



THE 6 KEYS TO UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL IN YOUR PEOPLE

6 vital steps when you consider investing in training & development.
A guide to the questions to ask yourself and any potential training providers before you start
a training programme

Paul Carey (MD Training)
paul@smithcarey.co.uk

Colin Billing (Training Director)
cbilling@smithcarey.co.uk

"The bespoke service, skill set, challenge and commitment from the team at SmithCarey has been 1st class...working across a range of channels and routes to market, this has been key to the results that we have achieved over our time working with them and will continue to benefit from in the future."

Healthcare Sales Director

The 6 Keys to Unlocking the Potential in Your People

Introduction

The training and development market in the UK is estimated to be worth c£3bn per annum with over 12,500 companies providing training solutions to the public and private sector. Many companies promote the importance of their employees to their businesses success and most invest some of their revenue back in to growing the skills and knowledge of their teams.

However despite considerable practitioner and academic research into effective training and development, little firm guidance exists on how to ensure your investment successful and permanently raises performance. Financial Return on Investment measure's struggle to strip out other competing factors to assess trainings impact, whilst qualitative measures are often vague and anecdotal.

At SmithCarey we have many years' experience in delivering a range of commercial training and development programmes to SME's and multi-nationals, all focused on transforming commercial competencies. We work in close partnership with each of our clients and seek to build programmes that meet their needs and embed lasting benefits in their businesses.

During this time we have paid close attention to what makes a truly successful training & development programme. ***Identifying 6 keys to unlocking the potential in your people*** and ensuring your investment delivers what it promises.

Without unlocking each step in the development process you risk:

- Alienating your people through ill targeted and irrelevant training.
- Applying short-term sticking plasters to long term challenges.
- Creating an anti-training culture in the organisation.
- Wasting valuable resources, (time, expertise and money) on a distraction from your core business.

If you do follow these steps we know from over a decades experience in delivering commercial training solutions you will:

- Identify the key challenges and opportunities within your organisation.
- Develop a learning culture throughout the organisation.
- Make on-going and lasting changes to performance.
- Motivate and encourage your teams to take responsibility for their own future development.

The 6 Keys to Unlocking the Potential in Your People



1. Is your training and development need aligned to your businesses values and core competencies?

Before you engage the services of an external training company or your in house learning and development team, have you stepped back to consider what is important to the sustainable success of your business?

What is it that makes your company unique and will give you a competitive edge? What are the **competencies** that your team need to excel at to leverage those values and what skills, tools, knowledge and behaviours are they currently lacking?

Without a comprehensive and robust understanding of the **competencies** your people need to outshine your competitors, training is often ill-targeted and badly aligned to what your business is lacking. Negotiation training may sound like a must have for a commercial team, yet if their role is in reality one of selling and relationship building then a different set of tools and knowledge is required to succeed.



Being clear on your values and core competencies allows you to access performance against key criteria and build a plan to develop the skills and behaviours your team need to win and win in the right way. It becomes your training and development plan and not one that could be applied generically to any commercial organisation.

It also allows you personalise and prioritise, developing individual training programmes and focusing on the areas that will provide the quickest, or biggest areas of improvement.

If you don't know your priorities for training you're shooting in the dark.



2. Are Senior Managers and Line Manager engaged with and involved in the training and development programme?

“Our team need to be better at constructing financial deals, in our fast paced environment we aren't confident they understand the value of the deals they are agreeing and it's costing us money. They need some training!”

Training is often seen as necessary for those new into a role, or whose jobs have grown and developed over time. They need to be given new skills or tools that will help them in their position and then they will be able to succeed.

Managers identify the training requirements, allocate the resources and provide the individual with the opportunity to learn.

But to learn what?

Great training will teach the latest most effective techniques to succeed in a particular task. It won't be the same training delivered 5 years ago as knowledge and insight improves.

