

It begins with the end in mind.

How to create the outcomes wanted within your teams through your learning and development programs.

What is the problem you are trying to solve?

This is the key question I now ask when organisations request learning.

After 20 years in the learning industry, I have realised that focusing on the end in mind is the most powerful gamechanger for successful learning to occur. By asking this question right at the beginning of a conversation ensures learning solutions are set in the right direction from the start. Clear outcomes can be set, and outputs measured.

Today's modern thinking around learning and development, links more to performance through achieving outcomes. I have learnt that more investment in thinking time at the start will ensure we get the results required, whether it is about increasing workforce capability and engagement, making training stick, deciding the best mode and model for delivery, or getting value for sometimes limited training dollars.

It is important to spend the time understanding what is going on – so the “right” solutions can be found. As Einstein once said, *“If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions”*.

We need to apply curiosity, ask lots of questions, listen, and observe to ensure clarity of the current state and then be clear about what the future needs to be. Then provide the framework for the learning to be practiced applied and embedded. Only then will there be a shift in the performance for our teams and individuals that is meaningful and impactful.

So, what do we ask ourselves before we engage in a learning program either by insourcing or outsourcing it?

Here is my list of powerful questions to ask yourself and others to give you the best chance of success:

Have we spent time really understanding what is going on?

Have we considered the change process - (there will usually always be one even if its small)?

What problem are we trying to solve? Is training the solution?

What do you want your people to know, feel and do either differently or more of or less of?
Are we really clear about this?

Why haven't our people been doing the things we need them to? What is blocking the way?

What knowledge or skills do they need to do?

How should this be delivered to be most effective and efficient?

What do we want to see happening post the learning?

How do we measure success?

Have we created a supportive environment for people to test and try and sometimes fail?

Have we communicated the expectations?

Have we landed on the best methodology, mode, and model for the delivery?

How will we support the learning post the training?

Have we got buy in from leaders and have we been clear in their responsibilities in supporting the process?

In the last 3 years I have been using this approach successfully in designing and implementing a range of programs in aged and community care organisations. Examples include a Buddy Program and a Leadership Program in Person centred/Relationship approach. I have seen that this way of thinking can help make changes in organisational outcomes, workforce capability and culture and importantly good outcomes for the people we serve – the consumers of services.

After all learning should always be about understanding the gap and designing solutions to fill it. Then we will see the outcomes landing just where we need them!

Best of luck

Yours in learning

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