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The Rewards, Challenges, and Responsibilities of an Accidental Trainer

AS THE SOLE INDIVIDUAL responsible for training in your organization or department, you'll be seen as the "go-to" person in a number of instances. When a departmental manager believes he or she has a training problem, you'll be the first person contacted. Upper management will look to you to help them make decisions about how to increase productivity and the skill level of the workforce. The human resource department may look to you to help with new hire training or to conduct training on effective performance reviews. One of the exciting aspects about being an accidental trainer is that your role constantly changes—not only on a daily basis but sometimes even on an hourly basis. In this chapter, we'll discuss the rewards and challenges of your new position as expressed by experienced accidental trainers and take a look at the many roles and responsibilities you can look forward to fulfilling. In short, the chapter will let you know what to expect and start to prepare you to excel in your dynamic new position.

Rewards and Challenges

Being an accidental trainer can be both exhausting and exhilarating. On one hand, you have limited time and resources available to you, which can be an ongoing and wearying struggle. On the other hand, these challenges force you to develop creative solutions that are applicable to your company's unique situations. At the end of each day, you'll be able to look back and say, "Wow! Look what I accomplished today!" Because I am in contact with so many accidental trainers on a regular basis, I conducted an informal poll, asking them to tell me about the rewards and challenges of their position. To share their experienced perspective with you, I've compiled their responses.

Rewards of the Role

The primary purpose of training is to move the organization as a whole to greater achievements. There is quite a bit of satisfaction in knowing that you have contributed significantly to the strategic goals of your company. Something as simple as new hire training can result in bottom-line savings of thousands of dollars. How? This training can result in reduced turnover in the first ninety days of employment, it can assist an individual in becoming a productive member of the workforce more quickly, and it can help to introduce individuals to the culture of the organization, which can help them more easily assimilate into your company. In addition, one of the rewards of being a trainer is seeing individuals grow professionally and knowing that you helped them achieve their new knowledge and skills.

An often underappreciated reward of being an accidental trainer is autonomy and independence. In many cases, you will naturally be seen as the expert in training, and your opinions and recommendations will be sought. You may find that once the training department has been established, you will be overwhelmed with requests for training and personnel development from various departments within your organization. Because your time and resources will dictate how many projects you can take on, you'll be in the enviable position to pick and choose those projects that will do the most good for the organization or that you will find personally rewarding and challenging.

Finally, one of the finest rewards that will come from being an accidental trainer is the knowledge and skills that you will develop and be able to apply immediately to the performance of your organization. You will inevitably become more skilled at public speaking and group facilitation, skills that all organizations look for in leaders. Your organizational skills will become topnotch thanks to the constant responsibility of project and meeting planning, which will contribute in untold ways to both your professional and personal life. And almost every day, you'll be able to see the immediate impact that your personal contribution brings to your organization. There may not be a more diverse, multifaceted, and potentially satisfying role in the organization for an individual who wants to develop skills while moving individuals and the organization toward excellence.

The Challenges of Your Role

No new role comes without the challenge of learning what that role is about. What are the expectations, who will you interact with, and how will your success be judged? Inevitably you'll learn by doing. Unfortunately the learn-by-doing mode can cause emergencies and unplanned events to arise. One of the goals of *The Accidental Trainer* is to help you think through each responsibility you are taking on, so that you don't find yourself in emergency mode too often.

The volume of work that you will be responsible for will greatly constrict your time for personal development and growth in areas that don't immediately support the initiatives on which you are working. It is important that you make time to learn about the industry and stay current with resources that are available to you; otherwise you'll find yourself living the cliché, "When all you have is a hammer, every problem is a nail." In other words, you'll attempt to apply the same solution to each training problem rather than being able to apply the right solution from a menu of appropriate choices.

This next challenge is not limited to a trainer's role; it is the ever-present challenge of limited resources. In addition to having limited funds and time, you'll find the lack of other human resources to be limiting in many ways: if you want to invite attendees to a training program, *you* will be sending the

e-mail invitation; when attendees begin to sign up for the training, *you* will be the registrar; *you* may even be the person in the mailroom at 8:00 P.M. the night before the training, copying and collating the materials; and very often *you* will be the one presenting the training as well.

