

ASK®

# ENGAGE LEARN

TRANSFER·EVALUATE

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**making learning stick to drive  
performance and productivity**

*Let's  
Learn*

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“Most of the investment in organizational training... is wasted because most of the knowledge and skill gained (well over 80 per cent by some estimates) is not fully applied by these employees on the job.”

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**BROAD, M. AND NEWSTROM, J.W. TRANSFER OF TRAINING. NEW YORK: BASIC BOOKS, 1992.**

## WHAT IS LEARNING TRANSFER?

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The purpose of learning and development is not simply to create more skilled or knowledgeable individuals, but to improve workplace productivity and performance.

Learning events, delivered in a few hours in structured environments, cannot achieve this alone: behavioural change takes much longer. To deliver great performance, organisations must supplement high quality learning with tools and techniques that encourage, support and measure the transfer and application of that learning back into the workplace.

Researchers Timothy Baldwin and J Kevin Ford defined learning transfer as:

*“the generalization of the skills acquired during the training phase to the work environment and the maintenance of these acquired skills over time”.*

In plain language, learning transfer makes learning lastingly effective by migrating new knowledge, skills and behaviours to the job to improve performance and productivity.

Making learning stick lies at the heart of what we do for you. After all, it's only when learning translates into action that a return on investment is realised.

# THE TRANSFER PROBLEM

People attending training often ask “Why are we doing this?”. A valid question, but it might be more relevant for those commissioning their training to ask: “What are we hoping to achieve after the training?”

It’s a question that research indicates we should ask more often, and more forcefully. The Association for Training Development estimates that the global training market was worth \$306.9bn in 2013, up 5.2% on the previous year. Yet it is widely acknowledged that only 5% - 20% of what is learned during formal training is transferred and applied in the workplace in a way that improves performance.

Whether considering rates of return on training investment, of the translation of training into job performance, or of the loss of transferred skills over time, a similar picture emerges. Even where learning is initially transferred, it may not be sustained: a study by Kenneth Wexley and Gary Latham showed that rates of content transfer initially as high as 40% can fall to 25% after six months and 15% after a year.

The causes of this so-called ‘transfer problem’ have been examined by academics for over 50 years, but the wider industry has been slow to adopt learning transfer practices that would reduce these levels of training ‘scrap’ – despite decades of evidence of the poor bottom line impact of training expenditure.

Our Engage, Learn, Transfer, Evaluate approach is designed to tackle ‘the transfer problem’ at every stage of the learning and development process.



TRAINING BUYER

“ I’m not resourced to deliver outcomes. ”



TRAINING PROVIDER

“ I’m paid to deliver inputs, not outcomes. ”



LEARNER

“ Learning is easy: changing behaviour is hard. ”



LINE MANAGER

“ I’m rewarded for getting things done, not for training. ”



ORGANISATION

“ Training is a distraction. ”

80% of training expenditure will produce no change in observable behaviour and no measurable improvement in workplace performance.



“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

WB YEATS



## A CHANGING LEARNING LANDSCAPE



Academics researching learning transfer have traditionally put managers centre-stage, arguing that learning transfer happens in the workplace and therefore obliges them to take the lead. Yet managers' ability and willingness to perform in this role – and organisations' willingness to monitor and reward their participation – begs a pertinent question. What happens if they can't?

As budgets shrink, appetite for time away from the office on courses declines and learning increasingly moves from classroom to the workplace, learning providers must design programmes that recognise this changing landscape. Critically, the pressure on managers to motivate, manage and implement transfer of learning increases dramatically: the evidence shows they cannot achieve this on their own.

With ASK®, you are ensured not only of the skills and experience of the consultants who deliver your bespoke training, but also of subsequent support from our learning transfer specialists who focus their efforts on helping your employees put what they learn into practice.

Our Personal Development Mentoring offering – see the Transfer section of this guide – provides just such a service.

We see learning in the round. We recognise the importance of engaging line managers and senior sponsors, ensure learning needs are aligned with business objectives, and encourage organisations to ensure their performance management, reward and recognition processes support both their learning and their business strategies.

**HOW TO MAKE LEARNING TRULY STICK, WITH ASK**



**MAKE THE CASE FOR CHANGE**

- Why are they learning?
- What are the outcomes?
- What is expected of them?

