

TRAINING


Investment #1

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(Yes, it does. “*Hey, this looks a lot like a PowerPoint presentation,*” you say. “*Yes it does,*” I reply shamelessly. PowerPoint is my medium. Pretty much everything I do resembles PowerPoint—I think and dream in PowerPoint. So consider this doc as a Word translation from PowerPoint. Why? Because it’s, as I said ... **WHAT I DO**. Furthermore, my company logo, two years in the making, is

a bright red exclamation mark  [That’s it. No words, no music, just that RED exclam.] I once wrote “*Technicolor times call for Technicolor solutions.*” And I stand by that. So there you have it ... a PowerPoint translated into Word studded

with  Please do enjoy. These are indeed ... **TECHNICOLOR TIMES.**)

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.**

*“The only thing you
have power over is to
get good at what you
do. That’s all
there is; there
ain’t no
more!”*

—Sally Field

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 Sally Field quote holds almost Biblical significance for me.

**And the Wooden-Walsh quotes are, well, peerless sentiments
from peerless coaches-leaders.**

The Army statement? 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!*

I understand full well the complexities of a full-blown development process. But I insist in this essay on paring to it down—to the Seinfeld-Churchill-Field--Wooden-Walsh bedrock. Namely, “down and dirty” ... TRAINING.

“The root of our problem is not that we’re in a Great Recession or a Great Stagnation, but rather that we are in the early throes of a

Great

Restructuring.

Our technologies are racing ahead, but our skills and organizations are lagging behind.”

—Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee *Race Against The Machine*

“For most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, employment usually rebounded after each recession, but since the 1990s employment didn’t recover briskly after recessions. It’s not coincidence that as the computerization of the economy advanced, post-recession hiring patterns changed.”

—Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee *The Second Machine Age**

*Training pays off. But beyond that, it is a (professional) life and death issue for every worker circa 2014.

*“The median
worker is
losing the
race against
the machine.”*

—Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, *Race Against The Machine*

So (salvation, as it were, of the employability sort, through) ...

TRAINING

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TRAINING

And ... *MORE*

TRAINING

Training Queries:

*If not,
why not?*

*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.)

**I wish my language weren't so coarse. But I am so so so so wound up on this topic.*

*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 for “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?

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.”)

Training =

Investment #1*

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

R&D.

**What is the best
reason to go bananas
over training?**

GREED.

(It pays off.)

The Mauritius Doctrine

On 16 April 2014, I spoke to 1,300 SME chiefs in Mauritius at a conference organized by The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council, and that included the Vice Prime Minister. I upped the stridency of my tone relative *not* to government actions—but relative to business’ *obligation* to develop its work force. Moreover, I asserted this was as true for a 6-person business as for a 6,000-person outfit. Yes ... wee companies can (and ought) become “training/development maniacs.”

Honing my new/uncompromising message: Especially in uncertain times which are sapping global employment security, it is the ... foremost moral responsibility ... of businesses to abet the radical development of their employees.

National productivity improvement is less about a few giants than about incremental efforts by the great mass of small businesses.

My training [& development] message in general is radical. ***But the truly radical notion is that “training & development maniacs” applies to the FIVE-person enterprise as much as it does to the giant.***

Training #1: Bottom Line

NOBODY gets off
the hook! “*Training
(& Development)
Maniac*” applies as
much to the leader
of the **4-person**
business as to the
chief of the **44,444-**
person business.

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.**

*“The only thing you
have power over is to
get good at what you
do. That’s all there
is; there ain’t no
more!” —Sally Field**

*Yes, a r-e-a-p-e-a-t. Very purposefully.

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.)

Prompted by 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?!

*“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.)