You'll need to overcome the common idea that training is easy; you may even believe this yourself if you've been in your role for a short time. Creating training that is efficient for the organization (meaning it doesn't waste people's time or organizational resources) and effective and engaging for the participants (meaning it enables them to return to the job with enhanced skills and knowledge) is an art form. Other individuals in your organization who don't have a training role will find it hard to comprehend that it would take forty hours or more to create a two-hour training class because it looks so effortless when they are sitting in the audience. The challenge for you will be to request (nay, demand!) the appropriate time resources in order to do your job effectively.

Finally, accidental trainers can find themselves so overwhelmed with work that they rarely pick their heads up to see what is going on around them. This can lead to discouragement and burnout in the job and to the reputation in the organization that the training department doesn't link with the business itself. One way to be successful in your role is to be proactive about the potential for training rather than simply reactive to requests for training (when fires may already be burning).

The rewards and challenges just described give you a big-picture view of what you can expect. At the end of your first year in your new role, you'll look back on the work you've done and describe it overall just as it has been described here.

The Accidental Trainer's Many Roles

The role that you play may change rapidly. Some roles will be more global, such as a consultant or manager, and others will be more task specific, such as instructional designer or presenter. The global roles are things you and

others may not be able to easily identify or define, so addressing them here should give you a better understanding of how a trainer supports the organization as a whole.

Global Roles

A recent study suggested that trainers, especially those who are the sole person responsible for training in their organization, spend at least half their time performing more global support functions of consultant, coach, performance improvement specialist, manager, and technical guru rather than actually training people.

Consultant. Approaching your role from a consultant's perspective may be one of the more difficult tasks you will have to perform. Because the role of a trainer is innately a supportive function, one that exists to assist the rest of the organization to improve its performance, it's sometimes difficult to keep the consultant's perspective, which is one of impartial analysis. When acting as a consultant, you should approach training requests as assignments in which you will thoughtfully consider the needs of the workforce, the goals of the organization, and the best way to achieve an improved performance outcome. You will need to resist the temptation to immediately tackle any request that comes to you and instead approach the request as if you know little about the organization or the department that made the request. Sometimes what appears to be a training need really isn't and requires a different solution—for example, hiring a new employee or purchasing a new piece of equipment. Maintaining a consultant's perspective will enable you to gather information and data to make the right recommendations for the organization. Eventually you'll become adept at asking the right questions, looking for deeper meaning in the answers that you get, and never accepting a situation at face value.

The box sets out the types of questions you may want to ask of a manager who is requesting training. These are addressed more thoroughly in Chapter Eight when we discuss how to analyze whether a training need exists.

Fifteen Consulting Questions to Ask

- 1. What is the problem you are experiencing?
- 2. What are the symptoms that led you to believe this was a problem?
- 3. Who is the audience?
- 4. Tell me about their typical day.
- 5. Why do you think this is a training need?
- 6. What training exists already?
- 7. What training has the audience had in the past?
- 8. Have they been able to do the job [or task or skill] in the past?
- 9. What organizational factors might be playing a role?
- 10. Does the audience think they need training [now or for this problem]?
- 11. What if you don't train them? What's the worst that will happen?
- 12. How will this training need tie to business goals?
- 13. What resources are you able to contribute to assist with the training?
- 14. How will you know when the problem has been addressed? What do you want to see changed or done differently?
- 15. How will you reinforce your workers' new knowledge and skills once they return to the job?

I learned a lesson about asking the right questions during my first consulting assignment—and I did not learn it the easy way. I was asked to provide customer service training for an inside sales group that had been receiving poor reviews from their customer base. I accepted the request at face value and designed an

eight-hour customer service training class. We split the group in two, and I worked with half the group one day and half the group the following day.

