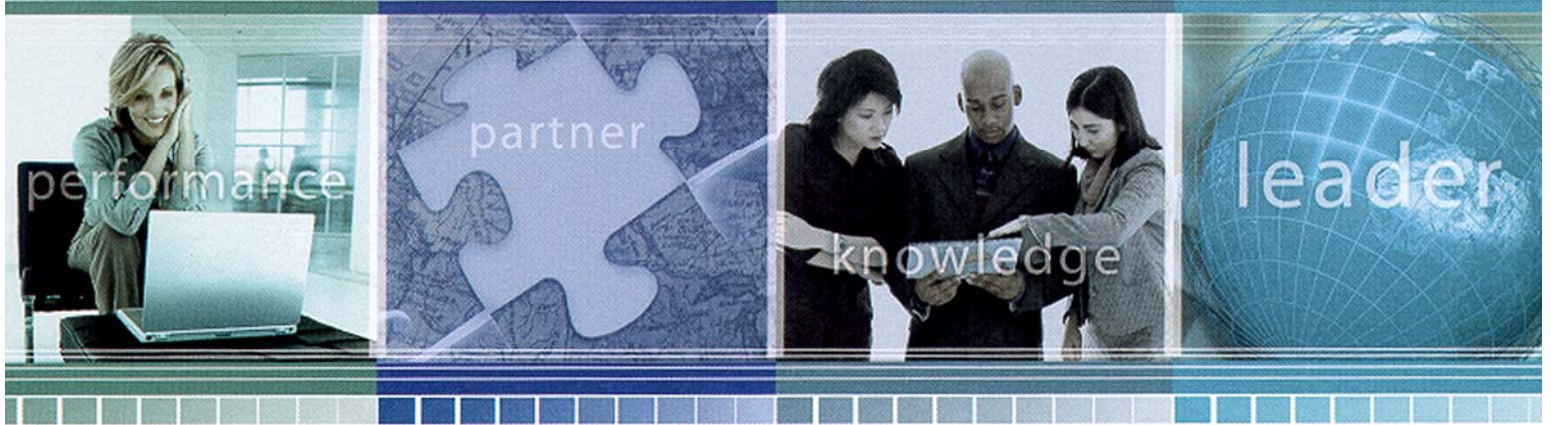


# *Solutions for Learning and Performance*



*Friesen, Kaye and Associates*

## **Training Transfer: A Corporate Strategy for Applying Skills and Knowledge in the Workplace**



Friesen, Kaye and Associates  
Solutions for Learning and Performance

**T** 1-800-FKA-5585  
1-613-829-3412  
**F** 1-613-829-0845  
**E** fka@fka.com

[www.fka.com](http://www.fka.com)



## Transfer of Training

### Defined

The 'transfer of training' is the effective and continuing application, by trainees to their jobs, of the knowledge and skills gained in training. There are two aspects to this full transfer of training. The first is that trainees immediately apply all they learned in training to their jobs at least as well as they could demonstrate those skills at the end of the training program. Second, with practice on the job, the trainees' level of skill will increase.

So how effective has the transfer of training been in the marketplace? Results from the research are not encouraging:

- No more than 20% of training investment actually results in transfer to the job.
- There is a lack of alignment of many training programs with the strategic direction of the company.
- There is a "disconnection" between trainers, trainees and line managers who supervise the trainees.
- There is a neglect of action in the pre-training and post-training phase.
- There is a lack of a training support system to manage the transfer process.

There are several factors known to affect the transfer of training. These include the:

- Individual learner
- Training program
- Work environment
- Trainee's immediate manager/supervisor

This report presents a model and toolkit that can be leveraged by training professionals to ensure the effective transfer of training to the job environment, increasing employee satisfaction, as well as employee effectiveness and efficiency.

# Training Transfer: A Corporate Strategy for Applying Skills and Knowledge in the Workplace

---

## The Transfer Partnership

The Transfer Partnership is made up of *managers* (including executives, supervisors, team leaders, etc.), *trainers* (including all HRD related professionals) and *trainees or learners* who have a strong interest in a particular training initiative and who have agreed to work together to support the full application of the training to the job. The only true requirement for a Transfer Partnership is for all partners to be committed to making the training investment pay off.

