

# Building a Performance Improvement Department



Transitioning Your  
Department or  
Consulting Practice  
*(while maintaining  
your sanity!)*

W402

HPI Forum June 6, 2001

# Getting Started

- Put a business card in the box at the front of the room to be eligible for the door prize drawings;
- Get a copy of the handouts;
- Form a small group and begin sharing performance improvement resources you've identified at the Conference (sessions, exhibitors, books);

# Building an HPI Dept.

## Objectives:

- Identify major obstacles to transitioning training organizations to HPI shops;
- Identify and practice some tools to help with this organizational transition;
- Network with HPI peers and share performance resources;

# Forum Agenda

- Networking/introductions/expectations;
- Changing client perceptions/marketing the “New You”;
- Group discussions—transition mistakes and common barriers;
- Organizational and structure tips;
- Sharing resources/door prize drawings;

# Presentation Assumptions...

- You've got the relevant skills;
- You know what HPI is;
- You aren't here for change management;
- You know the rationale for HPI;
- You need to deal with the unique challenge of transitioning to HPI and getting clients aligned with the “New You”;

“Many professionals in training organizations have sought to transform their group from a training focus to...a performance improvement focus. Seeking to achieve radical organizational transformation, they create their presentation materials and march off to the boardroom to pitch the concept... they have just embarked on the *fastest route to failure*. Experienced sales professionals would consider it the worst possible scenario--selling a product with no brand-name recognition to a skeptical customer who is not aware of what the product is, or that they even have a use for it.”

--Jim Fuller

# What Hasn't Worked

- New business cards and titles (a “flavor of the month” feel);
- Keep doing what we’re doing--but add HPI;
- PowerPoint presentation to management;
- Failure to consider the source;
- Emphasis on words, not deeds;
- Failure to connect with the client;

# Keys to Successful Marketing of HPI

- Perceived value by the client;
- Perceived need by the client;
- Trusted, credible source;
- Proof;
- Clear options and choices;
- Application of the concept;



# The Transition Process

- Agree on HPI definition and model;
- Define roles, identify organizational resources, determine what to do/stop doing;
- Resolve ethics/values issues;
- Develop identity piece;
- Get a quick win;
- Fight the positioning fight/adjust systems;

# Clear Choices and the New You

- The Elevator Speech: As you step into the elevator, your CEO/biggest client steps in as well. With just the two of you there, she/he turns to you and says “What’s this about changing what you do? What’s that all about?”
- You’ve got 25 words (or 30 seconds to answer). Figure out what you’d say.

# Clear Choices and the New You

- The Audio Logo (by Lynn Kearny): A short statement that offers a specific explanation of who you help and what you help them do.
- Template: I help \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Examples: I help *marketing* to *increase sales*. Or....I help *the Baltimore field office* to *decrease human error and rework*.

# Decision Criteria for First Project

- Easy measurement;
- Clear link to measurable business results;
- Only limited resources necessary;
- Short time-frame for completion;
- High chance of success;
- Either a strong champion or major pain;
- It isn't a "day one" problem;

# Identifying a Quick Win

- Pair up at your table;
- Identify (and share with your partner) a possible “quick win” in your business that meets at least 4 of the previous 7 criteria;
- Explain why you think it might be an ideal first project to win credibility;

# Sharing Resources

- Tools/techniques I use as a performance consultant and how I use them;
- Favorite questions I ask clients to get a better sense of the organization;
- Most common mistakes performance consultants make;
- Best advice I'd give someone on HPI;
- Favorite HPI book or website;

# Conversational Tactics

- Raise the target level (see Dana Gaines Robinson, ICE 1999 and ICE 2000);
- Create curiosity (shift their interest);
- Paraphrase the intent, not the conversation (focus on the ultimate purpose, not the means);

# Questions to Create Curiosity

- What do exemplar employees/best performers do that others don't? How'd they get to be better?;
- Once we've done the training, what else could prevent them getting these results?;
- Were they ever able to perform this work?;
- How are your competitors different?;



# Dealing With Demands for Training

Four strategies or approaches to deal with clients who are adamant about what they want...

- “Just Do It” approach;
- “Foot in the door” approach;
- “What’s in a name anyway?” approach;
- “Iceberg” approach;

# Confronting Training Demands

- Pair up;
- Identify a strategy you might have used to deal with a specific client's demand for training (or any other specific intervention);
- Explain to your partner how you could have applied this approach;
- You have 4 minutes;

# Language Gets in the Way

- “solution/answer” vs. “intervention”;
- “prototype/trial/demo” vs. “performance technology initiative”;
- “get information” vs. “front-end analysis”;
- “results” vs. “performance objectives”;
- “problem” vs. “performance gap”;
- “meet” vs. “engagement session”;

# The Customer Feedback Process

- Build trust before you ask for feedback: openness is vital or your data is worthless;
- No Tabula Rasa: Have them react to a list of services or choices;
- Have multiple agendas: get feedback but also build relationships and identify possible hot buttons for performance consulting targets;

# Questions to Consider

- How much of the HPI process do you wish to own?
- How proactive do you see this function being?
- What aspects of performance will the function not address?
- What role does training play within the function?
- What responsibility do HPI staffers have for interventions?
- What happens to problems that the performance function declines or doesn't address—where do they go?
- What percentage of time should you expect HPI staff to be spending on particular activities?

# Structure Options

- Competency level (often an interim model);
- Subset of HRD (an addition);
- Performance role (analyst, evaluator, etc.);
- Client (assigned to business units/lines);

What do you see as the pros and cons of each structure?

# Naming “the Beast”

- Performance Improvement & Training;
- Performance Enhancement Group;
- Learning Network;
- Performance Management & Training;
- Workforce Development Dept.;

What do you see as the pros and cons of training in the title of the new unit?

# Transition Resources

- Jim Fuller & Jeanne Farrington, From Training to Performance, 1999;
- DG & J Robinson, editors, Moving From Training to Performance, 1998;
- Tom LaBonte, Building a Performance Vision, 2001;
- DG Robinson, “Engaging Line Managers to Want Performance Consulting,” ASTD ICE 1999 and 2000;



# Joe Willmore is...

- A member of ASTD's Board of Directors;
- Chair of the ASTD National Advisors for Chapters (NAC);
- Taught ASTD's HPI seminar series;
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