

Eric P. Bloom: **7 Advantages of Just-In-Time Training**



By Eric P. Bloom

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Have you ever taken a technical training class weeks before actually using the information you learned? If you are like most of us, the majority of the knowledge gained within the class will be long gone from your memory by the time you put your fingers to computer, feet on the peddles, or hand to the construction tool. The reason is that the information you learned was not immediately reinforced in the workplace.

Just-in-time training is exactly what it sounds like; it's providing training to your staff just before they are required to use it on the job.

There are many advantages of providing training just prior to use, including the following:

Maximized knowledge retention

Immediate reinforcement of a newly learned skill helps the learner move the acquired knowledge from short term memory to long term memory. Many people learn by doing, rather than just by hearing. Therefore, immediate use of the learned material should be considered part of the learning process and scheduled as such.

Helps facilitate change

Change is a difficult thing for many people. By its nature, learning new processes, techniques, and/or methodologies are a form of change. Therefore, you can also use just-in-time training as a catalyst for change. Namely, use the training class for the dual process of instruction and change facilitation. That is to say, using the class to get your team excited about a change has the added business benefit of making the change happen.

Maximizes the use of your training dollars

Every company and department, no matter how large, has a finite amount of time and money that it can spend training its people. Therefore, finding ways to maximize the effectiveness of your staff's training helps maximize the return on investment of this time and money.

Enhances staff engagement

If the employee knows that he/she will be required to use the newly learned skills/knowledge as soon as they return to work after the class, it gives him/her a vested interest in learning the material. This feeling of expectation that they will be immediately using what they have learned will, in itself, help the employee be more focused and work to internalize the class materials. It can also help maximize the employee's work engagement by having the opportunity to "show off" their new skills and illustrate their increased worth to the company.

Aligns staff growth and department need

One of our responsibilities as managers is to provide opportunities for personal and professional growth to our staff. This action increases their value to the company, reduces employee attrition, and enhances staff loyalty to you and the company in general. It also directly aligns staff skill enhancement with department need because, by definition, your people are being trained on a skill they will immediately use.

Department productivity

Logic would dictate that if your staff is better trained, more highly engaged in their work, feel they are able to grow professionally, and are loyal to you and the company, it will help you, as the department manager, maximize your department's productivity and effectiveness to the organization. As the leader of the team, this department productivity can certainly have a

positive effect on your job performance and maybe even help facilitate your next promotion or grow the size of your next salary increase.

Enhances your professional brand as a good manager

Having the reputation as a manager that's good to his/her people, helps them grow professionally, has low employee attrition, and maximizes department effectiveness and productivity has the dual advantage of attracting quality employees and personal career advancement. It makes it easier for you to hire quality people because the employees talk and people want to work for you. You will have a larger applicant pool of potential people to hire. From a personal/professional perspective, it can help you accelerate your career because your department's efficiency will most likely be noticed by those above you organizationally.

The primary advice and takeaways from today's column is to know that:

- Just-in-time training is providing training to your staff just before they are required to use it on the job.
- There are many advantages, including those mentioned above, to your company, department, staff, and you personally related to providing skill-based just-in-time training to your staff.

Until next time, work hard, work smart, manage well and continue to build your professional brand.

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