

Spicing up Your Training with Accelerated Learning

Generating Bottom Line Results Through Accelerated Learning



For Executives, Trainers, Facilitators, Meeting Planners, & Conference Organizers

PREVIEW

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Why Accelerated Learning

Missing the Mark



In 1996, I launched The Training Oasis, Inc., my training and development company. Over 20 years later, little has changed in the strategies used to deliver content and engage learners. Yes, PowerPoint and projectors have replaced black and white overheads and there are new delivery channels but, fundamentally, the strategies are the same.

Whether it's corporate training, public workshops, or general sessions and breakouts at conferences, the main approach to content delivery is still the "pour and bore" method. I can't take credit for the term. Over 20 years ago, I heard Dave Meier from the Center for Accelerated Learning use it to describe seating participants in rows and boring them with presentations until they are in a comatose state.

For well over a decade, to reduce the amount of time employees are away from work, many companies have scrapped face-to-face classroom training and put most of their eggs in the e-learning basket.

This strategy is flawed for a number of reasons. While it has a chance of working for technical training, computers can't teach people management, interpersonal, and soft skills. Also, technical training usually requires a hands-on practice to ensure skill mastery and proficiency. Unfortunately, ineffective practices have migrated to new technology and platforms.

Often, IT firms and professionals are "prime" in the e-learning development process. Instructional design and adult learning principles are not their areas of expertise. This has resulted in **tedious text-heavy page turners** that miss the mark in terms of producing desired learning outcomes. To save money, many organizations have outsourced e-learning design to low cost foreign suppliers. The cost is low and so is the quality.

The other result of reducing the amount of time employees spend off the job is that, when face-to-face training does take place, it is crammed into increasingly tight timeframes. This leaves little thinking and processing time and creates a challenging learning environment for introverts and analytical learners.

How Accelerated Learning Can Help

Accelerated learning can:

- reduce the amount of time that employees are away from their jobs for training
- streamline training programmes and double their effectiveness
- help employees "hit the ground running" by focusing on results and relevant skills rather than theory
- help participants grasp technical and complex material more easily
- increase retention by creating **vivid and memorable learning experiences**

Since 1996, The Training Oasis, Inc., a Toronto based consulting firm has offered a range of range of accelerated learning, experiential learning, and management development programmes to companies from 9 countries. **Spicing up Your Training** shares best practices gleaned from over 20 years of experience. It includes updated versions of our popular **Spice of the Month E-zine** archives and new content.

Some Quick Definitions

Accelerated Learning: "Accelerated learning (A.L.) is a total system for speeding and enhancing both the design process and learning processes. Based on the latest brain research, it has proven again and again to increase learning effectiveness while saving time and money in the process." [Center for Accelerated Learning](#)

Experiential Learning: "Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience, more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing".
[Handbook of Research on Improving Learning and Motivation](#)

E-learning: Electronic learning (e-learning) refers to learning delivered through technology such as computers, the Internet, and apps.

Virtual Learning: Training offered at remote locations via the Internet or video conferencing technology.

Hybrid Learning: In this mixed learning format, some participants engage at face-to-face locations and others participate virtually. This format can be enhanced through the use of pop-up conference rooms where participants can gather at a variety of remote locations.



Why This E-book

Many companies are realizing that e-learning will only get them so far. They are re-thinking the importance of management development initiatives and modifying training to meet the needs of a new generation. Meeting and conference planners are also realizing that the “pour and bore” lecture based approach to content delivery is not meeting the needs of participants. In an effort to reverse the decline in conference attendance and association membership, many are seeking more interactive and effective approaches.

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About Anne Thornley-Brown



President,
The Training Oasis, Inc.

Training Facilitator/OD Consultant
Education: MBA, MSW

Experience: 20+ Years
Global Reach: Companies from 10 countries

Anne Thornley-Brown, founder and President of The Training Oasis, Inc. and Executive Oasis International, has worked with clients in a variety of industries including IT, telecommunications, banking, pharma, the airline industry, transportation, retail, and the entertainment industry.

Anne has designed and facilitated training and workshops for companies from 10 countries in North America (Canada), The Caribbean (Jamaica, Dominica, Barbados), The Middle East (Dubai, Saudi Arabia), and Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, India). From Singapore and Saudi Arabia to Sudan and South Africa, with the executive retreats and team building sessions that Anne has facilitated, she has worked with companies from 18 countries.

Anne's clients have included Holt Renfrew, Bell Mobility, TELUS Mobility, CIBC, Caribbean Development Bank, National Bank of Dominica, Grant Thornton, Novo Nordisk Canada, Ingram Micro, OCBC Bank – Malaysia, Penang Port - Malaysia, Permodalan Nasional Berhad – Malaysia, IBM, and IKEA.

