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TIPS, TOOLS & INTELLIGENCE  
FOR DEVELOPING TALENT



**TRAIN THE TRAINER**

**VOLUME 3**

**TRAINING PROGRAMS:**

**TRAINING FOR THE NEW REALITY**



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# The Positive Workplace

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**W**hen we think about positive emotions, we often think of pure happiness: that bubbly, giggling, happy face, cartwheeling feeling that we remember from childhood. Increased productivity and workplace satisfaction are not generally what comes to mind. However, recent research suggests that happiness is not something we must save for the weekend.

According to Dr. Barbara Fredrickson of the University of North Carolina, the range of positive emotions is much broader than pure happiness, encompassing the feelings of love, gratitude, peace, inspiration, awe, pride, serenity, and more. Fredrickson's work has shown that we need a positivity ratio of approximately 3:1, that is, three positive emotions to every one negative emotion, in order to reap the benefits of positivity in our lives.

She contends that it is possible to change our natural level of positivity. However, it requires an extended effort over time, probably equivalent to the effort, time, and concentration required to reduce our cholesterol or lose weight.

This *Infoline* offers practical suggestions for achieving high productivity using a new approach called positive performance. After reading this *Infoline*, you will be able to:

- Describe positive performance.
- Explain why a positive workplace is critical to exemplary performance.
- Demonstrate practical, research-validated ways learning and development professionals, department directors, and managers can effect change.
- Implement specific approaches to achieve positive performance.

## POSITIVE PERFORMANCE, THE SCIENCE OF SUCCESS

What is positive performance? Positive performance is a new approach to productivity geared toward helping employees achieve their best possible performance, both at work and at home, by

supporting them in areas that contribute to their overall well-being.

The theory and principles behind positive performance are based on rigorous scientific research at leading academic institutions in the United States and abroad. Its tenets are based on a set of scientifically validated strategies and tactics that help people perform at their highest possible levels.

Two key areas of research form the foundation of positive performance:

- positive organizational scholarship (POS), the study of "exceptionally positive outcomes, processes, and attributes of organizations and their members"
- applied positive psychology, the study of what is right about people rather than what is wrong.

Both POS and positive psychology look at the positive outliers in a group and measure what those productive employees do differently than average performers to excel. In other words, both disciplines look at what the best performers do right, rather than assessing and attempting to fix what the worst performers are doing wrong.

Positive performance is about applying scientifically tested interventions to foster the best possible performance from ourselves and our employees. We will translate the academic research being conducted in the fields of POS and positive psychology into practical tools that learning and development professionals can immediately put to work to increase productivity through wellbeing.

## WHY POSITIVE PERFORMANCE MATTERS TO L&D PROFESSIONALS

It's an unfortunate reality that most attempts to create a better workplace fail. Let's face it: change is hard. Organizations spend more than \$60 billion per year on training in an attempt to achieve lasting change, yet most results are temporary at best. In his book *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman refers to this as the "honeymoon effect." For the most part, the tendency of both individuals and

## WHAT IS THE PERMA MODEL?



In 2012, Dr. Martin Seligman introduced a new model for well-being based around the acronym PERMA. Seligman is widely recognized as the founder of today's positive psychology movement.

- Positive emotions/pleasure
- Engagement (flow)
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishment

The PERMA model takes a giant step beyond earlier theories that measured levels of happiness and life satisfaction because it includes additional important elements that drive well-being and flourishing. Each element of the PERMA model meets three criteria:

- It contributes to well-being.
- People pursue it for its own sake.
- It can be objectively measured independently from the other elements.

The elements of the PERMA model are being used by researchers around the world to measure well-being in individuals, organizations, and countries. For example, Felicia Huppert and Timothy So of the University of Cambridge recently used PERMA to measure well-being in each of 23 European nations and discovered that Denmark had the highest level of their population flourishing while Russia was the lowest. It's likely that in the near future, a growing number of organizations will use the PERMA model to measure the overall well-being of their workforce.

Now that the elements of well-being have been identified, researchers can also determine whether interventions designed to improve well-being actually work. As a result, there is a growing number of scientifically validated exercises that are proven to contribute to greater happiness, higher levels of well-being, and improved life satisfaction. In short, we now know what individuals and organizations need to do in order to flourish and that these interventions can be taught.

organizations is not to change if it can be avoided. We're usually happiest when we are not forced to make radical changes in the way we do things on either a personal, professional, or organizational level.

