



Rice University HR Training
Excellence Through Learning

presents

The Advantage Way
Learner's Guide and Workbook



Introduction and Purpose

In the next few weeks you will attend a training program intended to help you improve your performance and, in turn, help your work unit and the organization better achieve business goals. This Guide is designed to help you increase the performance and business impact of the training that is provided to you. As a participant, your preparation and engagement are critical in making sure that you use what you learn during training to improve performance and business results.

Becoming a “world class learner”

When you take part in training, your “job” is to be a “world class learner.” Being a “world class learner” boils down to three key actions:

Before training

Build an Impact Map with your manager that gives you a crystal clear “line of sight” to connect this training with what you need to learn and do to be successful in your job.

During the training

Review your learning progress as you go, refine your thinking about how you can put the new learning to work in your job, and build an Action Plan that can assure your success.

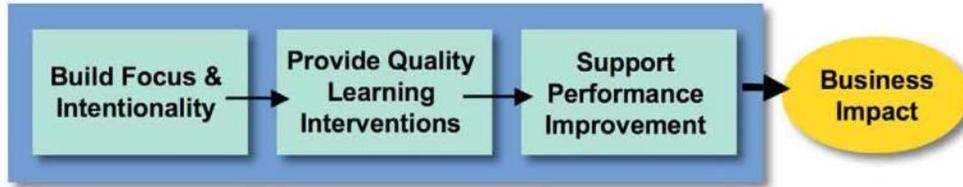
After the training

Meet with your manager to review and finalize your Action Plan. Make an effort to do the things in the Action Plan.



The Advantage WaySM Learning Process

The Learning-to-Performance Process



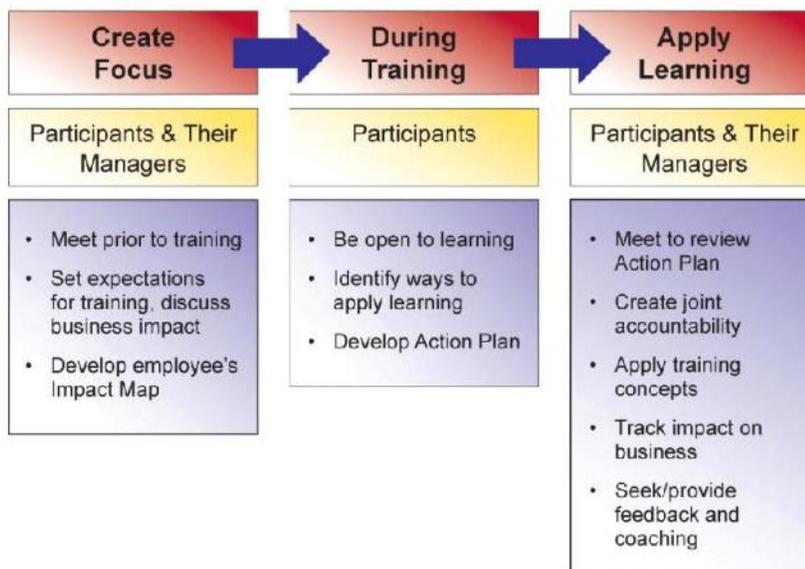
Learners must understand:

- Why the training is important
- How it can help them do their jobs better
- How their improved performance can help the organization succeed
- **Exactly** how they could use their training on the job to improve their performance
- **The importance of their commitment to use the training back on the job**
- That their manager values the training, expects them to use it, and will support them when they try out the new skills/knowledge.

Training programs have to be delivered at the right time, to the right people, and with high-quality learning activities.

New learning is fragile. If it is not put to use very soon after training, or if it is not nurtured and supported, people quickly return to their old pre-training ways of performing.

The High Impact Learning Process





The Impact Map

An Impact Map is a clear and simple format that shows

- ◆ the “line of sight” between the learning outcomes you should focus on during the training,
- ◆ how you will use the learning in your job, and
- ◆ the business goals you can achieve by using the learning

This helps you target exactly the learning outcomes that are most important and helps you focus on one or more useful ways to put that new learning to work.

An Impact Map has a simple structure, shown below.

What I will learn (The few, most important skills or concepts I'll learn during the training)	How I will apply these new skills back on the job (The few most important ways in which this trainee can use the learning to produce key results most needed to achieve business goals)	What results I will get (How will applying my new skills improve the results of my work area?)	The organization's* goals that my results will support (*Organization could mean my work group, department, school/division, or Rice University)
The few, most important skills <i>most critical</i> for your direct report(s) to learn in order to improve their performance and drive results	The few most important ways in which this learner can use the learning to produce key results most needed to achieve business goals.	The few most important immediate job results that can help produce business goals, and can be achieved by applying the learning.	The business or unit goals that this trainee can best contribute to by applying the learning.

