. But almost never does any part of responsibility for success reside with the participant's manager. But that component of the training is essential to success.



Here are the responsibilities of each leg of the Training Success stool:

1) The participant's manager has to:

- Talks to the participant(s) before the training to determine areas of needed improvement and to ensure the identified training is the best way to acquire the needed skills and/or information.
- Be clear on what s/he expects the learner to be able to do differently as a result of the training.
- Co-create with the participant measures for determining the learner successfully integrated new skills/information.
- Release the participant for training sessions, ensure s/he attends, and arrange coverage for the learner's duties while in training.
- Talk with his/her participant(s) regularly to discuss adapting the new skills to their department.
- Coach the participant when needed.
- Give the participant positive feedback for observed behavior changes.

- Model effective behavior him/herself.
- Talks with the instructor regularly to get feedback on his/her participant.
- Support any follow-on reinforcement offered.

2) The participant has to:

- Talks to his/her manager before the training to determine areas of needed improvement and to ensure the identified training is the best way to acquire the needed skills and/or information.
- Be clear on what s/he wants from the training and actively makes sure s/he gets it.
- Be fully committed to strengthening or learning new skills.
- Attend the sessions and be fully involved in the discussions and processes.
- Complete any pre-reading or homework.
- Accept coaching from the instructor and/or manager.
- Participate in any follow-on reinforcement offered.

3) The instructor/content provider has to:

- Provide stimulating, useful, clear content and processes.
- Prepare pre- and post-learning assessments.
- Be approachable and open to dissenting opinions.
- Provide an integrated approach to learning, including job aids and practice.
- Create useful tools and resource materials.
- Give participants needed coaching/feedback.
- Make modifications to the program/tools when appropriate.
- Offer the participants' managers suggestions for coaching the participant.
- Provide appropriate follow-on reinforcement.

As a result of all the legs of the Training Success stool working in tandem, a solid base is created for permanent behavior change. Without all three legs strong, training is often a waste of time and money. Ensure your success by having all parties committed to success of your training effort.

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