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*Over and over, research is showing that happy, healthy employees who have time to pay attention to their personal well-being are more engaged, focused, and productive than those who do not.*

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In spite of this, some people and some organizations do change and grow in positive and lasting ways. In order to understand how they make lasting change, we can't look at the average performers. Instead, we must look at the positive outliers—those people and organizations that excel at learning and have the ability to make lasting change as a result of what they learn. Through ongoing learning and change, they reach the peak of their ability to achieve positive performance.

POS and positive psychology experts study the organizations and people that are positive outliers, those who stand out in a group of their peers. What these experts have found is that in healthy organizations, the most highly performing employees are physically and emotionally well. Over and over, research is showing that happy, healthy employees who have time to pay attention to their personal well-being are more engaged, focused, and productive than those who do not. Organizations that foster the well-being of their employees have reduced turnover, greater revenue, and higher profits than those that do not. The benefits of investing in the well-being of employees have been validated in a growing number of studies. This investment is the key to achieving positive performance.

## PURPOSE AND ENGAGEMENT

In his Harvard Business Review blog post, "Employee Engagement Does More Than Boost Productivity," John Baldoni explains how he defines employee engagement: "People want to come to work,



understand their jobs, and know how their work contributes to the success of the organization.”

Baldoni cites Jim Harter, chief scientist at Gallup Research, who states that “Engaged employees ‘listen to the opinions of people close to the action . . . and help people see the connection between their everyday work and the larger purpose or mission of the organization.’”

When people are engaged, they’re happier, they contribute more, they want to stay, and they make the work environment a better place for their colleagues.

## Achieving Results Through Workplace Well-Being

Take a moment to picture a work day when you feel strongly connected to the work you are doing. On this particular day, you feel that your work is important, that it matters, and your day is filled with a sense of purpose and meaning. How productive are you on a day like that? What is your level of commitment? How engaged are you? Now multiply that feeling by the number of employees on your team. Imagine if every employee experienced just a 10 percent increase in their connection and commitment to the purpose and intention of their work; what might be the impact on efficiency and productivity?

As Nietzsche said, “When there is a ‘what for,’ every ‘how’ becomes possible.” If you want to increase productivity and engagement in yourself or in your work group, find and strengthen the emotional connection to the “what for” of your project or organization. How?

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*Before starting a new project, take time to appreciate past successes and the positive outcomes of those successes.*

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There are four elements associated with finding purpose and engagement at work:

- Appreciate the past: how have you made a difference?
- Envision the future: how will you make a difference?
- Declare and commit to a goal: what specifically will you do to make a difference?
- Learn to flow: how can you spend more time in your personal sweet spot?

Here are some specific things you can try by yourself or with your team to create a greater sense of purpose and engagement.

### **Appreciate the Past**

Before starting a new project, take time to appreciate past successes and the positive outcomes of those successes. You can write about these things in a personal journal or devote a team brainstorming session to the appreciation of past success. Ask, “What did we do well? How did we accomplish that? What specific strengths contributed to our success? What happened as a result of a job well done? Who benefitted and how?” Celebrate past successes with your team.

### **Envision the Future**

Spend time visualizing the positive outcomes of the project and write about the future you see. Use as many senses as possible in your visualization: What will customers experience as a result of your work? What will you hear your boss say about the job well done? What will your name look like on the poster for “employee of the month”? How will your team feel when they complete the assignment? This is a great exercise to kick off a team project because it helps everyone focus on the positive purpose and potential outcomes of the work in front of them.

### **Declare and Commit to a Goal**

Getting things done is important to our wellbeing, but we have to make sure we get the right things done. Setting goals helps organize and focus our energy. Research has shown that when there is a goal in sight, it narrows our choices about what to do, who to connect with, what to read, what to look at on the Internet, and most important, what to ignore. Without goals, our day-to-day actions have little meaning; with them, we have a purpose for getting up each day. In short, goals are the means,

# Learning Through Transmedia Storytelling

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Whether its theater from Aristotle, the Japanese ghost story structure in Kabuki plays, or modern screenplays such as *Lawrence of Arabia*, there's a timeless similarity with commerce and story—most recently enhanced by transmedia. And we participate as observers and spectators filled with similar challenge, charm, and conflict.

The classic storytelling narrative is being revived today. A new generation of “always-connected” workers is watching more than 22 hours of online video per month on mobile devices. Forward-thinking business and learning leaders are reinventing the ancient tradition of storytelling, weaving compelling stories across different platforms and formats to inspire and engage the audience to action. This new way of developing a narrative across multiple platforms to expand learning and engagement is called transmedia storytelling.