You and your manager will share your thinking to come up with an individual Impact Map for you prior to your participation in a training program.

Note: Your manager or the training department may send you some general impact map information **prior to your discussion with your manager.**



Four Key Participant Actions

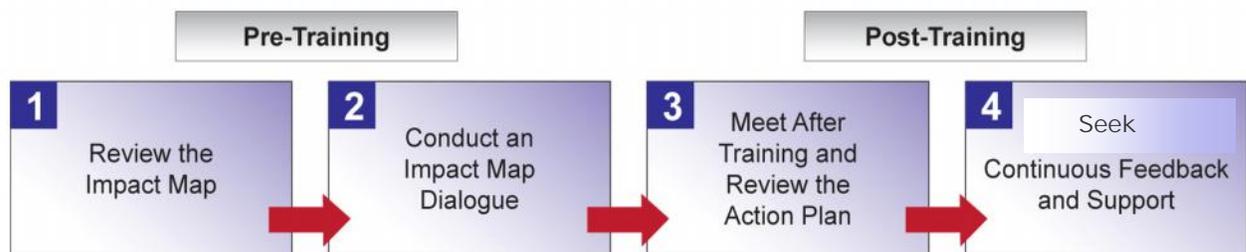
Training participants and their manager must work together to be sure that the training is implemented on the job, and that the right coaching and encouragement are in place so the new learning can lead to sustained performance improvement.

There are four steps that must occur – two before participants go to training and two afterwards – to make sure the entire training process

drives business results. The graphic below illustrates the Four Key Participant Actions. The remainder of this Trainee's Guide provides you with a detailed explanation of each action.

Research has shown that up to 80% of training impact is determined by pre and post-training joint actions of participants and their manager.

Four Key Participant Actions



Pre-Training Key Participant Action #1: Review the Impact Map

1. On the Impact Map for this training initiative (the needed impact map is the last page of this document) **circle, check, or highlight** the top one or two items in the *Organization's Goals* column that you think can most be impacted by this training.
2. Review and select the one or two *Individual Key Results* (from the *What results I will get* column) that this training can help you more consistently produce that link to the *Organization's Goals* you selected. (You may add your own as long as they will be supported by this training).
3. Review and select the one or two *On-the-Job Behaviors* (from the *How I will apply these new skills back on the job* column) that will most help you produce the *Individual Key Results* you selected and that you know you would like to be better at. (You may add your own as long as they will be supported by this training).
4. Review and select one or two *Critical Skill & Knowledge* entries (from the *What I will learn* column) on the Impact Map that will most directly support the *On-the-Job Behaviors* you selected.
5. Prepare to meet with your manager, using the highlighted map you have just worked on. If your manager has not arranged for this meeting, contact your manager asking for time to meet.



Pre-Training Key Participant Action #2: Conduct an Impact Map Dialog with Your Manager

Meeting with your manager before training is one of the most important contributions you can make to ensure training impacts business results. When meeting with manager, press to be sure you understand how this training relates to your job expectations and the success of your unit.

1. Take the results of Action #1 to the meeting with your manager.
2. Prepare any questions you might have about the impact map and its entries.
3. Be prepared to respond to your manager's questions, such as (Action #1 will have prepared you for these questions):
 - What are the one or two *Organization Goals* you personally impact the most and that this training might help?
 - What are the one or two *Individual Key Results* (from the *What results I will get* column) you personally think might be linked to the *Organization Goals*, will be supported by this training, and that you need to begin producing or be better at?
 - What are the one or two *On-the-Job Behaviors* (from the *How I will apply these new skills back on the job* column) you personally think are linked to your selected *Individual Key Results* (from the *What results I will get* column), will be supported by this training, and that you need to be better at?
 - What few *Critical Skill & Knowledge* (from the *What I will learn* column) entries can most impact your selected *On-the-Job Behaviors*?
4. Reach agreement on the Impact Map for implementing the training.
 - Openly listen and discuss differences of opinion with your manager.
 - Share your ideas, perspectives and priorities.
 - Don't try to include too many learning outcomes or job applications; it is better to aim at just one learning goal that you know is important rather than several that may be less important.
 - Reach consensus on one or two lines of sight for your participation in this training.
 - Near the end of your dialogue with your manager, you should be able to respond to this scenario, "Suppose someone stands at the door of the training room asking you why you are attending this training. How would you answer that question?" You may certainly use your highlighted impact map to help you answer this question.
5. Make the necessary changes to Impact Map based on your dialogue with your manager and take this Impact Map to the training
6. End the dialogue with your manager by setting a date/time for a first follow up meeting (must be within 10 business days of the conclusion of the training) to discuss the training, your action plan, and what next steps you will jointly take.
7. Thank your manager for his/her support for your participation in this training session.