## Barriers to Transfer “The Newstrom Nine”

Rank Order	Barrier
1	Lack of reinforcement on the job.
2	Interference from immediate environment (work, time pressures, insufficient authority, ineffective work processes, inadequate equipment and facilities).
3	Nonsupportive organizational culture (no strong philosophical support for the goals of t & d programs).
4	Trainees' perception of impractical training programs.
5	Trainees' perception of irrelevant training content.
6	Trainees' discomfort with change and associated effort (undue discomfort or extra effort).
7	Separation from inspiration or support of the trainer.
8	Trainees' perception of poorly designed/delivered training.
9	Pressure from peers to resist changes (not transfer training to the workplace).
<b>Key: 1 = greatest barrier; 9 = lowest barrier</b>	

Study conducted by John Newstrom (1986), Professor of Human Resource Management, University of Minnesota at Duluth

### Timing of Barriers to Transfer

The table below classifies each of the nine major barriers to transfer into the most likely (indicated by 1), and the second most likely (indicated by 2) time period in which that barrier would arise.

Dominant Timing			Barrier
Before	During	After	
		1	Lack of reinforcement on the job.
	2	1	Interference from immediate (work) environment.
1	2	2	Non supportive organizational culture.
	1		Trainees' perception of impractical training programs.
	1		Trainees' perception of irrelevant training content.
2	2	1	Trainees' discomfort with change and associated effort.
		1	Separation from inspiration or support of the trainer.
	1		Trainees' perception of poorly designed/delivered training.
2		1	Pressure from peers to resist changes.

**Key:** 1 = primary time of impact; 2 = secondary time of impact

### Conclusions Emerging from the Timing of Barriers

1. An organization cannot wait until after a training program is over to address the transfer-of-training problem.
2. The top two barriers occur after the training has been conducted.

# Training Transfer: A Corporate Strategy for Applying Skills and Knowledge in the Workplace

## Source of Barriers to Transfer

Dominant Sources				Barrier
Trainee	Trainer	Manager	Organization*	
2		1	2	Lack of reinforcement on the job.
		2	1	Interference from immediate (work) environment.
			1	Non supportive organizational culture.
2***	1	2		Trainees' perception of impractical training programs.
2***	1	2		Trainees' perception of irrelevant training content.
1	2			Trainees' discomfort with change and associated effort.
2**	2	1		Separation from inspiration or support of the trainer.
2***	1	2	2	Trainees' perception of poorly designed/delivered training.
		2	1	Pressure from peers to resist changes.

**Key:** 1 = primary responsibility; 2 = secondary responsibility

- \* Organization in general means top management, the trainees peer group and the physical factors in the work environment.
- \*\* Trainees may be a secondary barrier source if they are "seduced" into unquestioning acceptance of training content while in the presence of a skillful, expert inspiration trainer, only to discover the spell wears off upon returning to work.
- \*\*\* Although these barriers may be perceptual, they are real to the trainees.

### Conclusions

Managers hold the most significant keys to resolving the problem of transfer of training. Trainers hold primary responsibility for any problems concerning training that is impractical, irrelevant, or poorly designed or delivered. Trainees hold the primary role for accepting the new knowledge and skills.

### Questions to Improve Training Transfer

- Do the participants and their managers know what the training will contribute?
- Did participants and managers help define the direction of the training?
- Do participants want to take the training?
- Do managers want to send their people to the training?
- Do managers know enough about the training to discuss it with participants and to coach them afterwards?
- Are the appropriate support tools and technologies available at participants' work sites?
- Have similar courses in the past been supported by the organization?
- Have senior-level managers done anything to show they support the training and its desired outcomes?
- Does the organization's culture encourage participants to use what they learn in training? If not, what gets in the way?

### Training Transfer Conclusions

To maximize the transfer of training (performance improvement) back on the job:

1. Link training to job performance and business needs.
2. Take a leadership role in communicating the necessity of a transfer partnership.
3. Encourage managers to invest time in briefing trainees prior to training.
4. Provide managers with coaching skills and strategies.
5. Assist managers with post-training follow-up that encourages and coaches new skill usage.
6. Develop and deliver relevant and practical training programs.
7. Ensure work environment factors enhance, not hinder the transfer of training.
8. Make your transfer of training intervention simple.

## Training Transfer: A Corporate Strategy for Applying Skills and Knowledge in the Workplace

---

### Training Transfer Matrix

To maximize the transfer of training, all three stakeholders—managers, trainers and trainees—should be actively involved before, during and after the formal training intervention.