This *Infoline* issue will:

- provide a framework for good storytelling techniques
- explain what transmedia storytelling is, and why and how it is effective
- help you find a practical and valuable “story structure” for learning design challenges
- explain your role as a trainer
- provide examples of effective transmedia storytelling in the business and learning environments.

## THE HERO'S JOURNEY

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*“There are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.” - Willa Cather*

---

Mythologist and scholar Joseph Campbell describes the human narrative structure as the Hero's Journey, which has deep roots in his classic work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell suggests that the most classic and enduring stories are the

ones fueled by a standard framework filled with challenge and adventure—both mystical and real. The archetype in the center of these adventures is the pivot point of the story, or as Campbell describes, the men and women with the “sense of the call,” otherwise known as the hero.

Like many forms of art, this pattern can be played in endless variations to feel fresh, yet familiar. What works universally with this structure is its reliance and reliability for telling stories based on self-reflection, stretching one's capability, finding friends, inspiration, attainment of goals, and perhaps what up until this point had been undiscovered talents.

The Hero's Journey story structure has several attributes we can reuse to succeed at work and in our organizations. That is, we can use the Hero's Journey as a device to design instruction and we can replicate it in our training function using the media formats currently available to build the capability and agility required to stay competitive and compelling.

Campbell's Hero's Journey structure is comprised of several parts or stages—typically 12 sections in a linear progression. These stages range from the hero discovering a call to adventure, to dealing with a life-changing challenge, to finding some sort of wisdom or resolution.

### The Ordinary World

Here our hero or heroine is introduced in a world that appears content, familiar, or ordinary. Yet there's something unnerving or disconcerting that is sheltering the hero's ability to fit in, to be normal in his village, circumstance, or society. Our war hero Lawrence in the desert of Arabia, for example, is drawn to a deep yet unknown thirst for war, battle, and vanity beyond his quiet, passive means. He senses a need for a different life, yet remains unaware of the events ahead.

### The Call to Adventure

A life-altering event occurs. This may be an external situation that presents a dilemma or challenge. Or it could be something that is internally recognized. In either circumstance, our hero is given a signal either to change or that something near is beyond

## ► Train the Trainer

his control. In the classic myth of Perseus, King Polydectes orders Perseus to bring him the head of Medusa. For Luke Skywalker, Obi Wan's holographic message serves as an invitation for Luke to leave his ordinary world.

### Refusal of the Call

Next, our hero is hesitant to change. She sees a need for adventure or to address a calling, yet there may be too many unknowns. Despite the fear, new insights or self-assessment leads the hero to make a difficult decision. For the young Michael Corleone in *The Godfather*, after recognizing his ailing father is not secure in an unguarded hospital, he decides to join the family business.

### Meeting with the Mentor

Merlin the Magician, Mr. Miyagi from *The Karate Kid*, and the Wizard in *The Wizard of Oz* all played the role of the seasoned, well-traveled mentor. Here, our mentor provides wisdom, special skills, or perhaps weapons to our hero. At some point, the shared wisdom and skills are tested and the hero must face her enemy or the unknown, alone. Now she is truly conscious of her existing weaknesses or gap.

### Crossing the Threshold

Our hero now formally recognizes that he must leave his ordinary world. He cannot turn back. This is when the story takes off—literally on flights to Jupiter, in a balloon, or perhaps on a train. Our hero has drawn his line in the sand and has crossed over the first threshold.

### The Tests, Allies, and Enemies

Our hero now meets others on a similar mission, or some to test his will and character. Or, perhaps the others' intent remains a mystery or a complex mix of romance and rivalry. Whether it's the cantina where Luke meets Han Solo, or a Western bar with whiskey bottles and bullets flying, our hero begins to make friends and foes in this new world.

### The Approach to the Inmost Cave

The hero arrives at a dangerous location where his mission may be completed, yet the mystery gets more tangled or threatening. He must confront a deep, personal conflict. For a soon-to-be King Arthur, he enters Chapel Perilous in search of the Holy Grail. In many Hollywood war films, the young soldier comes to terms with his duty for battle and searches deep within to muster the courage.