During the Training

This part of the guide is meant to help you during your training experience. It has some worksheets, tips and guidelines to help you stay focused on what matters the most and make your learning effective and enjoyable

There are three things this part of the guide helps you do:

1. Occasionally reflect on your learning experience during the training, to be sure it is on track
2. Think about any obstacles you might face in using your learning when you get back to your job
3. Prepare an Action Plan that details specifically how and when you'll put your learning to work

Personal Learning Reflections

The Learning Reflections worksheet in this section is meant to be completed one or more times during the course of your training experience. Your training facilitator will call a "time out" when it is time to do this. Additional copies are provided at the back of this guide.

The purpose of the Learning Reflections worksheet is to give you an opportunity to sit back, take a brief break from your training experience, ask yourself how it is going, and perhaps make some adjustments in your plan of action.

The Learning Reflections worksheet is brief, and will only take you a few minutes to complete. But don't let its briefness fool you. Taking the little bit of time to reflect on how things are going can make a big difference in your success.



Personal Learning Reflections Worksheet

Directions: Complete this worksheet during breaks in the training action and when your training facilitator suggests.

Look over each question below then jot down your current thinking. If you have already completed a worksheet before this reflection break, take a minute and review it to help you focus your thoughts.

1. So far, the most useful thing I've learned is . . .

2. An especially useful application of this learning in my work would be to . . .

3. Do I need to revise my Impact Map? ___ NO ___ YES
If yes, what changes are needed?



Obstacles to using the learning

No matter how good a training experience has been and no matter how much you might want to apply your learning, reality says that you'll probably encounter some obstacles to doing things differently on your job. Applying new learning and making changes is never easy. But it can be even harder when things get in the way.

Toward the end of this training experience, your facilitator will ask you to complete an Obstacles Survey. It is a brief survey that captures your ideas on what obstacles are likely to get in your way as you try to apply new learning.

After getting surveys from you and other trainees, your facilitator will summarize the group's opinions into a report that will be given to all of your managers. The idea here is that managers are in a position to help reduce the obstacles, so they need to know what they are. Managers are also going to get a guidebook that will help them understand these obstacles and give them ideas for how they can help you overcome them.

This Obstacles Survey is important, because it gives you a way to help managers in our organization to see the challenges from your perspective. Please consider the Obstacles Survey carefully and give it your honest and frank consideration.

There is a copy of the survey at the back of this guide, but your facilitator will hand out one to you to complete during the training session.

Completing an Action Plan

The last thing you'll do in your training is complete an Action Plan. This is based on your Impact Map, because your Impact Map was your and your manager's best thinking about how your new learning could be applied. But since you've been involved in the training, you may want to sharpen this plan to use your training or make some revisions to it.

The Action Plan is self explanatory. A sample is provided on the page following this section in your guide.

Before completing it, be sure to

- ◆ Review your Impact Map, and
- ◆ Review entries you have made in your Learning Reflections worksheets.

Note that part of your Action Plan asks you to indicate the type of support you think you'll need from your manager or others. No one expects you to be totally on your own as you work to apply your learning and improve performance. Be sure to ask for any help you think might be helpful. Your manager has a stake in your success, as does everyone else in our organization. Don't be shy about asking for what you need!

After you have completed your Action Plan, you will share it with your manager and discuss it, making revisions as needed. Finally, your manager and you will sign it indicating that you each agree to do your best to make this plan become a reality.



Learner's Action Plan

Action Plan for _____ Date _____

What I will learn		How I will apply these new skills back on the job	What results I will get	The organization's* goals that my results will support (*Organization could mean my work group, department, school/division, or Rice University)
		Actions I will take		
		When & where I'll try these		

Support and assistance I would like (job assignment, permission, feedback, monitoring, coaching, etc. that will enable success)

Agreed to:

Manager

Employee



Post-Training Key Participant Action #3: Review Your Action Plan after Training

This is where training really pays off. If you use your training to improve your performance then your training was worth it. If something keeps you from using it, then it has been mostly a waste of time.