During 18 tours of Asia, Anne has delivered seminars to over 2000 executives and managers In Asia, participants from a variety of organizations including Petronas, Samsung, Malaysian Airlines, Digi, Mobil/Exxon, Thai Airlines, Proton and Perodua, Bangkok Airways, and Dell Computers have attended her public workshops.

Anne is also a popular blogger. She has written for **Plan Your Meetings by MPI**, **The Huffington Post**, **Event Manager Blog**, **Cvent Blog**, **EventMobi Blog**, and **Elite Meetings**.



About The Training Oasis



With major shifts in the global geo-political landscape, the economy and business climate have entered a time of turbulence and uncertainty. As businesses become increasingly complex, connectivity is decreasing, and silos are becoming more entrenched. Effective cross-functional teamwork is a key driver of corporate success. In the midst of turbulence, even organizations with strong performance need to be alert, on top of their game, agile, and proactive enough to seize opportunities. Organizations need to spot and respond effectively to the trends that will have an impact on their business.

Since 1996, The Training Oasis, Inc., a Toronto training and OD consulting firm, has helped rapidly changing organization:

- Foster innovation.
- Strengthen team cohesion.
- Re-shape their corporate culture.
- Inspire teams that are tired or discouraged.
- Identify and tap into growing markets.
- Break down silos and improve cross-functional teamwork
- Design & execute innovative strategies to stay ahead of the competition.



We'll Bring our Oasis to You

We specialize in the design and facilitation of training, workshops, meetings, and brainstorming services.

We have served clients from 10 countries in North America, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

[Partial Client List](#)

Why an Oasis

From time immemorial, weary travellers have wandered through the desert in search of the next oasis to refuel, re-chart their course, and find the strength to continue their journey.



In the same spirit, The Training Oasis, Inc. creates a safe haven for corporate teams to pause, refuel, and pick up tools and strategies to help them on their journey to success. An oasis is the perfect metaphor that represents the energy, solid content and colour that we bring to each and every learning experience.



Oasis = A place of calm and growth in the midst of turbulence.

It also represents the type of corporate culture that organizations need to create to get the best out of employees during these turbulent times.

Executive Oasis International, our sister company, uses accelerated learning to design executive retreats and team building.

<http://www.executiveoasis.com>

The Business Case for Accelerated Learning



When trainers and conference planners hear the expression "accelerated learning", what images come to mind?

- colourful peripherals
- baroque music
- games

It is important to remember that these are only **SOME** of the ingredients that can be used to produce effective learning. Accelerated learning is possible even if no music is playing, no one plays games and a koosh is nowhere in sight.

More Than Fluff



So, if accelerated learning is not just about kooshes, music, and games, what is it?

Accelerated learning = RESULTS of interactive, participant centered learning

Notice the emphasis on **results**. If facilitators use strategies other than presentations, it's not just to add fun and colour to training sessions. It's to produce better results.

What results? Learning that is:

- quicker
- easier
- smoothly transferred to the job
- retained longer

In other words, learning that ***is accelerated***.

The Main Ingredients of Accelerated Learning



What are the ingredients that produce accelerated learning? The main ingredients that produce accelerated learning are:

- solid content that meets a specific business need
- training methods based research into how the brain and senses interact in the learning process
- identifying and catering to diverse learning styles instead of using a cookie cutter or "one size fits" all approach to training

What can your organization do to increase the return on its training investment? Here are a few ideas.

Ensuring Business Results Through Solid Content



The best place to begin is to ensure that training that meets a **specific** business need. In their ground breaking book **Training for Impact**, Dana Gaines Robinson and James C. Robinson, highlighted the importance of initial project meetings at the VP level before commencing training initiatives.

The role of training specialists is facilitate these sessions and ask key questions including:

- What specific business need has prompted the request for training?
- What performance is required at the individual employee, departmental, corporate levels?
- What performance is currently occurring?
- What is the gap between current performance and desired performance?
- What is causing the gap?

If the answer to the last question is not a lack of skill, information, or knowledge, training will not close the gap. Don't throw money at problems that training was never intended to solve. If there is no clear business need, there is no point in offering it. Save your money.



"Flavour of the month" training does not make business sense. In fact, one of the fastest ways to run up any training budget is to empower line managers and directors to select and approve their own training. They'll pick what they like instead of what's effective from the point of view of the bottom line impact of training and sound learning methodology. A better approach is to have a co-signing arrangement in which training managers partner with line managers and make decisions jointly. Politically, this approach is unlikely to be palatable at first but it will make a big difference to the bottom line.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

Another group used up so much of the budget on a 5 star accommodation where everyone could have their own room, a host bar, and gifts for each participant, that there was little left for facilitation. Again the priorities were clear.

