

Excellence. NO EXCUSES!

Excerpt:

TRAINING

Investment #1

Tom Peters

03 September 2014

NOTE: The material herein is NOT under copyright. My goal is grand theft—by you the reader. I hope you will find some of the contents of value, and will therefore extract and utilize what you will, directly or indirectly, with or without attribution.

V. My Training ... **Obsession**

Consider ...

6-2-3*

*It takes Jerry Seinfeld **SIX MONTHS**
to develop **TWO-THREE MINUTES**
of new material.

(Source: Documentary, *Comedian*)

1-1*

*Winston Churchill's rule of thumb: **1** hour of preparation
for **1** minute of a speech.

Basketball coach John Wooden, perhaps the best coach of anything, ever:

*“I was never
much of a
game coach,
but I was a
pretty good
practice
coach.”*

Hall of fame football coach Bill Walsh on prep:

*“The score
takes care of
itself.”*

In the Army, 3-star generals worry about training. In most businesses, the top training post is a “ho hum” mid-level staff slot.

**(The Seinfeld-Churchill numbers make perfect sense to me.
Two consummate pros—for whom preparation is Activity #1.
For whom preparation is a consuming passion.**

The Wooden-Walsh quotes ring very very true to me.

The Army statement is a truism. PERIOD.

The arts. [Theater, ballet, etc.]

Sports.

Pilots.

Police & Fire.

The military.

Docs.

What's missing?

By and large: Business and “normal” jobs in general..

Soooooooo)

I just scored Birthday #71. I am more determined than ever to shout/scream about CEOs (and other bosses at all levels) finally “Putting People First”—as their mission statements say, but which is contradicted by their actions. As tech change accelerates, this becomes more important with each passing day.

At an event in Milan (11/05), I passed out one item to the several thousand

attendees. I labeled it my “**#1** Belief.” To wit:

Your principal moral obligation as a leader is to develop—day by day—the skillset, “soft” and “hard,” of every one of the people in your charge (temporary as well as semi-permanent (*there is no “permanent” circa 2014) to the maximum extent of your abilities. The good news: This is also the #1 mid- to long-term ... profit maximization strategy!*

Related to the statement-of-principle above, I fired off (right term) on Sunday (11/03) a series of tweets on the keystone—training.

(I understand full well the complexities of a full-blown development process. So I want to pare it down—to the Seinfeld-Churchill-Wooden-Walsh bedrock. Namely, “down and dirty” ... TRAINING.)

Herewith ...

*Is your **CTO/Chief
Training Officer** your
top paid “C-level”
job (other than
CEO/COO)?*

If not, why not?

*Are your top trainers
paid/cherished as
much as your top
marketers/
engineers?*

If not, why not?

(Most companies don't even have a Chief Training Officer.

Dumb.

Pathetic.

Contemptible.

AND ... a crippling blow to profit maximization.)

*Are your
training
courses so
good they
make you
tingle?*

If not, why not?

(Someone at a seminar challenged me on this. Said it was unrealistic and, by the way, what does “tingle” mean. I pointed to my sophomore year in college. For us engineers, including civil engineers like me, an introductory chemistry course was required. Most of us looked forward to it as the equivalent of a 4-month long root canal. We had two well known professors, Michell Sienko and Robert Plane. They were scholars of the first order and simultaneously entertainers of the first order. Bottom line: By the end of the course, probably half of us (among hundreds) wanted to be chemistry majors. Ten years later the same sort of lightning struck courtesy an econ prof, Keith Lumsden, at the Stanford business school. That is, there are great teachers and great courses—and I do not understand why the corporate world can’t develop or recruit the Sienkos and Planes and Lumsdens. Billions are at stake—and great “profs” concocting great courses could do wonders to, say, recruitment and retention and productivity. As to “tingle,” I’m looking for something beyond “very good;” I’d accept “earthshaking” or “mind-blowing” or, for sure ...

“supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.”)

Demo. Demo. **Demo.** NOW.

“We don’t have the budget [to create a great training course].”

No.

No.

No.

No.

You can ... **always** ... find
(scrounge) enough \$\$\$\$\$\$\$ to launch a ...
partial demo. Right now.*

**Impetus: Discussion with a senior HR exec. I had been ranting about the need to create training courses that were so good they made you “jump up and down with joy.” He said ‘twas a great idea—but he’d never get the budget. Well, truth be known, I flew into a rage: “Of course you can’t get it—and, furthermore, you don’t deserve it. You need to prove your case first. And the best (only?) way to do that is to scrounge a few bucks, find a soulmate somewhere in the organization, and conjure up a demo of some bit of your ideal course. Work on improving it, gather a passel of supporters, and aim for no less than ‘brehtaking.’ With a few demos and a few raving fans in tow, then you can begin to sell your idea up to the powers that be.”*

No demo.