For training to “stick” it needs to be supported outside of the classroom or e-learning environment. Trainees need to be able to put their learnings into practise, make mistakes and move on. They need to feel supported and able to share their experiences with others including their line-managers. This means line managers and the senior commercial team **must** be actively engaged in the training programme if learnings are to become part of the businesses DNA. Whilst this doesn't mean managers need attend the training programmes themselves, they do need to understand and adopt the language and tools taught on the courses.

If a manager doesn't fully engage in the training programme neither will their direct reports or anyone else below them in the organisations hierarchy.

Engaging managers in the development, execution and follow-up to their teams training unlocks the 2nd key to successful training & development.

3. *Gaining the widest possible perspective.*

Training is designed to build an individual's skills, knowledge and behaviours. It focuses on where a participant is now and helps push their performance forward by giving them new knowledge and processes that will make them more effective.

However in commercial roles we are always interacting with others, be that trade partners or internal customers. Understanding who we are interacting with and their objectives is vital in implementing new skills. Therefore effective training needs to take a **“both sides of the fence”** approach. Utilising the knowledge of buyers or other parties in the commercial transaction, to proactively confront the challenges that will be faced in putting new learnings into practise.

Great training helps build the knowledge and confidence to know what to do, but it also realises that there are others involved in the process and we need to prepare to react to their responses and needs too.



4. Effective Face to Face Training.

Regardless of the preparation and involvement you undertake prior to your training sessions. The success of the training hinges on the quality of the training material and the way in which it is delivered.

Excellent training can be achieved in a number of ways, however what they share in common is:

- *Clear objectives aligned with the companies and individual's needs.*
- *A productive environment, away from business distractions.*
- *Targeted training material, specifically designed to achieve the objectives.*
- *Passionate enthusiastic trainers with the skills and knowledge to be flexible when required and go "off-piste".*
- *A mix of delivery techniques to include all learning styles.*
- *A safe place where people can try out new concepts and ideas, and be encouraged to make mistakes.*
- *Challenge and stretch to "raise the bar" on performance.*



Great training is delivered by those people who have an in depth understanding of your needs and objectives. Have experienced the challenges you face themselves and can effectively communicate the most effective approach to tackling those challenges.

It is an interactive process where all participants can share their perspectives and the group all learn from each other as well as from the training provider. All conducted in an environment that respects the different backgrounds and learning styles of each attendee. Pushing them hard to break out of old habits and adapt the new skills, knowledge and behaviours. Without feeling they are being judged, where mistakes are learnt from and there is no failure only feedback.

5. Do you have Individual Measurable Action Plans?

Training is not conducted for its own benefit it can only be deemed successful if it produces an on-going sustainable change in behaviours. Any change is the responsibility of the individuals however it is vital that they assess their own success.

Too often training effectiveness is measured by feedback sheets collected in a hurry at the end of the course. In reality the impact of training needs to be assessed over the short, medium and long term. Participants need to set themselves clear stretching goals and proactively monitor their performance.

Action plans need to be realistic if they are to be achieved so focus and prioritisation is key. Better to make 1 or 2 critical commitments to change that you have the resources and passion to deliver, rather than a long list of “should do’s” that will languish in a draw or computer folder and never be referred to again.



Time needs to be set aside to regularly review progress against the plan and great training providers will happily invest time with their clients post course to assist them in bringing their action plans to life. Not just in the immediate post course enthusiasm, but in the weeks and months it really takes to embed change.