About two hours into the first session, I had a horrible realization that I was preaching to the choir. This group of trainees was very dedicated to providing excellent customer service and knew all the right things to say and do. In order not to waste their time, I asked them why they believed their customers were complaining about their service. I was told that customers frequently requested faxed copies of their bill of lading or invoices, but this group did not possess its own fax machine (this was back when a fax machine cost well over five hundred dollars), so they were forced to leave their desk and walk down the hall to use the machine in another department. This resulted in poor customer service in two ways: incoming calls and response time. Either the salespeople were frequently away from their desks trying to send a fax and therefore unavailable to take calls, resulting in longer queue times, or they would wait until it seemed to be a good time to leave in an effort to not leave their department short-staffed, which might mean a twenty- or thirty-minute wait before they had the opportunity to walk down the hall to the fax machine.

I could have saved the client a lot of time and money in terms of paying my fee, as well as taking the sales group off the floor for training, if I had simply said, "Tell me about their typical day." Two simple solutions, neither of which required training, would have become apparent: (1) the client could have invested in a fax machine for the inside sales group, or (2) the salespeople could simply have changed their work process by designating one representative to take all the faxes, once per hour, to the fax down the hall and in the interim the salespeople could tell callers, "I'll get that to you as soon as possible; it may take up to ninety minutes." The first option would have been an economical and long-term solution, and the second option would have given customers a better point of reference regarding what "poor service" looked like. If the second option had been adopted and the fax arrived in sixty minutes rather than the expected ninety, their customers would have been delighted with the service they received.

Manager. Being a one-person or part-time training department will require you to be good at self-management; however, a more global perspective of a manager is a "person who leads or directs all or part of an organization, through the deployment and manipulation of resources (human, financial, material, intellectual or intangible)" (www.wikipedia.org). This is an exact definition of your managerial responsibilities. You may not have the title "manager," but management will be a significant daily responsibility as you coordinate people, facilities, materials production, and distribution, competing time lines, and the business goals of the individual departments that you support. In addition you'll be responsible for managing resources such as money (more in Chapter Three), deadlines (more in Chapter Four), and both internal and external human resources.

Coach. Being a coach may be your primary responsibility as an accidental trainer due to the constraints that you will find yourself operating within. One of the most efficient ways to develop other people is through coaching them. A coach helps an individual to define his or her goals and create a plan of action to achieve them. Much like an athletic coach, the workplace coach offers suggestions for improvement, helps the individual to refine his or her technique, and provides ongoing encouragement and support. In other words, the coach does not actually do the work. While you will provide guidance, support, and ongoing encouragement for the individual, the responsibility for acquiring the new skills or knowledge lies squarely with the individual. You may also find yourself coaching a manager so that she in turn is able to improve the performance of her own group. This approach is especially common in smaller companies where there may not be enough people to fill a training class.

New attorneys learn their skills on the job, not in law school. A law firm with sixteen offices throughout the United States implemented a formal coaching relationship for new attorneys. The new attorneys are paired with one or more seasoned attorney coaches in order to develop their skills in areas such as oratory, negotiation, and marketing their services.

Performance Improvement Specialist. A performance improvement specialist is part consultant, part trainer, and part business manager. Like a consultant, performance improvement specialists look at the big picture to identify causes of poor performance and the appropriate ways to address the situation. Although both a performance improvement specialist and a trainer are focused on increasing the performance of the business overall, the distinction lies in the fact that the performance improvement specialist looks at all approaches to solving the problem, not just training-related approaches. A trainer applies processes that address workers' lack of knowledge or skill and affect their ability to do a job correctly; the performance improvement specialist addresses anything within the organization that may resolve poor performance. For instance, perhaps the organization has poor product quality because there are no consequences for workers who do not perform quality control on their work. Performance may be improved in this case by giving rewards or instituting consequences, both nontraining solutions that are effective ways of improving performance.

Technical Guru. Technology enables us to deliver training to participants across the globe, right at their desks. You may find yourself in charge of teleconferences, webinars, computer-based training (more about these in Chapter Eight), or a number of other technology-based delivery methods. Although you won't necessarily have to know how to work the technology, you will need to have a good understanding of what method of delivery would be more appropriate than another in a given situation. You'll also need to know what the technological capabilities of your organization are—both people and equipment. Are employees computer literate? Do they have ready access to a computer? Do the computers have CDs, speakers, and Internet access? I recommend becoming friends with the people in the information technology (IT) department; you'll find you interact with them a lot, and you'll want them to know who you are and understand that your goal is to help the organization, not to slow them down.

