

A Summit Training Source, Inc
White Paper



4170 Embassy Drive
Grand Rapids, MI
800.842.0466
www.safetyontheweb.com

Benefiting from Your Training Program



Summit Training Source, Inc.
Whitepaper: Benefiting From Your Training Program

The benefits of safety training to your organization can be challenging to measure. Training is an intangible item and often seen as a cost center rather than a money saver. We often measure ROI, but one can never be sure how many accidents or injuries that the training prevented. However, as a training professional, one can control the effectiveness and retention employees gain during their training experience. Whether the format is online or instructor led, taking certain measures prior to and during the training will ensure that you receive all of the benefits of your training investment.

The most important aspect of any training program is consistency. When studying the human brain, the most common form of memory classification is based on duration – short-term and long-term memory. Short-term memories are usually founded on inconsistent, small duration memories. Short-term memories can become long-term through rehearsal and meaningful association. For example, if someone were to give you a 7 digit number, you may be able to recall that number for a few seconds, perhaps a full day at the most. If the 7 digit number is a phone number that you use on a daily basis you will be able to recall the number for years, even your lifetime. In this scenario, the 7 digit number that began as a short-term memory became a long-term memory over time.

The goal with any training program should be beyond memorization. Training is futile unless the student is able to store the learned material and retain it. Rehearsal and meaningful association are the keys to developing a successful training program. Materials should be initially presented and reviewed to ensure retention. As our minds consolidate learned material, the material should be reviewed at spaced intervals. After a few repetitions, well structured and meaningful learning material can be repeated with intervals lasting many years. This successful learning technique is often referred to as spaced repetition.

To get the most from a training program, the material should be presented in a clear and comprehensive manner in an environment suited to learning. Review and interaction are critical parts of any training program to ensure that learning is taking place. How material is presented can have a dramatic affect on the learner's ability to understand and more importantly retain the knowledge.



The following strategic points for success will assist safety professionals with implementing, maintaining and enhancing a training program.

Consistency → Maintaining consistency in your training program is extremely important. Humans are creatures of pattern and when we interrupt the learning pattern critical information can be lost. It is necessary that content be presented in the same manner and that the area in which students learn remains similar.

Promote/Sell Up, Down & Sideways → Implementation of any learning system requires companywide promotions and participation. Every level of the organization needs to be communicated with concerning the benefits of training. With advanced preparation and planning, your workers will positively welcome the new training program. Convince your workers and management of the positive features and benefits of employee training.

Express Value to Employees → Workers should understand the positive value of the training they receive. Provide positive reinforcement and incentives for training. Help employees understand that training is not just a company requirement, it is for their wellbeing.

Provide a Learning Environment → Training needs to occur in an environment that promotes learning. Your training location should be located away from distractions such as other employees, loud machines, or work site operations. The same area should be used and maintained for learning purposes. Students will begin to associate the area with training and become more focused, increasing comprehension and retention of materials. Similar to how we associate sitting at the dinner table with eating.

Promote Feedback → In order to fine tune your training, it is important to solicit feedback from everyone involved with the training. This should be a continuous mechanism used to ensure that the training is effective and help to determine if any adjustments to the training are necessary.

Establish Criteria to Measure Success → What benchmarks do you have for your training program? How will you know if you have been successful? By establishing a set of training goals it is possible to measure and document success along the way.



Conclusion

A successful training program goes beyond the material presented. The true return on investment for any training program is measured by assessing the total investment in training. The total investment in training is everything management puts into the program, which directly impacts the organizational attitude towards training, which dictates the success rate and retention of the student.

It is important for any training administrator to provide the proper environment to facilitate training. Materials presented should be reviewed to ensure student's are retaining the information and are able to apply it to their jobs. A well-oiled training program will reveal a return on investment due to lowered accidents and injury rates and higher morale and production. It may take some time and effort up front to evaluate your current training program and make the necessary adjustments, but once a successful training program is in place you will realize the full amount of benefits from your training.