

Learning revolution

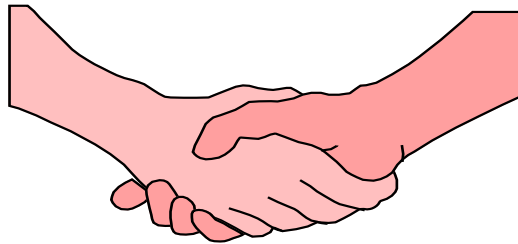
Quotable Quote

"A health & safety problem can be described by statistics but cannot be understood by statistics. It can only be understood by knowing and feeling the pain, anguish, and depression and shattered hopes of the victim and of wives, husbands, parents, children, grandparents and friends, and the hope, struggle and triumph of recovery and rehabilitation in a world often unsympathetic, ignorant, unfriendly and unsupportive, only those with close experience of life altering personal damage have this understanding"

Major Guiding Principle

INITIATING CHANGE

- When initiating change remember “People support what they create”



In the early 1990's company X revolutionised their approach to learning. I was heavily involved in this work in my role as Senior Safety Adviser in the Brisbane-based corporate OHS department. Company X had 7 open-cut mines, 1 underground mine, 2 ports, 2 coal quality laboratories and 5 town offices, with a workforce of approximately 5,500.

The following are the steps that were taken as best I can remember it.

1 A Learning Manager was appointed with a reputation for challenging the status quo and practical outcomes.

2 Existing learning programs were examined and costed, many millions were being spent and it became obvious much of this money was wasted.

3 An exhaustive learning needs analysis was carried out. One of the 7 open-cut mines was chosen for this and for about 6 months operated at half capacity due to an intense focus on learning needs

analysis. This worked formed the basis for the introduction of competency-based learning in the Australian mining industry.

4 Doctor Stephen Billett of Griffith University was engaged to research preferred and effective modes of delivering learning. Not surprisingly learning by doing coached by a content expert was favoured. A lot of people saw classroom learning as largely a waste of time. Carrying out authentic tasks in the workplace was seen as important.

5 External trainers and internal trainers, of which I was one, had to attend a week course with a unit that specialised in advanced learning techniques from the Qld. Department of Education. This emphasised interactive techniques and Action and Experiential learning.

6 Consultants were engaged to prepare self-paced, competency-based modules in many areas. The modules were given to learners and they were assigned a content expert to refer to as needed. In the safety area there were 10 modules that gained National recognition towards a certificate IV in Occupational Health & Safety. My role was to do the T.N.A., write modules, liaise with the consultants writing the modules, assess learners, coach learners and where necessary facilitate the modules.

7 I completed some of the learning techniques modules and because a thorough approach was used in their development, was able to get exemptions from 2 of my subjects on the Bachelor of Education (Adult & Workplace Education) at Q.U.T.

8 A system was introduced whereby the supervisor had to engage with the learners to develop an action plan to implement the lessons learnt from a learning experience.

9 A matrix of mandatory and recommended learning for all levels of employees was developed. For example at some locations completion of a certificate IV in Occupational Health & Safety was made mandatory for all supervisors and managers.

10 The performance appraisal process put a high emphasis on learning with the result that individual learning plans were developed for all employees.

11 The organisation truly became a "Learning organisation" and a high value was put on learning.

12 A communications plan was developed to communicate processes to employees. Various available media were used to communicate learning change.

13 Development of the learning materials involved many project teams and a philosophy that "When initiating change, People support what they create" was used.

14 Assessors of the self-paced learning modules completed learning and set about assessing learners

15 I was never privy to the cost of this work but I am told there were massive savings because people were not traipsing off to classroom sessions of dubious quality all over the countryside and the learning was really targeted to needs. It was summed up for me when I was sitting in a mine manager's office that overlooked the coal stockpile and the mine manager said "There was a time when I had evidence the bulldozer operators did not always know what they are doing and the machines were not always well maintained, since this new training I no longer have these concerns"

15 The BHP-Coal Learning Manager went on to develop a very successful International Learning consultancy business based on the company X approach. An indicator of his success that he pointed to

was gaining the contract to develop the complete learning system for Company Y, an American company with 350,000 employees.

The precursors to success were the very thorough learning needs analysis and the establishment of the preferred and most effective means of learning.

Learning-Mezirow

- “Learning is the process of making a new and revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience which gives subsequent understanding, appreciation and action”



We retain

- 10% of what we Read
- 20% of what we Hear
- 30% of what we See
- 50% Of what we Hear and See
- 70% of what we Say
- 90% of what we **SAY & DO**