Task-Oriented Responsibilities

In contrast to the global roles you will fulfill, which are more or less invisible to an observer, other people in your organization will acknowledge when you are performing a training task. What follows is hardly an all-inclusive list of

the various responsibilities, but it is a good grounding in what you can expect to do on a weekly, if not daily, basis. These tasks typically result in an end product or at least a move along a project plan path. You can use these descriptions when people ask, "What do you do?"

Training Designer. Many organizations find that they need to custom-design training for their employees because the work that they do is unique or proprietary. For example, in almost all cases, a new hire training program is custom-designed for an organization because it is unique to the way that the organization does business. One of the reasons that you were appointed an accidental trainer may be that your organization determined it had unique needs that it could not find training for off the shelf.

Off-the-shelf training is generic training that is designed by a training vendor. You may purchase the rights to deliver the training at your site. Off-the-shelf programs are commonly found for sales, customer service, and software training and may include videos, audiotape, Web-based programs, or leader and participant materials in a complete package for classroom delivery.

The designer of training programs conceptualizes what the training should include. For example, I once developed a two-day course called Shoe U for a retail client. The goal of the course was to teach footwear salespeople the differences in the eight athletic footwear brands the retailer carried along with selling skills such as determining needs and suggesting add-on sales. The training director at the company conceptualized the overall design. Day One was to be all about product knowledge, and Day Two was to be designed as a game in order to balance out the intensity of Day One. With that high-level design, the development work was left to me.

As a training designer, you may interview subject matter experts to determine what knowledge needs to be transmitted to the trainees, you will order the information into a logical presentation sequence, you will consider the best way to deliver each topic within the training, and you will begin to determine how to evaluate trainees' success.

Training Developer. The developer creates the training based on the designer's plan and vision. The developer takes into consideration such things as the resources that are readily available, the knowledge level of the trainees, the experience level of the trainees, whether the new knowledge and skill can be learned in one class or whether it will take multiple classes, and whether practice is required in order for the trainees to master the new knowledge or skills.

The developer also creates the physical materials that will be used in the training, such as workbooks or handouts for the participants, leader guides for the presenters, and visual presentations such as PowerPoint slides, posters, video, and e-learning courseware. Thanks to technology, this process does not have to be arduous, and many times you can outsource the development of materials. The design and development of training is so crucial to the success of a training program that Chapter Eight is dedicated to expanding these concepts.

Presenter. Often you'll find, as the sole person responsible for training in your organization, you also end up being the presenter of that training; however, you may also use subject matter experts or other credible people within your organization such as managers. If you will do the training yourself, you'll want to be skilled in public speaking, group facilitation, questioning techniques, and time and meeting management. These are also skills that you will want those you may be using as trainers to have as well. For example, if you are using a subject matter expert as a trainer, this person may need coaching in how to respond to questions or how to foster group involvement. An excellent resource for new presenters is *The Instant Trainer* (1998) by C. Leslie Charles and Chris Clarke-Epstein.

Marketer. In the big picture, training is all about change, and most people simply don't like to change. You may find that unless management "forces them," attendees do not readily sign up for training courses. In addition, although management typically understands the value of training, managers frequently believe that they cannot afford to let their employees leave the work area in order to attend training class. Therefore, no matter what other roles you are fulfilling as a trainer, everything you do on a day-to-day basis needs to be infused with a marketing perspective. Marketing the value of your training programs to the entire organization is vital. If you don't sell it, training will disappear because the function will not be valued.

There are three keys to effectively marketing the training department:

- 1. Create a compelling message.
- 2. Clearly define what's in it for them.
- 3. Be proactive and consistent.

