

TD at Work Contributor Guidelines

TD at Work, a 20-page practical resource, helps readers gain immediate proficiency on a variety of talent development-related topics. Each single-topic issue offers how-to reference help.

Contributing

If you'd like to write for TD at Work, first familiarize yourself with the publication, its content, and voice. Next, review the TD at Work sections and process below and ensure you can fulfill the writing requirements. We look for core elements in each issue:

- A timely or relevant topic that will resonate with the talent development audience
- Practical, fresh, how-to content that meets the publication requirements (see below).

Proposal

To start the contribution process, submit a proposal to Patty Gaul at pgaul@td.org. Be sure to include the following elements:

- Working title
- Author's or authors' names
- Topic summary: 2-3 sentences noting the reason the topic is important and/or the pain point it eases. If the proposed issue seems similar to another TD at Work, please explain how your issue is different.
- Brief summary of author qualifications
- Detailed table of contents outlining each proposed section with potential sidebars or graphic elements, and job aids.

TD at Work Sections

(See the TD at Work Sections in Detail document for more on each of these.)

- **Introduction:** 300 words
- **Main text:** 6,000 words (max 8,500)
- **Sidebars or case studies:** 5-7 total, 250-450 words each
- **References, resources, recommended reading:** 10-15 entries
- **Job aids:** 2-3
- **Author bio:** 65 words



Publishing Process

Manuscript

Authors are expected to meet the publication guidelines as well as use the TD at Work Writing Checklist Google document to track their progress through the production process. Authors will have about a month from when their outline is approved to write the manuscript, with the first half of the manuscript, two sidebars, and one job aid due within the first 2.5 weeks. **Upon final submission, the manuscript and related components should be complete and ready for editorial review.**

Authors will have the opportunity to review a laid-out version of the issue prior to publication. Authors must also sign a copyright release form.

Payment

ATD does not pay a fee or provide a royalty check for TD at Work issues. ATD will send authors 20 complimentary copies of their published work. Authors may purchase additional copies at a reduced cost.

Most authors use their status as a TD at Work author to enhance their credibility and/or market awareness of a training and development practice, approach, or model. Others view TD at Work authorship as a way to give back to the profession.

Contacts

Patty Gaul, Editor, TD at Work
703.683.8131 or pgaul@td.org

Joy Metcalf, Managing Editor, TD at Work
571.384.2245 or jmetcalf@td.org

TD at Work Sections in Detail

Authors are expected to meet these publication guidelines as well as use the *TD at Work Writing Checklist* Google document to track their progress through the production process.

Introduction (300 words): Your introduction should familiarize readers with the topic, express the intended audience for the issue, and convince readers that you understand them and their pain points and questions. This section should be provocative, encouraging readers to continue reading. The introduction is where you begin the process of telling the story.

Main text (6,000 words): Your main body of text should delve into the topic and provide practical information, steps or guidance, and tips. Break your main text into **4-6 subtopics** or questions that you will answer. (See the sample outline at the end of this document.) Be sure each subtopic includes real-world examples of what individuals can do and how they can practically approach a solution. For example, it's the difference between telling someone they need to eat healthy or giving them recipes to do so. The latter is what we mean by practical.

Author bio (65 words): Briefly summarize your qualifications. Note: We do not include promotional language, such as “bestselling” or “world’s-leading” in the bio, nor do we include author websites.

Sidebars or case studies (5-7, each between 250-450 words):

A typical issue of *TD at Work* contains 5-7 sidebars, charts, tables, graphics, or case studies. These sidebars may vary in length between 250 and 450 words; variety is important. Also, it is key to space the sidebars throughout the issue—all sidebars should not run in the same one or two sections. Finally, if you include graphics or tables, make sure that they are relatively simple in nature—complex graphics will not translate well to print. Sidebars could include:

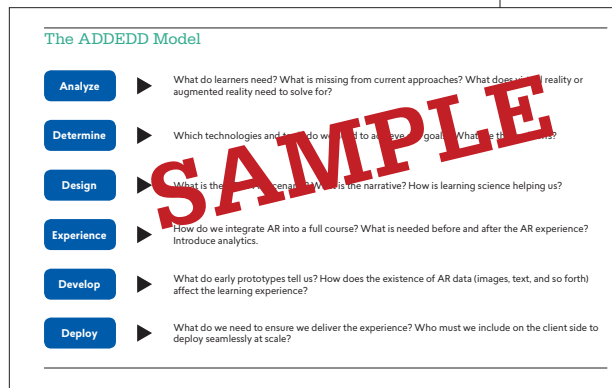
- practical tips that expand on an issue you’ve raised in the main text
- confessions, where you relate an interesting or funny story about something that didn’t go as planned
- case studies of how real-world companies and organizations have solved problems
- additional information that adds to the main text and provides readers with a viewpoint that they can relate or react to.

Job aids (2-3): See next page for description and sample.

References, resources, recommended reading (10-15 entries): If you have a selection of references that you used to prepare your manuscript, include these citations. If you didn’t use sources to prepare your manuscript, provide a selection of additional resources for readers to refer to.

Permissions: You must have permissions from the copyright holder for any illustrations or graphics you take from a company or publication. This includes images that you find online. If your company is providing the permissions, include a letter or email granting this permission. Note that the entity from which you’re requesting permission should understand that the use is for within a for-sale publication as opposed to an academic or nonprofit purpose.

Examples: If you need examples of sidebars or job aids that have run in previous issues of *TD at Work*, please reach out to Patty Gaul (pgaul@td.org) or Joy Metcalf (jmetcalf@td.org). We are happy to supply you with examples to help you familiarize yourself with the type of materials we are looking for in *TD at Work*.