*See the matrix below for sample strategies.*

Role	Time Period		
	Before	During	After
Manager	Communicate that learning is a prime organizational objective.	Encourage full participation by ensuring trainee's job is covered off during the learning program.	Provide opportunities to practice and demonstrate new skills.
Trainer	Provide clear description and pre-course information to trainee and manager.	Ensure good delivery.	Provide follow-up consultation to maximize application
Trainee	Clear up daily activities prior to the learning program.	Participate actively and ask questions.	Discuss performance objectives and action plans with manager.

*For a more complete list of strategies, see the following 9 pages. Select from the strategies to build your organization's personalized training transfer strategy.*

## **Strategies for Managing the Transfer of Training**

<b>Before</b>
<b>Manager Actions:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Understand course and review expectations</li><li>2. Communicate that learning is a prime organizational objective.</li><li>3. Tie achievement to performance evaluation</li><li>4. Build transfer of learning into supervisor performance standards.</li><li>5. Collect baseline performance data.</li><li>6. Involve supervisors and trainees in needs analysis procedures.</li><li>7. Involve trainees in program planning.</li><li>8. Understand the trainees' learning levels and potential inhibiting factors.</li><li>9. Brief trainees on the importance of the learning initiative and on course objectives, content, process, and application to the job.</li><li>10. Relate learning to business goals and objectives.</li><li>11. Brief trainees on why they are going, and what they should expect to accomplish.</li><li>12. Discuss how the learning initiatives will improve their performance.</li><li>13. Point out successful people who have already completed the program and benefited from it.</li><li>14. Discuss trainees' specific needs.</li><li>15. Explain measures and evaluations.</li><li>16. Set budget.</li><li>17. Communicate costs.</li><li>18. Discuss steps that can facilitate transfer - get trainee input.</li><li>19. Review instructional content and materials.</li><li>20. Provide supervisory coaching skills.</li><li>21. Provide time to complete pre-course assignments and ensure they are completed.</li><li>22. Discuss career opportunities and offer rewards and promotional preference to trainees who demonstrate new behaviors.</li><li>23. Select trainees carefully.</li><li>24. Arrange conference with prior trainees.</li><li>25. Send co-workers to learning programs together.</li><li>26. Provide a positive learning environment (timing, location, facilities).</li><li>27. Plan to participate in learning sessions.</li><li>28. Encourage trainee attendance at all sessions.</li><li>29. Develop a supervisor/trainee contract.</li><li>30. Ask the trainees to enjoy.</li><li>31. Relieve trainee of normal duties.</li><li>32. Plan post learning program review.</li><li>33. Give trainee specific issues to explore at course.</li><li>34. Discuss shared ownership of learning as a partial solution to performance improvement.</li></ol>

## Training Transfer: A Corporate Strategy for Applying Skills and Knowledge in the Workplace

### Before

#### Trainer Actions:

35. Set expectations.
36. Be well prepared.
37. Align the learning program with the organization's strategic plan.
38. Ensure the managers and trainees understand the importance of the learning initiative.
39. Utilize a pre-course survey to familiarize yourself with trainees.
40. Encourage pre-course meeting
41. Use previous course evaluations to improve future courses.
42. Involve managers and trainees in analysis and design.
43. Systematically design instruction.
44. Identify post learning program practice opportunities.
45. Develop trainee readiness.
46. Know the target audience and their work environment.
47. Set up a plan to measure current performance and expected future performance.
48. Design a peer coaching component for the program and its follow-up activities.
49. Provide clear description and pre-course information to trainee and manager.
50. Ensure program is relevant - modify if necessary.
51. Ensure all logistical matters have been reviewed.
52. Provide a favorable, well organized learning environment.
53. Verify functionality of equipment.
54. Design job aids to use during the learning program and back on the job.
55. Include application exercises where trainees use data from their workplace.
56. Create an “ideas and application” page to encourage reflection on how the content can be applied.
57. Plan the pace of application exercises so that the pace parallels the reality of the workplace.
58. Include higher-level questions such as application questions when creating tests.
59. Design the learning to include activities where trainees discuss how to apply course content in the workplace.
60. Create a Facilitator Guide that includes:
  - higher-level questions to test for understanding
  - questions that invite trainees to share experiences from the workplace
61. Design ongoing summary activities where learners describe something valuable they have learned, explain how an idea applies to their workplace, identify something they will use immediately on returning to the workplace, etc.
62. Validate that the performance analysis data is accurate, complete and up-to-date.
63. Screen out nice-to-know information; focus on need-to-know.
64. Create realistic examples and case studies.
65. Include application exercises that simulate the work environment.
66. Include workplace stories and examples in the Facilitator Guide.