Create a Compelling Message. Think of the marketing of your training offerings like a radio or television commercial. If it does not grab people's attention in the first few seconds, they'll never hear the rest of the message. Some ways to grab attention quickly are the use of bright colors (such as printing your registration flyers on neon-colored paper), compelling pictures (such as photos of coworkers attending training), powerful metaphors (remember the public service announcement that showed a frying egg and declared, "This is your brain on drugs"?), and questions, such as the one below. Which of these e-mail announcements for an upcoming training program makes you want to learn more: "Telephone Skills Training" or "Tired of Talking to Angry Customers?"?

Clearly Define What's in It for Them. The question on all potential trainees' minds will be, What's in it for me? The question on manager's minds will be similar: What's in it for my department or the organization? Your compelling message and all other communications about training offerings should clearly identify the value to be received from the training. For instance, to continue the telephone skills training example, a customer service representative who works in an organization that rates performance on call volume would benefit from the ability to calm angry customers, get to the heart of the problem quickly, and more rapidly conclude the call. The benefit to the manager of the call center would be representatives who handled more calls per hour.

Be Proactive and Consistent. In order for your message to be heard and to compel people to take action (such as signing up for a training class), it must appear frequently and consistently. Consistency in this case relates back to the first key, which is to create a compelling message. It is important, once you decide on the message you want to send to the organization, that you transmit that message consistently, using the same wording and the same "What's in it for me?" messages.

Being proactive goes with being consistent: you cannot be successful by marketing in spurts. Even if you do not have an upcoming training program,

the organization as a whole should be hearing from the training department on a consistent basis. You want to eliminate the dilemma that each time you have an offering to announce, it's as if you are reintroducing yourself to the organization. Consider setting up a communication calendar for yourself that ensures that you are marketing the training department on a monthly or weekly basis. Your efforts may be as simple as sending a training tip using broadcast e-mail to the organization, writing an article for the company newsletter, or, if your company allows, sending a broadcast voice mail message to the entire organization on a regular basis. They key is to communicate regularly and with a consistent message.

Another way to market the training function is to create a logo for your department. When the casual clothing retailer Bob's Stores, a division of TJX, wanted to promote the role of human resources and training within the organization, it not only came up with a logo; it renamed itself "The People Place" (Figure 1.1). When the director of training for McDermott, Will and Emery wanted to emphasize the alignment of the training department with the law firm itself, she designed a training department logo that incorporates the law firm's logo as well (Figure 1.2).

FIGURE 1.1. HR AND TRAINING LOGO FOR BOB'S STORES.

Reprinted with permission of Bob's Stores, Meriden, Connecticut.



FIGURE 1.2. TRAINING DEPARTMENT LOGO FOR A LAW FIRM.

Reprinted with permission of McDermott, Will, & Emery, Chicago, Illinois.



An ambitious trainer who was the only trainer in his organization wanted to make sure that no one forgot him. So he periodically painted his office door a vibrant new color. This tactic kept attention coming his way.

Facilities Manager and Meeting Planner. The administrative tasks of facilities manager may fall to you as well. You may be responsible for making sure that training-related items are ordered and in stock, such as flip charts, markers, projectors, overhead projector bulbs, and pens and pencils for participants who show up with no writing tools. One trainer I know keeps two large plastic tote boxes filled with anything that might be needed in the classroom. Not only will you be responsible for keeping items in stock, but you should take the responsibility for the maintenance of mechanical items such as projectors, TV and VCRs, screens, and stereo systems because it is your effectiveness that will be damaged if the equipment fails.

Trainer's Tool Kit Supplies

Pack a small box or case with the following items so that you are prepared for any emergency that might occur when you are producing a training program:

- Sticky notes of various sizes
- Index cards
- Flip chart markers
- Transparency markers
- Name tents
- Extension cord and power strip
- Three-prong adapter
- Pens, pencils, erasers, and highlighters

- Pencil sharpener
- Masking tape and two-sided tape
- Scissors
- Push pins
- Small stapler
- Tissues
- First aid kit
- Small clock
- Laser pointer

In addition, room reservations, room arrangement, and room comfort may all fall under your purview. Small training departments rarely have a training room to call their own; instead, they must be able to plan far enough ahead so that they can reserve conference rooms, lunchrooms, or unused offices when necessary.