**MOTIVATE THE LEARNER**

- Allow the learner to choose
- Provide incentives
- Make it an enjoyable experience

**GAIN MANAGER SUPPORT**

- Engage managers
- Involve them in programme design
- Ensure they meet with the learner regularly



**MAKE THE LEARNING RELEVANT**

- Contextualised
- Emotionally stimulating
- Connected to what they already know

**USE A VARIETY OF LEARNING METHODS**

- Innovative content
- Engaging instruction
- Blended methods

**REMOVE BARRIERS**

- Minimise distractions
- Allow time to absorb information
- Agree accountability for application of learning



**PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT**

- Workplace mentoring, coaching and action learning
- Informal learning opportunities
- Social and digital learning

**PROVIDE ONGOING PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK**

- 1:1s with Line Manager
- Peer feedback
- Coaching

**RECOGNISE AND CELEBRATE SUCCESS!**



**REACTION TO LEARNING**



**CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR**



**BUSINESS IMPACT**



# ENGAGE LEARN TRANSFER AND EVALUATE

Although every one of our management and leadership development programmes is customised to meet specific needs, they are constructed on a consistent foundation – Engage, Learn, Transfer, Evaluate.

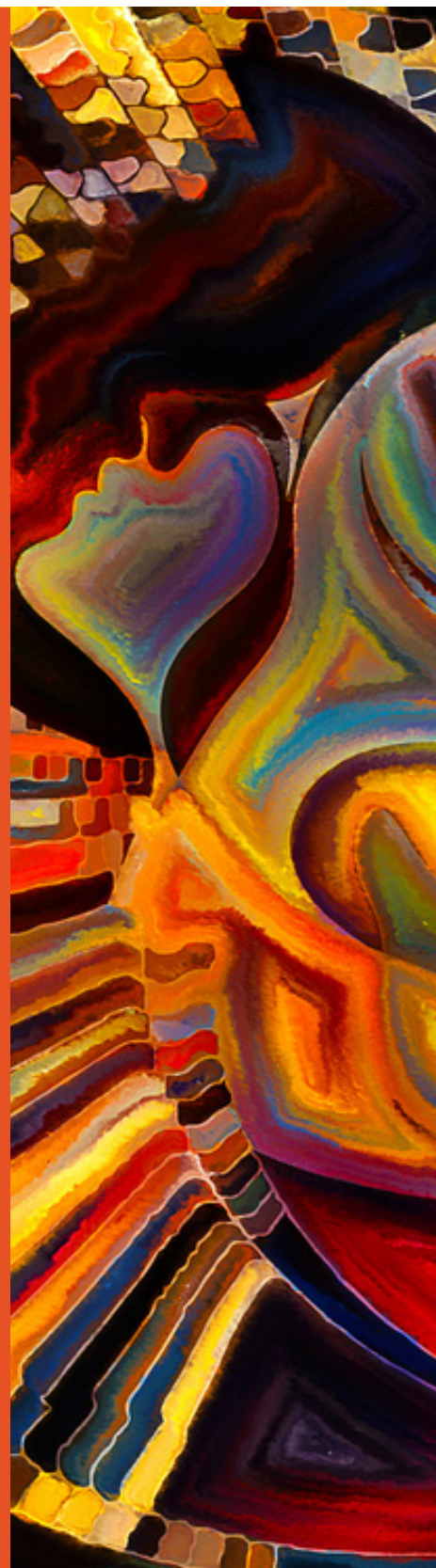
## ENGAGE

Teaching is easy. Learning can be tough. But changing behaviour is extremely difficult: it takes courage, time and a lot of effort. Fewer than 4% of people succeed unaided. For the rest of us, whether we're facing the challenge of being more skilful with our least favourite colleague, or taking difficult decisions, the personal costs of trying to do something differently and better loom large while the benefits appear distant and uncertain.

So why do we assume learners will motivate themselves? And why don't we do more to help people to prepare for their change journey?

ASK® programmes typically begin six weeks before the learning experience, with projects designed to inform and motivate all key stakeholders critical to the programme's long term success.

Using a mix of influencing strategies, briefings and job aids, we create a coalition around the learner in which line managers, L&D practitioners, senior managers and HR professionals commit to the aims of the programme, accept their respective roles and responsibilities, and work together to create an environment in which new capabilities are learned but, more importantly, put to work.



## LEARN

Organisations do not invest in learning and development simply to increase the skills or knowledge of their employees, but to improve their workplace productivity and performance.

To achieve this, individuals must also change their behaviours – a longer-term process that cannot be achieved in a structured learning event lasting a few hours. High quality learning must be supplemented with tools and techniques that not only support and measure the transfer and application of their learning back into the workplace but which also act to encourage and accelerate this process.

The 70:20:10 organisational learnscape is more likely to feature on-demand digital delivery and informal workplace learning than it is traditional tutor-led training. But before the full benefits of this blended approach can be realised, two challenges must be overcome: formal training courses are subject to low levels of learning transfer, and informal workplace learning often fails to deliver on its promise where it is left largely unmanaged.