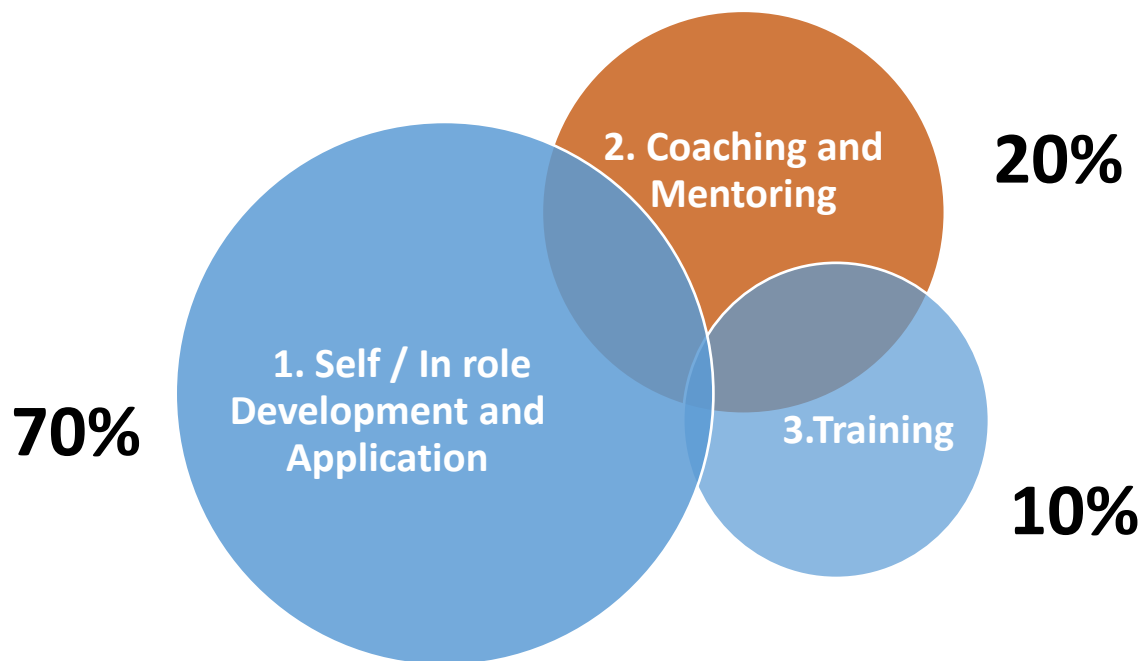
6. Do you prioritise On-Going Coaching and Support?

Whilst the accountability for personal and business development lies with the individual the responsibility for enabling that change is shared with their manager and the training provider.

We all need help to recognise our weaknesses or to improve our strengths. It is no co-incidence that in the c-suite of major corporations, or in the gym alongside

top performing athletes stand coaches whose role is to help them unlock their performance potential.

Factors driving successful development in commercial organisations.



Coaching support is crucial in embedding new skills, knowledge and behaviours. It is a different skill to managing and can be a powerful tool to both correct problems but also positively challenge and grow individuals. Helping them explore goals and ambitions and finding ways to achieve them.

Therefore to succeed a coach must have the trust of the person they are coaching and be focused on their needs, acknowledging that the solution lies with the coachee and not the coach.

Coaching is a specific skill and is widely adopted as a means of improving individual performance, it compliments formal training programmes and has a multiplier effect in translating new ideas and skills learnt in the classroom into

real life actions and solutions that have a demonstrable impact on business success.

Therefore the final key to unlocking the potential in your people through training lies not in the content or the delivery of the training itself. Rather in the quality of the support and guidance that is provided post course to ensure creative plans are put into action.



The 6 Keys to Unlocking Potential in your People

1. Understand the critical values and **competencies** required to be successful in each role.
2. Ensure **senior & line managers are fully engaged** and supportive of the process.
3. Look at **both sides of the fence**, consider training needs not only from your perspective but also your internal & external customers.
4. Ensure **training delivery is high impact and effective**.
5. All training to be supported by **realistic, measurable action plans** focused on real sustainable change.
6. Support on-going development through a **culture of ongoing coaching** and personal development.

At **SmithCarey Transforming Commercial Capabilities** is our passion; we work with companies big and small to help them achieve their potential. We live and breathe the 6 keys to success every day to ensure the investment our clients put into their people delivers success.

We can help you at each step to identify, deliver, transform and embed your teams' skill, knowledge and behaviours.

For more information on how we can help your business visit our website:

www.smithcarey.co.uk/training

Email us at training@smithcarey.co.uk

Or call **01488 649360**