Job aids (2-3): This is a **reproducible element** that is not copyrighted. The job aids are how-to guides or templates that should help readers accomplish specific tasks associated with the topic covered in the issue. These are often the most important part of the *TD at Work*, so take time to craft job aids that are useful for readers. (Because of their benefit, we appreciate receiving a third job aid that can be used as member or bonus content to increase awareness of *TD at Work*—including your issue—and provide additional benefit to our members. Note, however, this is not required.)

As you consider job aids to accompany your manuscript, keep in mind that they must fit within this box and be legible. That means that a table with eight or nine columns and 25 rows won't work in *TD at Work*.

**ALL JOB AIDS MUST FIT WITHIN
YELLOW AREA OF THIS PAGE.**

Outline for ATD's *TD at Work* Issue: What Works With Mobile Learning Programs

Introduction (300 words)

General introduction to the topic, indication of the intended audience, understanding of the reader pain points, and the start of telling the story.

Main text (6,000 words)

1. **The downside to how mobile learning is often done.**
2. **Key challenges to doing it successfully?** How technology isn't always your friend. The story of how a good initiative turned bad and what lessons could be learned. What does it look like done right? The story of a good, successful initiative, and why it worked well. What were the outcomes of the successful initiative--the benefits of mobile learning for the learner, the instructor, the organization, the extended enterprise? What were the pitfalls that were avoided? What were the expectations? Were they kept in line? What benefits represented "wishful thinking" rather than the reality?
3. **When is mobile learning appropriate?** What are the circumstances and objectives that best lend themselves to mobile learning solutions? When is mobile learning not such a good fit? How can you distinguish between them?
4. **Designing successful mobile learning programs.** How you can design effective learning content for mobile delivery. What are the key elements for a successful mobile learning strategy and how do you start putting it together? What real-world issues have arisen in the planning, development, implementation, and maintenance of a mobile learning program? What have teams done in the past to resolve those problems?
5. **The future of mobile learning.** Why starting now makes sense for the future. The urgency (and data) behind the way Millennials and Gen Z learn. How we're seeing the course of mobile learning continuing to evolve. And what it all means.

Sidebar, Case Studies, Graphics (5-7, each between 250-450 words)

1. **Confessions of a learning technologist.** How one initiative helped us learn what not to do.
2. **Devices, capabilities, operating systems.** A chart describing the range of mobile devices and their capabilities along with associated operating systems.
3. **Mobile learning needs.** A chart showing the kinds of learning or information retrieval needs that are applicable to mobile learning solutions.
4. **When to use an app: A checklist.** What makes a successful app? Great examples of training apps that knock it out of the park.
5. **Case study: Company XYZ success.** Description of a successful mobile learning application and why it's working.
6. **Case study: Company XYZ failure.** Description of a failed mobile learning program and what went wrong.
7. **Myths and misconceptions.** List of common mobile learning myths along with a more realistic appraisal.

Job Aid (2-3)

1. **How to put together a mobile learning strategy.** A step-by-step guide and list of questions with to determine if learning needs are appropriate for a mobile learning solution.
2. **Are you on the right track?** A list of questions to help determine whether the trainer's existing mobile learning program is on the right track.

Tips on Writing Your *TD at Work*

TD at Work's written tone is nonacademic. It should be friendly, helpful, and engaging. Consider writing in the first person if it helps you write more authentically. Short sections, bulleted information, and sidebars enable readers to digest information quickly and easily. The following tips may help you during the writing process:

1. Don't spend too much time introducing a subject to readers (background, history, and so forth). The reason we've marked the introductory section as 300 words is that's all we really need. A *TD at Work* is what we call a "slice of the talent development pie," and you need to jump in and get to the point while making a compelling case for the reader to continue on to the main text.
2. To help make content approachable, use bulleted lists for short entries. List should be about three to five entries long (but not longer than seven or eight). Examples might include "Answer these questions" or "This is beneficial for the following reasons." Alternatively, you can use checkbox lists of entries that readers need to check off when completing tasks or projects.
3. If you use other individuals' ideas and materials, you must provide an on-page citation to the material. It may end up that we edit out the citation from the text, but this is our way of knowing that there must be a reference to the original source somewhere in the issue. If you're not sure whether to include a citation, do it anyway and mark the citation with a question mark (?).
4. If you have used several sources exclusively, let us know the individuals' names and titles when you submit your manuscript. Manuscripts are considered "original works" submitted to ATD, and if most of your work is based on someone else's work, we need to edit around that or get permission to use the material.
5. Readers love worksheets, job aids, charts, best practices, case studies, and so forth. These are elements that help them apply what you're writing about. Please be sure to include these with your manuscript.
6. Always write more rather than less, but please don't take this to an extreme. If you submit a 10,000-word manuscript when we've asked for 6,000 words (excluding sidebars and job aids), we'll offer you suggestions on how to cut it, but we'll also likely send it back to you to revise to a more manageable length. Similarly, if you send us a 4,000-word manuscript, when we've asked for 6,000 words (excluding sidebars and job aids), we will send this back to you to add additional text.
7. Use Microsoft Word's word count function to see how many words you have written. You can find this in the top navigation bar, under the Review tab.
8. If you think a process or model could use a visual rendering but have no idea how to create it, let us know when you're writing or when you submit your outline. If you give us enough lead time, we can have our Creative Services department develop a related graphic.
9. Complicated models or graphics do not translate well to a print issue. Keep models fairly basic in details. If you need examples, please contact us.
10. **Ask if you need help or have questions. Contact us as early in the process as possible. We can help and offer guidance and suggestions.**