**Before**

**Trainee Actions:**

67. Provide input into program planning.
68. Actively explore all learning options.
69. Research other related material.
70. Participate in advance activities.
71. Clear up daily activities prior to the learning program.
72. Delegate duties that cannot be taken care of prior to the learning program.
73. Review objectives and expectations with managers.
74. Identify a specific job situation that can be used as an example.
75. Develop questions for trainer.
76. Go to program with clear and open mind.
77. Talk about your upcoming learning program with key managers.
78. Note one's own performance gap.
79. Write personal goals.
80. Clarify location, time and dress code.
81. Arrive at course early, well rested.
82. Read up on the topic, talk to trainer and complete pre-work.
83. Sort out personal responsibilities that could interfere with program.
84. Bring appropriate equipment and materials to the program.
85. Take the course when you need to use it (just in time).
86. Ensure learning is part of your development plan.
87. Prepare personal objectives - why am I going?
88. Ward off negative pre-course feedback.
89. Understand what is expected after the course.
90. Discuss the change with manager to understand expectations.

## Training Transfer: A Corporate Strategy for Applying Skills and Knowledge in the Workplace

---

### During

#### Manager Actions:

91. Become involved in opening or wrap-up.
92. Don't call or page.
93. Prevent interruptions.
94. Encourage full participation by ensuring trainee's job is covered off during the learning program.
95. Communicate supervisory/managerial support for the program.
96. Encourage support of co-workers not attending the learning program and acknowledge extra effort.
97. Treat in-house sessions as if they were off-site.
98. Encourage "all is well at work" message.
99. Recognize trainees' participation.
100. Participate in transfer action planning.
101. Review information on employees in the learning program.
102. Prepare for trainees' return to job.
103. Refresh self as to the learning program being conducted.
104. Plan assessment of transfer of new skills to the job.
105. Get feedback, possibly each day, from trainee to ensure the learning program is pertinent and valuable.
106. Monitor trainees' satisfaction.
107. Monitor trainees' attendance.
108. Remain positive and encouraging during the learning program.
109. Call trainer and ask how trainees are doing.

### During

#### Trainer Actions:

110. Develop application-oriented objectives.
111. Follow course objectives.
112. Manage the unlearning process.
113. Answer the "WIIFM" question.
114. Reinforce importance of task/activity in the process chain (where it fits in).
115. Ensure good delivery.
116. Follow design/lesson plan.
117. Be flexible enough to adjust to newly introduced needs.
118. Adjust to trainees' levels.
119. Provide realistic work-related tasks - relate learning to jobs.
120. Solicit input and give individualized feedback.

*Continues...*

**During**

**Trainer Actions, *continued*:**

121. Provide job performance aids.
122. Reinforce relevance and practical application.
123. Provide "Ideas and Applications" notebooks.
124. Create opportunities for support groups.
125. Reinforce consequences of non-performance.
126. Manage the learning environment.
127. Monitor learning.
128. Maintain positive and encouraging attitude.
129. Ensure all trainees are involved.
130. Use practical examples.
131. Provide continuous evaluation and feedback.
132. Use "parking lot" technique for questions.
133. Help trainees prepare group action plans.
134. Have trainees create individual action plans.
135. Design and conduct relapse prevention sessions.
136. Help trainees create a contract for change with their supervisors.
137. Maintain positive attitude.
138. Be flexible.
139. Break the ice - fears, concerns, apprehensions, needs.
140. Remember adult learning principles.
141. Make the learning "fun".
142. Check for learning transfer and knowledge retention by verbal and written assessments.
143. Continuously confirm learning content and applicability with trainees.
144. Do hands on practice.
145. Be aware of pace.
146. Frequently test for understanding.
147. Communicate course content clearly and concisely.
148. Encourage questions.
149. Allow constant opportunity for feedback.
150. Summarize often.
151. Establish classroom guidelines for trainees to follow.
152. Minimize external disruptions.

