



The Six Golden Rules to Making Employee Training a Consistent Success

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Every employee, from the most senior level to the freshly minted, must take some type of training in their career. The nature of this training differs depending on the company and the department. However, one thing remains constant: training is vital for the ongoing success of every company.

There's more to successful training than great instructors, excellent instruction, cutting-edge technology, and top training materials. To be successful, training must have the right approach.

While demand for training has increased since 2020, many employees remain frustrated by what courses are offered and how those courses are delivered. When a company takes a correct and proven approach to training, it is more likely to be adopted and positively impact employees and the company. This guide outlines the six golden rules for training success.

Golden Rule 1: Make Training Real and Applicable

It's the "why." The employee must fully understand why the company requires them to complete the training. For an airline pilot, the reason is usually clear: safety or learning to fly a new aircraft. For an employee in a different type of company, the "why" may be less clear, if it's clear at all.

An employee might sit through the videos. They might answer the multiple-choice questions at the end of the session. They might tell others they liked the training. But without the "why," the information won't be retained, and the training will be a waste of time and money.

Simply describing the "why" as "because you have to, it's for compliance" is a poor reason, even if it's true. It's important to go deeper and explain all the reasons. Engagement will skyrocket when you show the employee how the training will help them move their career forward.

Many companies make the mistake of assuming that their employees understand why the training is taking place. Put yourself in the shoes of the employee and determine their assumptions.

When you have finished a training module, test the module. During this testing, make sure the people who are taking the test fully understand the "why."

Golden Rule 2:

Make Training Easy and Flexible

Easy training does not mean easy to complete or simple. It means removing the barriers that will stop employees from completing the course. One obvious barrier is a training course that does not work on a cell phone. All your current courses must be mobile friendly and work perfectly on the device employees keep in their pockets.

Placing training on a cell phone provides excellent flexibility, and this means higher engagement. Employees can train on their schedule. They can watch a three-minute video, read a short article, check coursework details, or even take a test during their commute, when they're out for a walk, or waiting to pick up their kids from practice (or pet from the groomer).

It's more than simply taking a single-day course and moving it online. It's re-building the course so that it works on all platforms and complements how people use their phones and absorb information in today's learning environment.

Your training can be extremely successful when you remove the barriers that block employees from engaging with your coursework. These barriers might include:

- Time
- Boredom
- Technology
- Lifestyle
- Work demands
- Motivation

Snacking on information instead of over-indulging is one way to make training successful. A 3-minute video is likely more digestible in today's environment than a one-hour video that needs to be watched in one sitting.

Golden Rule 3:

Make Training Collaborative and Engaging

Collaborative learning is a technique used by trainers to help learners retain more information. By asking each other questions and essentially re-teaching what has been learned, they are getting to a deeper level of understanding. But collaborative learning is not always simple when a workforce is dispersed or course creators are holding onto traditional training methods. Adopting learning technology that makes discussions between employees simple, even if it's not in real time, has a lasting impact. Tools such as a mobile app allow learners to connect with other employees on their time. And, for those teams who are in person, conversations can start in a digital format and be picked up later over coffee in the break room.

Golden Rule 4:

Carefully Consider Test Questions and Track Performance

In many online courses, proof of learning happens through a multiple-choice question where anyone can guess the answer. This is not helpful and negates the impact of the training.

Testing must help the employee understand what they're learning, how they're learning, and which areas need more work. Well-designed testing can also be a valuable way of helping employees think about what they're learning instead of accepting and repeating it, parrot style.

As such, think carefully about the questions at the end of the training.

- What do you really want employees to take away from the course and its sections?
- What can you ask them that will genuinely assess their knowledge?

Employees will be more engaged, not less engaged, when the test questions are sensible and not exceptionally easy.

As the tester, you should understand how well or poorly employees are performing. You should spot the employees who might drop out of your course if you don't intervene or those struggling in their learning journey.

You can improve the coursework once you have data based on accurate testing.

Golden Rule 5:

Make Training Rewarding

The word reward may have triggered thoughts of gift cards and pizza lunches but gone are the days of buying employee interest in training. Today's employees are looking for job satisfaction, professional development, and growth opportunities within the company. Meaningful training that is tied to these three employee needs is much more likely to be successful. And companies that offer meaningful training are likely to reduce churn. That means that training is a win-win for both employees and companies.

Golden Rule 6:

Test Courses and Assumptions

It's all too tempting to create a course, release it into the wild, and then forget about the course — until the complaints become too loud or the results too awful.

It's understandable. Creating and monitoring courses can take significant time. Unfortunately, many companies have a flawed approach to creating and evaluating courses. The design process must have an evaluation process built in.

- How satisfied are employees with the course?
- How many are completing it?
- Are there clear blockage points or sections employees find too hard to understand?

Data can be a great friend here, but it's just one way to assess the effectiveness of the training. The learning platform must provide an easy way to answer all the questions above. Results can be even better when a company goes beyond data.

Speak directly with the employees who've taken the course, through an end-of-course survey, by asking these questions.

- Did they enjoy it?
- What were their top takeaways?
- Is there anything they'd like to change?
- Would they recommend it to a colleague?

Take all the data and change the course accordingly. Testing and improvement need to be constant.

Final Thoughts

Training is crucial in every organization. The six golden rules provide a way for companies to maximize the impact and effectiveness of their training.

If there were a seventh golden rule, it would be to partner with a company that specializes in training and has a track record of successfully helping companies with impactful training.

At Anthology, we support many top companies in their goal to deliver education and training that matters. To help companies reach their short-term and long-term goals, Anthology provides training initiatives and solutions that work — starting with the six golden rules.

Learn more about how we can help make your training a success with **Anthology for Business**.

About the Author

Celena Westlund is senior marketing manager for Business and Government at Anthology. Westlund joined Anthology in 2021, bringing nearly 11 years of government and marketing experience, including over 7 years at the U.S. Institute of Peace and 3.5 years at a MarTech company. In her role at Anthology, she works to create awareness and demand for our EdTech solutions in federal, state, and local governments, and within corporate entities. Westlund graduated from Washington State University with an M.A. in strategic communication and previously earned an M.A. from American University in international peace and conflict resolution, with a focus on conflict in the Southern Balkans.

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Through over 60 SaaS products and services, Anthology advances learning in partnership with K-12, higher education, business and government institutions. Tapping into this unmatched portfolio of solutions, only Anthology can leverage data from across the EdTech ecosystem to create intelligent experiences that lead to better outcomes.

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