

thinktwice™ Today

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May 2006—Keep Learning

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ASK THE COACH

Q: Why is it important to have a Learning Attitude?

A: Having a learning “attitude” sounds like something your mother might tell you to get in high school. It can’t be forced upon you, but you can develop skills to learn which will enable you to grow professionally and personally. Three ways to develop a learning attitude are:

- Approach something without expectation of the outcome.
- Get really curious – ask a lot of questions.
- Don’t be afraid not to know. The most brilliant minds are humble and recognize how much there is in the world to learn, no matter how masterful they are in their own craft.

-Marci Rinkoff is a TLG Associate specializing in coaching.

Are you a Learning Role Model?

A 2004 survey conducted by Right Management Consultants showed that 44% of HR managers surveyed said that their companies’ leaders were lacking skill in “developing of subordinates,” while 28% said that their leaders lacked a “commitment to developing people.”

Is there cause for concern? There’s no denying that constant learning is imperative in today’s competitive business environment. Companies that do not embrace learning as a core value will stagnate. Learning drives creativity and new ideas. And building a learning culture — an environment in which ongoing development, curiosity, risk-taking, and coaching are highly valued — starts with *you*.

As a leader, you are a role model. Everything you say and do sends a message. When you admit what you don’t know, take classes, share best practices with peers and ask for feedback, you demonstrate a commitment to learning.

President's Perspective

Welcome to the premier edition of our **thinktwice™ Today** newsletter, presented monthly by The Loyalty Group.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide tips, trends, ideas and more to training and HR professionals, line managers, executives and sales leaders. It also provides a forum for you – our clients, associates and business leaders – to comment on today’s hottest training and talent management topics.

Each issue will have a theme. It seemed appropriate to launch this, our first newsletter, with a “Keep Learning” theme. After all, whether you’re a trainer, coach, manager, executive or HR consultant...learning is at the heart of everything you do.

Ask yourself — what are you doing to create a learning culture? When’s the last time you asked your team for honest feedback? When’s the last time you held yourself accountable for professional development? How often do you take risks and admit what you don’t know? This week, do something to be a learning role model. If you want others to grow and take risks, start with yourself.

GET YOUR ZZZS

According to an article on Britesurf.com (06/01/2006): “Learning appears to rejuvenate the brain. Scientists already know — and most of us can confirm from firsthand experience — that lack of sleep impairs cognitive function. Sleep-restricted individuals have a shorter attention span, impaired memory, and a longer reaction time.”

Please tune into future editions in which we’ll have themes relating to sales training, performance management, coaching, recruitment and selection, communication skills and customer service. We look forward to hearing from you!

-Phyllis Roteman, President, The Loyalty Group, proteman@theloyaltygroup.com



Day-to-Day Learning

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2002–03, approximately 68.5 million people, or one-third of civilian, noninstitutionalized adults age 16 and older in the United States, took formal courses or training that were not part of a traditional degree, certificate, or apprenticeship program for reasons related to their job or career. (O'Donnell 2005).

LEARNING LAGGING IN U.S.

Just 20 years ago, American students were among the best in the world, routinely coming in first in test results.

Now, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, students in the richest country on earth are in 24th place in math. That's behind Canada, Germany, France, Korea...but also smaller, poorer countries like Poland, Hungary and Slovakia.

RECOMMENDED READING

To learn more about organizations with a Learning Mentality, I encourage you to read Peter Senge's book, [The Fifth Discipline](#).

-Marci Rinkoff

We learn something every day. In fact, we can't keep from learning, even if we try! Valuable lessons emerge from almost every effort and experience. Unfortunately, most of this learning is like a blip on a radar screen; it's there, then it's gone. The importance and the value of our daily lessons quickly slip away from us.

The U.S. Army recognized this problem and developed the After Action Review, or AAR, to facilitate and capture tacit learning from combat

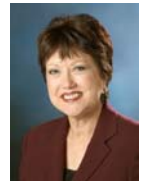
training exercises. The process was so successful it quickly spread to the corporate world, where variations are now used at GE, Motorola, Boeing and other successful companies.

You can adapt this simple, yet elegant tool to leverage your day to day learning. After completing an assignment, project or even at the end of the day, simply ask yourself: "What did I want to accomplish?" "What actually happened?" "What could I have done differently?" "What did I learn

from this experience?" Recording your responses in a journal will help you codify valuable tacit knowledge, and internalize key lessons from your experiences.

More information on the AAR process can be found in [The US Army Field Manual](#)

-Velma Purser is a TLG Associate specializing in leadership development.



Coming Next Month: Coaching

Learn why coaching in today's competitive environment helps keep employees loyal.

Are you a new manager wondering what the first step is to building a good relationship with your direct reports? Find out how to start off on the right foot early on.

Need reminders for your next one-on-one session? Get advice on what tools are available to help.

Readers' Forum

This monthly section will feature questions and contributions from our very own readers.

Do you have question on next month's topic? Or, if you would like to contribute an article on this topic, please send an email to info@theloyaltygroup.com. Please email all submission by the 20th of each month.

For next month's topic of COACHING:

- Tell us about a best practice on coaching that you have implemented in your company.
- Give us your best coaching tip or advice
- Tell us about a coach who changed your life or career. What did he or she do?

PRODUCT CORNER

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