If you've ever sat through a training program or meeting in a room that was icebox cold or hot and stuffy, you understand the importance of room comfort. It is nearly impossible to think when you are too hot or too cold. Be sure you are able to adjust room temperature and lighting yourself when you are choosing the rooms in which to hold your training. If it is impossible to have access to the controls yourself, it's imperative that you become friendly with the person in charge of room comfort; you will find yourself calling on this person often.

If you lack appropriate meeting space at your own facility, you will also be responsible for negotiating contracts with off-site facilities such as hotels and conference facilities. Contract negotiations can involve the cost of the meeting space, what audiovisual equipment is needed, and room arrangement. See Chapter Five for detailed information about meeting planning.

A Classic Challenge

One client with whom I consulted had a group of twelve individuals who needed training on a Web-based software application that had been designed specifically for their company. The company had a computer training room that could accommodate all twelve trainees at once. The original expectation was that the training would be delivered to the group as a whole during two sessions that would be held in the computer training room—until it was discovered that the computers in the training room did not have Internet access (and the IT department was disinclined to give it to us). Luckily, the question of Internet access was asked early enough in the design process to account for this constraint, and the training was instead designed to be done one-on-one, at each individual's desk. Remember your many roles—consultant (ask the right questions) and designer/developer (design the training within the constraints you are given)—and be flexible.

Evaluator. Training is often seen as an expense to the organization because of the time and money that goes into designing, developing, and presenting training. What is not as frequently tracked is the value that is returned as a result of people's new knowledge and skills gained through the training. In order to answer upper management's questions about the value of your training programs, you will need evaluation skills.

There are two important questions when it comes to training evaluation: What is the purpose of the evaluation? and Who cares?

What Is the Purpose of the Evaluation? Evaluation can take many forms. There is a standard for training evaluation known as Kirkpatrick's model; in this model, there are four levels of evaluation that range from, "Did the participants like it?" to "Was it a worthwhile initiative for the company to undertake?" The most basic level, level 1, "Did the participants like it?" is the most typical and the easiest evaluation to conduct. Level 1 evaluations are typically distributed at the end of class and ask participants to express their opinion about the class in terms of content, delivery, materials used, and sometimes even whether the room temperature was comfortable and the food was enjoyable. An example of a level 1 evaluation would be: "On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the instructor's knowledge on the topic?"

Kirkpatrick's Levels of Evaluation

Donald Kirkpatrick developed these four levels of training evaluation in 1954. They are still universally used today:

Level 1: Trainees' reaction

Level 2: Test of knowledge or skill

Level 3: Use of the new knowledge or skill on the job

Level 4: Business results attributable to the training

Level 2 evaluations seek to determine if the participants have learned new knowledge or skills by attending the training program. These evaluations typically take the form of a test for knowledge or performance. For example, a midterm exam in college is a level 2 evaluation that tests what the students have learned during a semester. A driver's license exam is a performance-based level 2 evaluation that seeks to determine if the trainee can successfully operate a vehicle. Level 2 evaluations are typically conducted at the end of the training or soon after and are primarily a snapshot in time; that is, they evaluate what the participant knows or can do at that moment.

Level 3 evaluations are used to determine if the trainees are using their new knowledge and skill back on the job. These types of evaluations may take the form of observations or may be a survey of managers or the trainees themselves to assess how the new skills are being applied on the job. To continue with the driver's license example, while someone might pass the twenty-minute driving test (level 2) by being tested by an instructor, that in no way ensures that they will drive at the speed limit or use their directional signals on a day-to-day basis. But observing them under day-to-day driving conditions, a level 3 evaluation, would let us know if they are truly using the driving skills they were taught.