No sale.

Randomly stop an employee in the hall:

**Can she/he describe
her/his development
plan for the next 12
months?**

*If not, why not?**

***And if the answer is “No” ... her or his boss should be sternly reprimanded ASAP. (I would say “fired”—but you might accuse me of over-the-top-ism.)**

Sunday/NFL game day (as this was written): “Players are our most important asset.” “No shit, Sherlock.” Football is a competitive BUSINESS.

If “people first” is obvious for them, why not you?

Study/inhale Matthew Kelly’s book *The Dream Manager*. It’s about a fictional sanitary services company. But it’s not fictional. I met the company’s CEO.

If them, why not you?

Check out a U.S. Marine E-6 (senior sergeant): Ask him/her about training and development objectives, and the intensity of the approach thereto.

If him, why not you?

Want to understand training in a super high-tech business? Talk to the commanding officer (effectively **CTO) of a “boomer”/U.S. Navy nuclear sub patrolling the sea with nuclear-armed missiles on board.**

If them, why not you?

Training =

Investment #1*

***Training should be classified as an element of**

R&D.

Addendum: Training Is **Not** a “Do To”:

The-Prep-Is-**The-Thing!**

The Sochi Olympics (on as I wrote this) should remind us that extensive

training is **not** something bosses “do to” people.

Training = Success.

Junior/senior. Age 17 (young Olympian) or 71 (me).

(My take: In many [most?] organizations training is treated as de facto penalty administered “to” rather than a ... **magnificent growth opportunity.**)

You do **not** achieve mastery during the game or the

speech or the concert. **Mastery is achieved (only) in the (invisible) preparation stage.**

*(It often seems to me that the attitude toward training is, “another damn cost item,” or “How bloody much do we have to do?” On the receiving end, given the half-assed attention to the product (the training itself), the attitude is, “How much of this shit do we have to go through?” Instead I imagine—and I think everyone should imagine—training as ... **THE COOLEST THING EVER**. The matchless opportunity to help people grow—and to help our organization achieve Excellence, which in turn can be translated into Ecstatic Customers—and, then, Ecstatic Shareholders. This whole topic, as ordinarily approached ... **PISSES ME OFF SOOOOOO MUCH I QUAKE & SHAKE.**)*

If there is no **joy** and

exhilaration

in preparing, success odds are ... **Z-E-R-O.**

**Training should be
the highlight. Event
an afterthought.** (Event is
basically decided before you step in the field/stage.)

For me, the pleasure is in increasing, at **1A.M.** before a 9 A.M. speech, the font size of a single word I've decided to emphasize on PowerPoint slide #39.

**My speech is effectively
over before I step on stage.**

Trevor Gay: Would rather hear ***“You clearly
prepared for that”*** than ***“That
was great!”***

Any idiot can be “psyched” & “up” when he steps on the field on game day. **Key is being “psyched” &**

**“up” & 1st on the practice
field.**

Twitter comment by org development group: *“We can help by integrating learning into work and ditching the term ‘training.’”*

NO! NO! NO!

NO cover-ups!

Training: **WONDERFUL** thing!

Training: **WONDERFUL** word!

Make it so **GREAT** people **BEG** for it!

I **LOVE** to train.

I **LOVE** to improve. (Age 71.)

*“training,
TRAINING
and M-O-R-E
T-R-A-I-N-I-N-G”*

—CINCPAC Nimitz to CNO King/1943 (punctuation Nimitz’s)
(U.S.Navy under-prepared after Pearl Harbor. The fix? T-R-A-I-N-I-N-G.)

From a Twitter exchange on optimism:

I simply don't understand optimism. I only "get" preparedness and de facto psychotic relentlessness.

“Yo, I'm an optimist. Gonna happen.”

“Yo, I'm a shit-happens-OCD-preparationist.”

Take your pick?!

Gamblin' Man

Bet #1: >> 5 of 10 CEOs see training as expense rather than investment.

Bet #2: >> 5 of 10 CEOs see training as defense rather than offense.

Bet #3: >> 5 of 10 CEOs see training as “necessary evil” rather than “strategic opportunity.”

**Bet #4: >> 8 of 10 CEOs,
in 45-min “tour
d’horizon” of their
biz, would NOT
mention training.***

***If you had *any* idea at all how much this pisses me off ...**

Rick Taylor/twitter: *“It’s been 12 years since I’ve been offered training in anything. Corporations see it as an expense not investment.”*

Shit hits the fan, Great Recession:

Container Store

boosts

front-line sales training.

RARE!!

(FYI: A few years ago, Container Store ranked #1 on the list of “Best Companies to Work for in America.”)