

## Have You Noticed This, Too?

We have been students, teachers and researchers of workplace learning and performance for half a century. Still very much active, we find ourselves in numerous work settings over the course of a year. What strikes us all too dramatically is that while the physical features of work environments change (manufacturing, mining, utilities, food services, transportation, government, medical, to name only a few) as do countries, cultures, technologies, and resources, not much changes fundamentally in the way people are onboarded into their jobs, trained, managed, supported to succeed and evaluated in how they achieve desired results. Fads come and go. Enthusiasms about performance results, quality of life, open communication, human capital analytics and talent management wax and wane. Investments in learning and performance enhancing technologies also increase and decline in cycles. The outer appearances and terminologies become more sophisticated. However, we still see organizations drawing on subject-matter experts to train up the new or uninitiated folks, using methods and content that leave the learners in semi-comatose states. We encounter koosh balls flying through the air for no reason other than to build apparent enjoyment, but not necessarily valued performance capability. Beneath the veneer of modernity lie primitive practices for building necessary learning and meaningful outcomes.

While this may sound negative, we ask ourselves, given all the talk, technology hype/research and attempts at modernization, what has fundamentally changed in how we draw out the best from all of our workers? This includes everyone from new-hires to experienced, high-level managers. Do we apply the basics of human learning and performance that we have known for years? We have learned over time what works:

- Clearly defining what performance (behaviors and achievements) is expected in ways that are meaningful to each person at every level.
- Communicating unambiguously what these expectations are and expressing them in ways everyone values - job performers, supervisors, managers, customers, co-workers, regulatory agencies, shareholders and all direct and indirect stakeholders.
- Providing clear, timely, useful feedback on performance that is concrete, helpful and motivating.
- Drawing out the valued talent that every employee possesses, not just searching for stars.
- Being truthful with the workforce and operating ethically in our human and business interactions.

- Analyzing what it takes to get from "here" (current state) to "there" (desired state) based on data, not ideologies and beautifully sounding beliefs.
- Applying sensible, systemic actions that reinforce one another, not single-shot, "flavor of the month" enthusiasms.

We could go on, but there really is no need. We have a well-documented repertoire of how to build effective learning and performance systems, of getting the best from everyone by applying what research and best practice has taught us over the years.

We have spent a half-century toiling in the workplace vineyards. We happily encounter individual signs of promise. Yet there is so much more that can be done by approaching senior leaders with sound recommendations for improving workplace learning and performance. It is up to us who call ourselves training professionals, learning and development specialists or human performance improvement professionals. May we always use sound judgment in providing counsel and solutions that result in achievements everyone values.

All the best,  
Erica and Harold

### **Tips, Tools, Techniques and Other Tantalizing Tidbits**

In the previous issue of HSA e-Xpress, we included the first installment of a three-part series of brief articles for instructional designers. It focused on separating myth from research-based evidence on five commonly held beliefs about learning and performance. If you haven't read it, visit [http://www.hsa-lps.com/E\\_News/ENews\\_Apr13/Tips\\_Tools\\_Techniques\\_0413.pdf](http://www.hsa-lps.com/E_News/ENews_Apr13/Tips_Tools_Techniques_0413.pdf) and access it before continuing (although each part is a stand-alone).

The objective of this second article is for you to be able to apply six tools we have found extremely useful in our professional work that can enhance your ID practice and decision-making. We begin with a useful project starter preparation checklist, which we simply call **Ready...Set...Go?**

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### **Brought Back by Popular Demand!**

Due to its popularity, ASTD has added a one-day Training Ain't Performance (TAP) event to its October 2013 offerings in Arlington, VA. Based on the award-winning book of the same name, this event takes its content and turns it into a

highly interactive learning experience that provides the key concepts, principles and tools that can help transform you into an effective Performance Consultant.

More and more 21st century organizations are transforming their training/learning and development entities into workplace learning and performance (WLP) support groups. This very involving one-day event introduces you to the basic concepts of performance consulting - a systematic process that allows training professionals, OD or HRD specialists and even managers to analyze requests for training or any other type of intervention and determine whether or not it is necessary/sufficient. This even includes materials and exercises that deal with human capital and performance engineering. The full-day session guides you through a thinking and decision-making process that sets the foundation for becoming a true workplace learning and performance professional. You leave with a set of skills and tools that are highly valued in today's competitive environment.

If you have not yet participated in a Telling Ain't Training (TAT) event, you can register for TAT for October 8 & 9 just prior to the October 10 TAP. While TAT is not a *required* pre-requisite to TAP, it is highly recommended that you sign up for both.

**Information on this event is on ASTD's website ([www.astd.org](http://www.astd.org))**

## **About Us**

At HSA Learning & Performance Solutions LLC, we've seen a lot over the years. We know the business of learning. We know the role human performance plays in business success. We know how to uncover and address needs, then create appropriate solutions. We pride ourselves on helping organizations achieve high levels of performance - and success. HSA is a leader in workplace learning and performance improvement. Our proven learning and performance solutions have helped maximize employee performance at dozens of organizations throughout the world. Our principals, Harold D. Stolovitch and Erica J. Keeps, share a common passion - developing people. Together they have devoted a combined total of over 80 years to make workplace learning and performance both enjoyable and effective. Their dedication to improving workplace learning and performance is reflected in the workshops they run internationally on training delivery, instructional design and performance consulting. Together, they are co-editors of the first two editions of the Handbook of Human Performance Technology and co-authors of the best-selling, award-winning series of books Telling Ain't Training - Updated, Expanded and Enhanced, Training Ain't Performance, Beyond Telling Ain't Training Fieldbook and Beyond Training Ain't Performance Fieldbook published by ASTD Press. They are also co-authors of the Wiley/Pfeiffer Learning & Performance Toolkit Series. To learn more, visit [www.hsa-lps.com](http://www.hsa-lps.com).