



Increase effectiveness of your training with coaching

by Katarzyna Kot, BA Coach

We have to constantly work on our skill sets to keep up with the relentlessly fast changing world; companies recognise this urgent need to build on skills and capabilities. In 2014 the worldwide spending in companies on training and development was [130 million US dollars](#). Interestingly a new skill development often takes place through classical training. According to the [2014 Training Industry Report](#) nearly 47% of training hours were delivered in a classroom setting.

The expectations around classical training are high: we sign up for training with the hope that after two to three, or sometimes more, days of intensive learning we will leave the classroom wiser with our new skill reasonably developed. After the training we are filled with ideas, enthusiasm and improvements for our daily work that we have discovered during the course. We promise ourselves that we will apply new ways of doing things just as soon as we hit the work floor. We go to work a day after, open up our e-mail where 100 urgent messages await us, receive a couple of new requests from the stakeholders, have a good chat with a project leader on what still has to be done and ... get sucked into daily operations. We keep resisting old habits but after a couple of weeks we give up and go with the flow... I believe you have similar stories of your own.

What was the effectiveness of such training? Low. Research conducted by [Saks and Belcort](#) shows that without any reinforcement, it is estimated that after one year employees will retain as little as 35% of what they learnt in training. The forgetting curve presented below shows the decline in the use of skills.

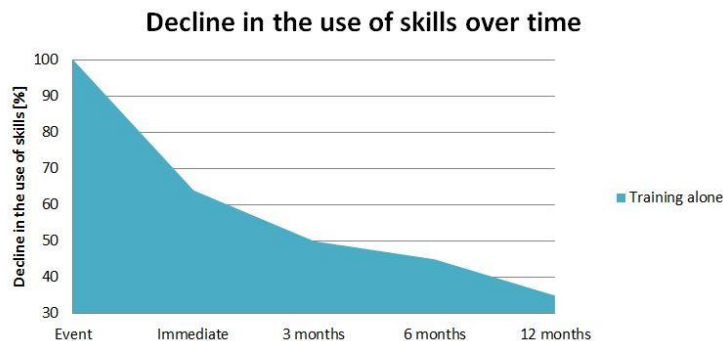


Figure 1: Decline in the use of skill over time

Training is an excellent **first** step in developing a new skill, however **it isn't the end, but the start of a journey**. Practice is the hardest part of learning. Finding ways to incorporate the newly learnt skill into one's work will allow the skill to strengthen and employees to get better in it. The time just after the training is the most vulnerable because a person still has to work actively on a skill and executing the skill

may require a lot of thought to do it. In this phase we can still easily fall back into old habits or even abandon the skill.

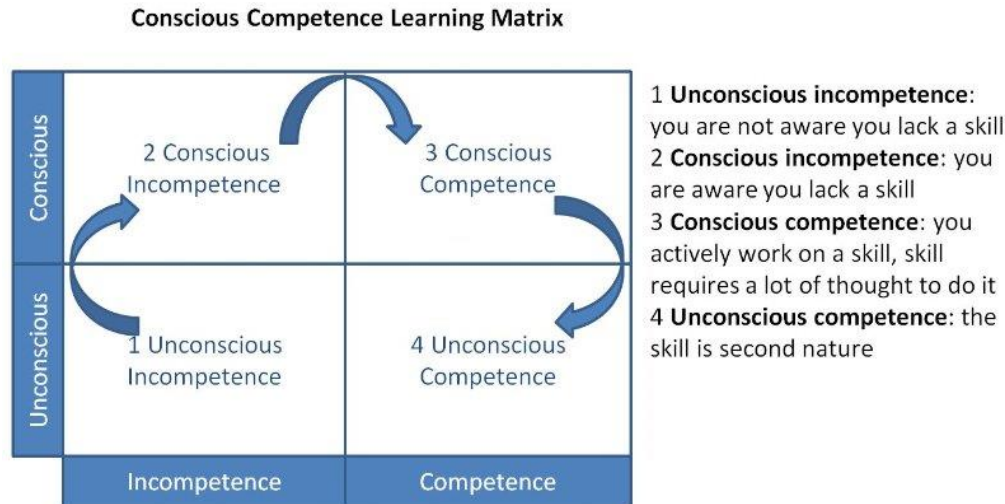


Figure 2: Skill maturity versus skill development overview

The “after the training” phase (the conscious competence phase) is where any form of post-training follow-up activities (e.g. coaching, reviews, interactive meetings) helps to sustain the learning. Multiple research reveals the important role of managers in coaching employees after training. The effectiveness of the training can be increased by 40% if managers take up a coaching role. These activities are necessary if we want to sustain the learning and prevent the “learning dip”.



Personally, I think that the mixture of application of the newly learned skill in practice and coaching in particular is the most effective means to get the most out of training. As the old proverb says, “Practice makes perfect”: by doing and even making mistakes we learn the best. We achieve this when an employee applies a new skill in projects, discusses it with peers, even during a coffee break, dares to challenge the old ways of working, and dares to make mistakes. It is not an easy time as it is definitely outside his/her comfort zone. Coaching sessions offer time for analysis, reflection and action that ultimately enable a person to take the necessary steps in maturing the required skill. This simple graphic (figure 3) illustrates how coaching prevents an employee from falling into the “learning dip”.

Figure 3: How coaching reinforces training

Source: <http://www.aboutpeople.com/Articles/BusinessCaseforCoaching.php>

In conclusion I think that if companies want results from their employee development, they need to ensure that in addition to training itself a series of follow-up activities take place. Training is just the start of the journey of new skill development, practising the skill in the workplace is the hardest part of learning. The follow-up activities, like coaching, will help employees through the vulnerable phase when the execution of a new skill requires a lot of thought and when the risk of falling back into old work habits is high. Finally if you need advice on coaching or look for a coach in Business Analysis for your business analysis team, contact us at +31 6 38 33 01 33