## Training Transfer: A Corporate Strategy for Applying Skills and Knowledge in the Workplace

---

### During

#### Trainee Actions:

153. Attend as scheduled
154. Link with a buddy.
155. Pay close attention - listen.
156. Understand.
157. Make notes on key points.
158. Try to personalize learning to meet needs.
159. Think about how to apply learning back on job.
160. Maintain an "Ideas and Applications" notebook.
161. Participate actively and ask questions.
162. Focus on learning and reduce distractions.
163. Collaborate with trainer over agenda.
164. Be open-minded and set aside paradigms where necessary.
165. Form support groups.
166. Create a course outline to pass on at work.
167. Develop plans on how to:
  - apply learning
  - reinforce learning
  - receive feedback
168. Ask/give workplace examples.
169. Anticipate relapse.
170. Create behavioral contracts.
171. Learn/apply/share.
172. Enjoy the learning process – have fun.

**After**

**Manager Actions:**

173. Plan trainees' re-entry.
174. Psychologically support transfer.
175. Assign dedicated performance coaches for a period of time.
176. Discuss potential barriers to skill use.
177. Provide opportunities to practice and demonstrate new skills.
178. Reward trainees for using skills.
179. Make public examples of trainees using skills.
180. Have trainees participate in transfer-related decisions.
181. Reduce job pressures initially.
182. Don't assign high priority tasks with deadlines immediately after the learning program.
183. Debrief the trainer.
184. Schedule a meeting with trainer/trainee.
185. Review benefits and expectations.
186. Discuss what will be done differently.
187. Discuss the trainees' "Ideas and Applications" notebooks.
188. Develop a simple action plan.
189. Provide positive recognition for completing course, i.e., project.
190. Promote and support the learning program.
191. Link the importance of the learning program to the organization's goals and objectives.
192. Give direct monitoring and feedback to trainee:
  - immediately
  - after 6 months
193. Provide role models.
194. Have trainees give short presentation briefs to peers.
195. Send co-workers.
196. Set mutual expectations for improvement.
197. Set specific objectives and performance standards with trainees.
198. Block peer resistance.
199. Ask questions, "If you were spending your own money, would you send someone to this program? If so, whom?"
200. Arrange practice (refresher) sessions.
201. Identify further learning requirements.
202. Provide and support the use of job aids.
203. Support trainee reunions.
204. Provide positive reinforcement.

*Continues...*

## Training Transfer: A Corporate Strategy for Applying Skills and Knowledge in the Workplace

---

### After

#### Manager Actions, *continued*:

205. Publicize successes.
206. Reward performance improvement.
207. Have an informal conversation about course:
  - What did you learn?
  - Would you recommend this course to others?
  - Did you leave with any outstanding questions?
  - Do you feel additional learning opportunities are needed to support this initiative?
  - What goals have you set based on this learning?
  - What applications in your job can this be applied?
  - What other applications in the group could we use this?
  - Could you give me a demonstration?
208. What can I do to help you apply this learning?

### After

#### Trainer Actions:

209. Give out a performance evaluation tool.
210. Do immediate follow-up with trainees and managers back on the job.
211. Offer and provide coaching.
212. Evaluate program to ensure performance improvement.
213. Provide follow-up reminders with Manager and Trainees.
214. Provide remote exercises (modem, e-mail) and/or self study refreshers.
215. Provide follow-up consultation to maximize application.
216. Develop and administer recognition systems.
217. Provide refresher/problem-solving sessions.
218. Check with manager/client to see what is next, (i.e., gap analysis).
219. Be visible and available.
220. Gather additional verbal feedback from performers and supervisors and record.
221. Have summary of course material available.
222. Provide job aids/updates/reference material.
223. Use past trainees to promote and facilitate future classes.
224. Develop a questionnaire for managers.
225. Review and adjust course.

**After**

**Trainee Actions:**

- 226. Practice self-management.
- 227. Practice, practice, practice.
- 228. Write summary of learning.
- 229. Review learning content and learned skills with manager.
- 230. Discuss performance objectives and action plans with manager.
- 231. Schedule follow-up with trainer.
- 232. Provide honest, targeted feedback to trainer.
- 233. Develop job aids.
- 234. Seek manager's support to implement any change of strategies.
- 235. Develop a mentoring relationship.
- 236. Maintain contact with new network.
- 237. Turn learning principles into a project.
- 238. Get others involved and share learning principles.
- 239. Look for behavioral change.
- 240. Present findings to peers.
- 241. Participate in refresher courses.
- 242. Develop short term/long term plans.
- 243. Take advantage of trainer's support and maintain connection.
- 244. Solicit feedback.

Adapted from: Friesen, Kaye and Associates, *Managing the Learning Organization Workshop and Transfer of Training* by Mary L. Broad and John W. Newstrom.



Friesen, Kaye and Associates  
***Solutions for Learning and Performance***