

# Training and Risk Management Newsletter

Harvey B. Lermack & Associates

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- More about getting employees' attention.
- Improving listening skills.

## *Now is the time to focus on training your employees regarding ...*

### Personal and Business Security

If we have learned one thing from the recent events in New York, Washington and elsewhere, it is that we must all change our attitudes regarding our personal safety and security on the job.

We are now questioning the level of complacency that has seeped into our working life—even into processes that require a high degree of security sensitivity, such as baggage screening at airports.

Since September 11, most people have a heightened sense of awareness regarding security requirements on the job. As trainers and risk managers, we must build on that awareness.

Take this opportunity to reinforce the procedures that everyone must follow every day to

stay safe.

When developing and delivering our training programs, we always identify and assess the risks at the workplace. This is especially important now for employees who:

- Work alone or in small teams
- Work in geographically dispersed or remote areas
- Have frequent contact with the public
- Work during other than regular work hours
- Respond to emergencies

Your workforce training programs should address at least the following topics:

- The need to take personal responsibility for their own

safety and security, and to stay alert at all times

- How to identify and assess potential security hazards at their specific work site or facility
- How to develop a personal security and communication plan before beginning work, including appropriate contacts
- The importance of effective job safety briefings
- How to report suspicious persons or situations
- Not to attempt to step in and stop a crime
- Security precautions at remote locations, while driving and traveling
- Steps to prevent theft
- Your company's violence prevention policies

## *Before you can successfully train them, you must ...*

### Get Your Employees' Attention

Everyone who is involved in the training business struggles with the same underlying issue - before we can teach employees, we must first get their attention, then keep it throughout the training .

While every trainer has his or her own little tricks to accomplish this, I am aware of very little research in this field.

In an article in the September–October 2000 Harvard Business Review titled “Getting the Attention You Need,” the authors address certain key principles you can use to manage any employee communications effort. I think that several of the principles can be directly adapted to your training efforts. Here are some of the things that jumped out at me. How many of them hit close to home?

1. **People have only a finite amount of**

**attention to go around.** That must be divided among work, home, all other corporate initiatives, and training. Be sure that you do not dilute your efforts by trying to address too many things at once. Include in training courses only what people need to know; omit superfluous background information such as alternative methods and procedures. Think of the words “minimalist training” when designing your programs. And try to manage and minimize the distractions when people are engaged in the learning process.

2. **Many people are overwhelmed by the prospect of lifelong learning.** They know that they must continually gain new skills, and upgrade their current ones, in order to survive in the business world. But they have limited time and

attention to invest, and are often paralyzed into inaction. Plan your training initiatives carefully to provide information in manageable and digestible doses. **Help people to use the training immediately**, to accomplish business objectives. This keeps them involved and engaged in the continuous learning process.

3. **Don't get hung up with using technology for its own sake.** While web based and computer based learning have a place in the training process, the technology itself can create distractions and dissipate attention (see 1 and 2 above).

Keep this research in mind when implementing your next training program.

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For more information, or for copies of recent publications or handouts which describe our products, services and projects in more detail, send me an electronic mail message. Include your electronic and business address, and phone number.

Harvey B. Lermack & Associates is a professional education, training and consulting firm. Our mission is:

- To help organizations improve risk management, environmental, health and safety performance through innovative training and education programs. The key result—your employees know how to identify, assess, and manage the risks at their workplace, reducing incidents and costs and improving productivity.
- To help organizations develop leaders at every level by delivering effective professional development training. The key result—leaders who bring a strategic focus to their daily and long-term activities.
- To ensure the success of these and other training and development efforts by utilizing innovative performance management techniques, working with individuals and small groups to ensure changed behaviors. The key results—safer operations, better performance, and reduced costs.

My associates and I bring extensive industrial, academic, training and consulting experience to this unique mission.

### Harvey B. Lermack & Associates

#### Training and Consulting Services

Risk Management Training

Behavioral Safety

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Strategic Planning and Management Skills

Leadership Skills for the 21st Century

Managing Change

Performance Management

Effective Networking & Alliances

Cultivating Influence

Coaching and Counseling Skills

Facilitation Skills for Teams and Meetings

Developing & Delivering Effective Training Programs

Balancing Work, Family and Career, and Time Management

Personal Skills Development

### Your leadership training should address the ...

## Ten Skills Required of Good Leaders

In a recent Elearning magazine leadership survey, the respondents identified the top ten skills required of good leaders.

This information has obvious implications for planning and conducting effective leadership training.

Check the list below, and compare it to your leadership training programs.

Note: The numbers following each skill indicate the percentage of respondents citing that skill on the survey.

1. **Communication Skills (57%)**
2. **Interpersonal Skills (49.5%)**
3. **Strategic Planning (39.8%)**
4. **Change Management (36.6%)**

5. **Coaching (30%)**
6. **Decision Making (21.5%)**
7. **Teamwork (20.4%)**
8. **Problem Solving (19.4%)**
9. **Goal Setting (11.8%)**
10. **Computer Literacy (4.3%)**

When reviewing this list, two underlying themes jump out.

First, leaders must improve their **interpersonal skills**, including communications, coaching and counseling, working on teams, and leading teams.

Second, leaders must improve their **perspective skills**, by understanding how to plan strategically, manage change, and reflect these skills in the decision making, problem solving and goal setting processes.

We hear quite a bit about the growing technical skills gap - that is, the lack of preparation among individuals throughout the organization regarding technical and computer skills.

But we must not forget the dearth of leadership skills in many companies, which are required to drive implementation of the organization's mission and strategies.

Next month, we will discuss some of the issues involved with improving communications skills. Specifically, we will discuss the need for leaders to learn how to actively listen.

In previous issues, we have addressed how to develop a strategic perspective. For more information, please contact me.