The most important thing you can do to assure your success from this training is to get together with your manager either in person or by phone, within 10 business days after training, to talk over your Action Plan. This will help both of you put your best effort forward to make this training a success, and help you continue to learn, grow, and succeed.

Getting ready for your Action Plan discussion

Before you meet with your manager to discuss your action plan you should prepare for the meeting. Your preparation should include the following:

- ◆ Set up a convenient time and place to get together with your manager
- ◆ If you can, provide a copy of your Action Plan to your manager before your discussion
- ◆ Review your Learning Reflections worksheets and your Action Plan to remind yourself of your most important goals and discoveries
- ◆ Think through the points you'll want to be sure to make during the discussion. Jot down notes if this will help you to cover everything you want to
- ◆ Don't wait! Every day that goes past before you use your new training reduces its effectiveness.

During the discussion

The discussion with your manager will involve three primary topics:

- 1. Review the plan**
- 2. Discuss obstacles**
- 3. Formulate a follow-up and support strategy**



Below are some suggestions to make the discussion as productive as possible:

- ◆ Ask for your manager's feedback and opinions
- ◆ Be sure to state your own wishes and ideas firmly
- ◆ Seek to understand your manager's thoughts and ideas
- ◆ Confirm your understanding by summarizing what you have heard
- ◆ Check to be sure your manager has understood you by asking questions and summarizing your own thoughts
- ◆ Don't hesitate to ask for the help you think you'll need to succeed
- ◆ Thank your manager for the time and energy put into this discussion
- ◆ Commit to some realistic and observable measures and milestones that you can use to gauge your progress in applying your learning
- ◆ Set a time and place to review your progress



Post-Training Key Participant Action #4: Seek Continuous Feedback and Support

Implementation of learning to achieve business results requires ongoing feedback and support. Suggestions of ongoing actions that will drive results from learning include:

Feedback is the “breakfast of champions.” Ask for honest and constructive feedback, positive modeling examples, and ongoing coaching to help you successfully implement this training.

- Ask to observe others who might already be good models of the intended behaviors and results
- Work jointly to set performance goals. Refer to and use the Impact Map as a performance guide. Measurement and performance data should be readily available so you can see what is working well and what needs improvement. Ask for help in getting this if not readily available.
- During standing meetings – either individually or with your team be prepared to respond to these kinds of questions:
 - How have I been using this training?
 - What success am I finding?
 - What obstacles am I facing?
 - What support do you I need from my manager/peers to be even more successful?
- Ask for feedback regularly from your manager. Identify how new behaviors might impact other people and the work environment. Discuss successes, and how to make improvements. Demonstrate your commitment to delivering value from the training investment made in you.



Personal Learning Reflections Worksheet

Directions: Complete this worksheet during breaks in the training action and when your training facilitator suggests.

Look over each question below then jot down your current thinking. If you have already completed a worksheet before this reflection break, take a minute and review it to help you focus your thoughts.

1. So far, the most useful thing I've learned is . . .

2. An especially useful application of this learning in my work would be to . . .

3. Do I need to revise my Impact Map? ___ NO ___ YES
If yes, what changes are needed?



Survey of Potential Obstacles to On-The-Job Application of Learning

Circle each item that you think might keep you from using your new learning effectively.

1. I have too many critical priorities right now to have time to apply what I just learned.
2. I don't see ever having the right opportunity to apply what I learned in this course.
3. I am prohibited from doing what was taught in this course.
4. If I tried the things this course taught us, my co-workers would pressure me to stop.
5. The things we learned in this course are not part of my job accountabilities.
6. Our work culture does not support or expect doing what we learned.
7. I would need a lot of coaching to help me succeed at this.
8. I don't see or speak with my supervisor often enough to get any feedback or support.
9. I do not think I learned enough in this course to be able to use it effectively or with confidence.
10. I have personal limitations (e.g., physical) that would prevent me from doing what was taught.
11. If I DID use what we learned in this course, no one would notice or care.
12. If I did NOT use what we learned in this course, no one would notice or care.
13. My personal belief system would not allow me to do what was taught in this course.
14. I know and already use better ways to do the things this course taught us.
15. If I DID use what we learned, there would be no way to tell if it was making a difference.
16. Using what we learned in this course would require information and data resources that we do not have.
17. Using what we learned in this course would require tools or equipment resources that we do not have.
18. There are no incentives to do things the way we learned. If I really did what this course taught, it would not benefit me personally.
19. I don't think doing the things we learned would really work or that they are necessarily the right things to do.
20. Other (describe):