### Ordeal

This is typically the middle point of the story. Our hero now faces a significant trial where her life is challenged and death seems probable. Will Luke survive the wall-crunching depths of the Death Star? Will our hero exit the dragon's cave? As screenwriter Chris Vogler shares in *The Writer's Journey*, "This is also like the rites of passage and rites of initiation into fraternities and secret societies. The initiate is forced to taste death and experience resurrection. You're never more alive when you think you're going to die."

### Seizing the Sword, Reward

After surviving the battle, slaying the dragon, and rising from the ashes, our hero now possesses her reward. In many myths, a unique weapon or special elixir is gained. Perhaps a personal conflict has been reconciled—either with himself, a parent, or a village. Here, our hero is acutely aware of the weaknesses he has conquered, and the competence required for mastering his destiny.

### The Road Back

Our hero makes her way home with the reward—perhaps completing the adventure; yet there may be new dangers on the way. Perhaps the heroine chooses not to go home, just as Thelma and Louise decided to remain outlaws.

## ALTERNATIVE STORY STRUCTURES FOR TRAINING



The Hero's Journey and instruction generally flow in a linear progression that starts with orienting the learner to a problem or situation, sharing the specific problem or opportunity, providing a solution, and concluding the training. But using variations of the linear structure can have advantages for certain learning challenges. Two types of these variations include problem-oriented story structure and the flashback model.

In sales training, for example, salespeople are typically focused on trying to solve their customer's problems while also, of course, meeting their quota potential. Their focus may include understanding clients' market growth needs; staying current and innovative; and determining how to increase their footprint and revenue. These problems or needs—once qualified—are ideally addressed and solved by the solutions the vendor provides—the “solution-selling” approach.

From a training perspective, one suggested course structure highlights the introduction of the client's problem first, followed by the orientation, solution, and conclusion. For example, we open the training stating a client's need to increase market penetration. Both threat and opportunity are conveyed with a case study or simulation, which then sets the stage and challenge for the class.

How we now structure our course—keeping in mind heroic activities such as consequences, collaborative problem-solving with allies, and so on—may look a little different. For our sales training example, the arc or engagement level is peaked at the beginning, as is the clearly stated problem and consequences.

Another viable storytelling structure shifts the mindset, or perhaps the expectations, of the learner from immediately trying to solve a problem up front, to playing more of a sleuth or investigator—or as some designers call it, conducting a learning autopsy. Here the structure is turned on its head and the conclusion is provided up front, followed by the orientation to the situation, and then re-qualifying the problem and suggested solution.

With this model, the course works backwards unraveling how the answer was found. This may be an ideal structure for training engineers, as it fulfills an innate passion to figure out how things work by breaking them down first. This is called a flashback structure where the final conclusion may share new insights or advancements to the problem.

Consider the purpose and audience when you decide how to structure your training program. While a traditional linear style is appropriate for most training, a different approach may help be more effective if the learning experience is as important as the content.

# **The Manager's Guide to Employee Development**

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# THE MANAGER'S GUIDE TO EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT



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**E**ven though we are not born coaches, it is within our role as managers to have career and professional development discussions with our employees. Career ambitions are important to all-around well-being and a sense of satisfaction in our work, although many of us feel ill-equipped for such discussions with employees. Still, four trends that will continue for the next several years make it crucial for managers to learn now how to create a culture of development.

#### **1. Unemployment continues to decrease.**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment reached a low of 5.3 percent as of July 2015. We are beyond the recession, resulting in more career opportunities for employees who are not hesitant about moving on. In particular, high-potential employees are most at risk for seeking (and being sought for) more promising options outside their companies. An added challenge to retention is the easy accessibility of job listings and online and mobile application processes.

**2. Workplace cultures are becoming more multigenerational.** Boomers and Gen Xers are still prevalent in the workplace; however, Millennials are moving up, and in many cases are assuming leadership roles. According to a 2014 *Forbes* article, at Ernst & Young, 59 percent of managers are Millennials and 18 percent are senior managers, even though many have not been trained to become managers. Additionally, Generation Z (born between 1994 and 2010) is emerging as the next generation preparing to enter the workforce.

**3. Technology continues to evolve and change at astonishing speed.** Implications for workplace changes include:

- the need to learn new and changing business technologies
- increased ability to work remotely
- easier access to new job opportunities, both within and outside the company
- managers keeping their teams' abilities current, so their performance matches the pace of change.

Additionally, the prevalence of social media exponentially increases everyone's networking capability regardless of cost, location, status, and culture. Likewise, recruiters are also able to network, making it easier to access and entice potential talent in an increasingly competitive market.