Our evidence is that development begins with recognition there is a need and motivation to do something about your own organisation's development, and that a blend of formal and informal approaches provides a powerful platform for applied learning within business.

# ENGAGE LEARN TRANSFER AND EVALUATE

To ensure new behaviours, skills and capabilities are not just learned but transferred and applied, we motivate learners and raise their self-awareness using a powerful combination of psychometrics, 360 degree feedback, facilitator, peer and video feedback. We over-train key skills using the well-founded principles of deliberate practice with rich feedback. And we always construct and facilitate the implementation of a rigorous learning transfer plan.

As many people and organisations benefit from a blended learning approach, we make use of a variety of learning channels, including:

- Digital learning
- Online tools (psychometrics and 360 degree feedback)
- Action learning sets
- Client specific case studies
- Virtual classrooms
- Webinars and podcasts
- Business simulations

We also employ a broad range of learning methods, which include:

- Rich feedback, including video
- Online social learning
- Accelerated learning
- Experiential practice
- Assessment
- Performance observation and feedback
- Coaching
- Forum theatre

The mix of elements that we deploy depends on the focus of your bespoke programme, the intended audience and the anticipated learning and business outcomes.



## TRANSFER

All too often, when the familiar world of learning comes to an end and the task of putting newly learned capabilities to work begins, learners find themselves abandoned.

Fellow participants melt away, trainers move on to new projects, and line managers have other priorities. It's at this point that the supportive coalition created during the engagement activity can step up and make a real difference.

To encourage that participation, ASK® has developed a range of job aids and tools to guide the efforts of line managers, mentors and learners during the transfer period.

We provide a range of workplace-based services, such as coaching and our innovative Personal Development Mentoring package, to supplement the work of the coalition and help learners to plan, implement and extract the maximum benefit from their training.

Focused by necessity on the broader, strategic needs of the organisation, training becomes a standardised event. To gain meaningful personal development, learners need help to extract it from the learning they receive.

Our Personal Development Mentors (PDMs) work with mentees in a series of confidential sessions to identify individual areas for improvement and development, discussing tools, techniques and examples that mentees can use. By staying in touch with individual learners once their training is over, PDMs can help them make their learning personal, meaningful, effective and sustained.

# ENGAGE LEARN TRANSFER AND EVALUATE

## EVALUATE

Our commitment extends beyond producing measurable improvement in management and leadership effectiveness: we will work with you to develop an evaluation strategy that yields the evidence you need to make a valid assessment of our projects and of the return you are receiving on your training investment.

## SATISFACTION

We routinely seek participant feedback and measure their satisfaction with the learning experience. Our standard self-assessment questionnaire captures participants' satisfaction with their preparation, programme content, tutors/facilitators, venue, and readiness to transfer new capabilities to the workplace.

Alternatively, we will be happy to work with you to develop a customised instrument to meet your specific needs.

## BEHAVIOUR

Management and leadership are activities rich in learnable interpersonal skills. But unless those skills are measured before and after training, its impact cannot be assessed.

We advise our customers to assess the attitudes and skills of participants using 360 degree feedback questionnaires both before and after training to provide a measure of any shift in behaviour as perceived by the audience that really matters for managers and leaders – their colleagues.



## BUSINESS IMPACT

It's argued that many factors influence organisational performance – economy, climate and current affairs, to name a few – but are left untouched by training, no matter how good. Because removing the impact of these 'externalities' from any analysis of training effectiveness is so complex, evaluation at this level is usually considered unaffordable.

We can, however, provide cost-effective and reliable analysis that provides a month-by-month assessment of the impact of your management or leadership training. Drawing on the work on productivity of Robert D. Pritchard, Professor Emeritus at the University of Central Florida, ProMES:

- uses quantitative and qualitative metrics your organisation already collects
- is 'bottom-up', so ownership remains with participants
- provides a single overall index of leadership 'productivity' with high informational value
- provides sub-indices that enable problem identification and solution finding
- enables comparison of the impact of the training on different business units.

There are many different and entirely legitimate reasons for investing in the development of your leaders, but ASK® start with the assumption that the desire to improve some aspect of your organisation's performance is foremost.

Evidence shows the odds are stacked against such an outcome – unless you Engage, Learn, Transfer and Evaluate.





With evidence showing that 80% of L&D spend fails to change behaviour and improve performance, teaming up with ASK® and improving learning transfer will increase your ROI. Why not contact us? You will find our details below.



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