



**HOW TO SUSTAIN LEARNING
AFTER A TRAINING EVENT.**

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"I have very simple tastes, I am always satisfied with the best."

- Oscar Wilde

STRATEGICALLY REINFORCE TRAINING

When thinking about learning and development, don't just think about the "class." Think about the full program, which includes the experience that will make the learning stick.

I get asked to speak on training sustainability all the time. At a recent conference for 800 learning and development directors in Helsinki, I was asked to give a keynote speech on this very subject.

When I think about training and learning development, I don't just think about the "class." I think about the full programme. It's about the experience that will make the learning stick. You can't accomplish that with a few videos, or even a two-day class. You need a blend of strategies that will cement the content and move it from training to application. Very often companies will decide that they will complete a two day or three day training event and fully expect the participants to leave the training room transformed into super human sales people who will sell until time immemorial. Without a proper reinforcement strategy in place, this will never happen, regardless of how engaging the training was. It will sustain for a short period of time, but old habits die hard.

Companies continually make the mistake of not considering how training impact will be maintained. Most don't consider it because they feel that they have spent thousands of pounds on a multi-day training course, any further investment is too expensive. This attitude is akin to buying a high performance sports car and never sending it to a garage to be serviced, never having the oil changed or never doing an engine tune-up. It just would never happen, but it happens all the time with training and learning and development.

Our primary audiences tend to be luxury marketing executives, luxury sales associates, sales managers, and staff. While luxury marketing staff are usually very eager to spend time learning, salespeople, not so much. Yet without sales success, a company won't grow. So it's critical that we use creative ways to cement learning and truly change sales reps' behaviour.



TOP TEN APPROACHES

Videos: Videos aren't just for synchronous training any longer. Use them to replace synchronous training, as well as to reinforce training once the main program is complete.

Social groups: Consider setting up a private Facebook or LinkedIn group, or a page on your company intranet, and establish a forum for participants to continue their learning from each other. Periodically pose questions and feed content, but primarily let participants ask and answer their own questions.

Applied practice: Most training programs include practice, but to really see behaviour change, it's the practice after the training ends that's critical. Incorporate applied practice into formal reinforcement and increase adoption rates.

Directed observation: With some jobs, such as sales, customer service, and operations, competence can be assessed through observation. Have a luxury expert look for opportunities to take learning to a higher level.

Fun quizzes: With all the gaming and testing programs available today, incorporate quick quizzes into your reinforcement..



TO MAKING TRAINING SUSTAINABLE

Reinforcement training sessions: The formal learning can continue during team and staff meetings. Choose a key topic and delve into it further. Use it as a learning check to identify where you need to expand your training.

Tools: You create fabulous job aids and resources during your training, but are you using them to reinforce training and drive higher adoption?

Coaching: Add a coaching element to offer one-on-one feedback and guidance. Whether it's peer, manager, or training coaching, coaching participants will not only sustain their learning, but also extend it.

Manager reinforcement: While managers rarely have the time to fully reinforce training to the extent you'd prefer, giving them a structured guide to use will increase the probability that they'll do it.

Refresh: Always budget in refresher and follow up training within a 3-month period. It is only through refresher reinforcement that training, and change is sustainable.



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