**4. Power has shifted from employers to employees.** More workers are saying no to full-time employment. Some workers have grown frustrated with repeated layoffs and the treatment they receive as job candidates. Technology enables more workers to become free agents, and more virtual opportunities are available that are unhindered by geographical boundaries. By managing several part-time contracts, freelancers can have a flexible schedule and work-life balance, giving them significantly more control over their earnings. Furthermore, the Affordable Care Act has reduced the dependence on health insurance from employers, removing one more reason to work full time for one company.

Keeping these trends in mind, managers need realistic approaches they can use immediately to manage their critical talent resources. Flexibility in worker abilities will help managers handle constantly shifting supply, demand, and demographic variables.

This *TD at Work* is a primer intended for managers, human resources professionals, and others. It is a practical, go-to guide that will explain:

- why career development is important to the organization, employee, and manager
- who is responsible for specific aspects of the employee development process
- how to facilitate the employee development process
- the characteristics of a strong individual development process
- how to lead successful development discussions.

## WHY EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT?

In a competitive global business landscape, company leaders and employees are wise to adopt continuous, agile learning practices. While employees should manage their careers for ongoing employability, companies should focus on attracting and retaining high-potential, promotable people.

Employee development has an upwardly beneficial impact, from employee to manager to organization. The potential advantages are numerous and dramatic. Best-practice companies, such as Genentech, realize the importance of investing in their employees' development. Genentech has received accolades from the training and development world for initiatives like its CareerLab. A blog post from career development firm Career Systems International further details the notable benefits achieved

by the company's dedication to employee development:

- The employee turnover rate is at 6.2 percent, in contrast with the industry average of 11 percent.
- Almost half of the job openings are filled by internal candidates.
- Approximately \$20 million in retention cost savings was realized in 2014, when the CareerLab helped find new roles for 76 high-potential employees whose positions were eliminated.

Employee development can be a proactive strategy. Business managers are smart to continually develop their employees even during times of stability, so that they don't wish they had done so when faced with talent shortages.

It is critical to note that employees, not employers, will decide where they will work. Specifically, Millennials, a fast-growing employee

## BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Employee development:

- Increases retention.
- Boosts morale.
- Improves person-job match.
- Maintains up-to-date skills for the workforce.
- Provides the resource depth and flexibility needed to swiftly respond to market demands and organizational changes.
- Keeps talent development aligned with organizational strategies.
- Supports and enhances organizational workforce-planning programs.
- Fosters future leaders within the company for business sustainability and stability.
- Increases employee commitment and productivity.
- Attracts high performers to your organization.
- Drives cultural change. For instance, Microsoft implemented a career development system as a strategy to remain competitive. Per a 2007 study, its career model, "platform of common standards," was used to identify, assess, manage, and develop talent as the company shifted its culture.

population, look for employers that will support their development, not just a good salary. A 2015 EdAssist study of Millennials revealed that almost 60 percent “would pick the job with strong potential for professional development over one with regular pay raises.” This holds true even for Millennials with high student loan debt; 66 percent said they would trade regular pay increases for a job with strong employee development potential.

**EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT HAS AN UPWARDLY BENEFICIAL IMPACT, FROM EMPLOYEE TO MANAGER TO ORGANIZATION.**

Employee development encompasses three major considerations:

1. abilities and skills—the employee’s current specific skills, knowledge, and competencies that are necessary for the ongoing success of the business
2. organizational needs—the needs and expectations of each role in the organizational structure
3. employee interests—career aspirations, the ability to fulfill current and future roles, identified gaps, personality type, and a plan for development.

Figure 1 displays the intersection of these three components. The ideal target for your employees’ development, as shown in Figure 2, is at the overlap of employee interests and organizational needs.

The objective is to maintain employee engagement and retention, and to develop individual and organizational capabilities, especially for promising employees with potential to make significant contributions to organizational imperatives. Otherwise employees are free to take their services to competitors. Your acquired and developed talent are a competitive advantage. An international study of organizational effectiveness by Right Management shows that companies providing career development opportunities are six times more likely to engage key talent and four times less likely to lose them. Findings also

## FIGURE 1. ALIGN SKILLS AND INTERESTS WITH ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS



SOURCE: ATD INTEGRATED TALENT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

## FIGURE 2. TARGET AREA FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT



SOURCE: ATD INTEGRATED TALENT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

indicated that only one-third of employees are fully engaged. Of the top 15 engagement drivers, 10 can be tied to career discussions.

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