Whole Brain & Multi-Sensory Learning

Research has shown that only 34% of the population could be classified as auditory learners. For this reason, it is important to ensure that the training activities and instructional methods selected cater to the diverse learning styles reflected in each group of participants. Think of it this way, while someone who is right handed **could** write a business case with their left hand, it would take a lot longer to prepare it. The experience would be frustrating and the quality of the document would be poor.

In the same way, when participants are forced to process content through a style that is not a natural fit, it takes a lot longer for them to learn (thereby adding to the length and the cost of training). The experience is stressful and frustrating and it's much more difficult for them to fully master the skills.

How would the approach to training based on whole brain learning and multi-sensory? Space does not make it possible to provide an exhaustive exploration of the differences but the following examples will give an idea of what is possible.

Before Training

Before training, the facilitator would administer a learning styles instrument or a participant profile to uncover the preferred learning styles of participants. Based on the results, they would design the learning activities and a menu of options for participants.

During Training

As participants enter the room, they would observe a change from a traditional training setting. For conservative audiences, training would be reinforced through the use of colourful posters with key learning points. For a creative audience, the facilitator might use a theme to provide rich metaphors and analogies that underscore course content. In addition to posters that convey learning content, the facilitator might decorate the room and place props on the tables to reflect the theme.

At the beginning of the training session, instead of sitting around and waiting for everyone to arrive, participants would complete a brief "session starter" exercise in pairs or trios.

For conservative audiences, it could be a "tough questions" exercise in which participants have an opportunity to identify a specific, "real world" challenge that they want to resolve based on what they learn in the course.

A creative audience might benefit from a short trivia quiz or card game with course related content to measure how much they know about the course material before they begin. The quiz or game could be re-administered at the end of the programme and 30 days after the course to measure learning and retention.



The Misuse of Adult Learning Theory

Participants would be given a choice of left brain (linear, logical) and right brain (creative) exercises for practice and review. For example, half of the participants may decide to work on a case study while the more creative participants may prefer to practice their skills through an improvisation exercise or role play.

While, based on research about the average attention span of adult learners, presentations should be kept to no longer than 15 - 20 minutes, this is often misinterpreted by conference and meeting planners. It has been so poorly applied that, at conferences, it is now common practice to parade a series of talking heads in front of participants. That is not interactive learning.

Interactive learning does not mean changing the topic or speaker. It involves changing the **method** of delivery. In other words, after a brief presentation, throw in a quick energizer and move on to a **meaningful** exercise in groups, pairs, or trios. These exercises should **never** be interaction for the sake of interaction.

The Energizers



To ensure that participants stay alert and remain energized:

- based on research about the ability of music to stimulate the brain, music would be used:
 - during breaks for all groups
 - as a backdrop for group exercises, reading and written exercises for more creative audiences (kinesthetic and visual learners)
- breaks would be more frequent than during a traditional training session (example: 1 five minute break per hour in addition to the regular mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks)
- energizers would be used during notoriously low energy periods of the day such as the last hour before lunch and around 3:00

Integrating Accelerated Learning Into Your Core Business

For conservative audiences, energizers could be as simple providing an opportunity to stand, stretch or grab a quick coffee re-fill. A more creative audience might benefit from a 2 minute aerobic workout.

The most exciting opportunities for producing bottom line results through accelerated learning can be found in some of the most unexpected places. If used effectively, accelerated learning can enhance your meetings, improve the effectiveness of your project teams, and revolutionize your management practices. Integrating accelerated learning into the fabric of your corporation will help trainers harness the creative potential of your employees and keep your corporation on the cutting edge well into the next millennium. It's not magic...but it will make a difference.



The Training Oasis Menu of Accelerated Learning Programmes

Accelerated Learning

Spicing up Your Training

[Spicing up Your Training](#)

Competency Based Interviewing

[Competency Based Interviewing](#)

The Changing Face of Diversity

[The Changing Face of Diversity](#)

Career Makeover

[Career Makeover](#)

Star Quality Presentations

[Star Quality Presentations](#)

The Trainer's Bootcamp

[The Trainer's Bootcamp](#)

The Designer's Studio

	Availability	Fostering Innovation	Interviewing Skills	Career Management	Presentation Skills	Train the Trainer	Instructional Design	Diversity
Globally					•	•	•	
Globally			•					
Globally								•
Globally				•				
Globally					•			
Globally					•	•		
Globally						•	•	

Cash Flow Game

Over the Rainbow

Beyond the Time Warp

[Beyond the Time Warp](#)

	Availability	Fostering Innovation	Managing Change & Uncertainty	Stress Management	Thriving in a Fast-Paced Environment	Financial Acumen	Time Management
Globally			•		•	•	
Globally		•	•	•			
Globally			•				•