Level 4 evaluations seek to determine if the training was worthwhile for the company. If a trucking company requires all of its drivers to go through a safety course and in the next six months the number of accidents is reduced or the number of insurance claims falls, it is safe to assume that the safety training did carry over into the workplace and achieved a favorable return for the organization. Level 4 evaluations can be conducted using before and after data that pertain to the behavior you've attempted to change through training. You can find more information about the evaluation of workplace training in the *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* by Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer (2004). Once you've determined what level of evaluation is appropriate for your training program, you'll want to consider who would want to know about the results.

Who Cares? Understanding the types of evaluations you might conduct and when and how to conduct them is not as important as answering the question, Who cares? The various levels of evaluation become increasingly complex, expensive, and time-consuming to implement as you move from level 1 to level 4. Therefore, it's important to know what you will do with the

information you gather from the evaluations and who is interested in the results.

If you are seeking to improve your training offerings, then a level 1 or 2 evaluation will give you enough information to adjust things such as the pace of the course, the amount of practice that is allowed during class, or the reference materials used in class. You should be able to conduct level 1 and 2 evaluations with a minimal amount of effort. Level 3 and 4 evaluations, however, will require the cooperation of more individuals within the organization. You may ask a manager to observe his or her workers and report back to you, or you may hold a posttraining focus group of trainees (level 3) to get their impressions once they have had time to practice their newly learned skills on the job. You may also request to see department data or confidential information in order to gauge pre- and posttraining results (level 4). Gathering more data is not necessarily better; as a trainer with limited time and resources, it is a better use of your time to conduct evaluations that you can control yourself.

Unique Needs of an Accidental Trainer

All of the roles and responsibilities just discussed contribute to a varied and exciting career as a trainer. Not every role may apply to your situation; you may find that you have unique challenges depending on how you came to be a trainer. I'll conclude this chapter with some thoughts about specific skills necessary for trainers who play dual roles as human resource specialists, managers, and business owners, or subject matter experts as well as those who have the luxury of being solely focused on training. Each subgroup within the larger accidental trainer group operates within its own unique constraints and access to resources.

Depending on your primary role within the organization—business owner, departmental manager, subject matter expert, or official training department—you may fulfill any of the roles and responsibilities discussed in this chapter to a greater or lesser degree. For instance, a business owner may serve in the capacity of consultant and coach more often than any other

role. A full-time trainer may serve in the roles of designer, developer, and marketer more often than any others. And a subject matter expert may concentrate solely on being a presenter. The particular needs of your organization will largely dictate the roles that you fill. I also encourage you to give some thought to what roles you want to perform. One of the ways to be successful as an accidental trainer is to know your strengths and weaknesses and to understand what it is you like and dislike doing, so that you can be most effective with the limited time and resources available to you.

Human Resource Representative, Business Owner, and Manager

The responsibilities and constraints of the HR representative and the business owner or manager are similar in that all three of these groups must fit training into their larger roles and responsibilities. Whether one is responsible for the training of an entire workforce or the professional development of one individual, the responsibility for determining the type and extent of training necessary, and whether the training has an effective impact on the business, can be very time-consuming. The individual manager, business owner, or HR representative is especially eager to find ways to deliver training that are efficient and effective. Chapter Seven will be of particular interest to this group.

Subject Matter Expert

Subject matter experts have a curious mix of possessing the correct information and too much information at the same time. The subject matter expert who is tapped to train others must squeeze training into a small window of opportunity in his day-to-day work. Understanding how others learn and how to present information that aligns with learning styles is important for the subject matter expert to effectively transfer knowledge to others. Chapter Eight will be of particular interest to this group.

The One-Person Department

While the one-person training department has the luxury of concentrating all of his or her energies on the professional development of the workforce, it is a job that can be overwhelming. When you are the only person responsible for

a function within the organization, you may find that the requests for training can be more than one person can accommodate. Chapters Six and Seven will be of particular interest to the one-person department.

Summary

While the roles and responsibilities of an accidental trainer are many, you needn't feel overwhelmed. By implementing a daily routine that includes the effective use of resources and time and by implementing the techniques I suggest in the chapters that follow, you'll find yourself on the way to reaping the rewards of the position in no time. The first step is to establish yourself as a credible resource within the organization and to build alliances to help you become successful. These are the topics for Chapter Two.