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Executive education programs help transform the workplace

Move out of classroom and consider creative ways for on-the-job training

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Traditional training — instructor-led learning in a classroom setting — is useful for certain results. For example, for developing skills like teamwork or effective interactions. But people can learn other knowledge and skills such as tasks, rules and processes more independently or at least outside the classroom and in creative ways:

- **Job-aids.** These are quick ways to teach employees simple procedures, rules or guidelines for quality job performance. They can be easily reproduced and adjusted over time as the workplace changes.



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- **Conferences.** This experience provides employees with a glimpse of their profession and the competition. With proper planning, follow-up and reporting, conferences, in addition

to providing tremendous learning experiences, can serve as a reward. The key is to get employees involved. For example, employees maybe expected to present or work a booth as a potential learning experience, then report back.

- **Mentoring.** The mentoring relationship can be a powerful lifelong learning experience. Sometimes mentoring happens naturally, but can be part of a formal framework. The key is ensuring the right fit between mentor and protege and providing growth expectations for both people.

- **Train-the-trainer.** A person who teaches something solidifies his own expertise. The training experience can also help a person develop ancillary skills like presenting, facilitating and documenting processes.

With proper planning, alternative training options offer less expensive learning than traditional training and less administrative coordination.

- **Public seminars.** Similar to conferences, these differ because participants usually represent a wide variety of industries, providing learning opportunities and a chance for companies to network or gain exposure to potential customers.

- **Professional development opportunities.** These also provide more industry-focused learning and a glimpse at the competition.

- **Leading teams.** Putting someone in a leadership role can encourage growth, but only if the person is ready. Being tapped as a leader can boost a person's credibility and reward quality work. Managers should choose team leaders who demonstrate both high skills and a predisposition to lead.

- **Presenting.** Sharing successes with coworkers or customers not only helps employees solidify their knowledge and skills, but can also set them up as potential leaders.

- **Experiences.** Real world experience is valuable learning. Observing, listening or participating can help employees make connections they might not in a classroom setting.

- **Job shadowing.** Following a leader in the company helps people see first-hand what a job is like and gain a broader organizational perspective.

- **Alternative training.** Options require careful planning and follow-up. Without a before-and-after structure, the experience is generally wasted. Learning in isolation stunts growth because new knowledge and skills need support, practice and review to maintain long-term results.

Every type of training has unique advantages. With proper planning, alternative training options offer less expensive learning than traditional training and less administrative coordination.