# The Difference between Telling and Training

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London, England (RPRN) 10/03/13 — The most common excuse every senior manager hears from subordinate managers when asking about the specifics of why a goal was not accomplished correctly is “I told them how it needed to be done.” The automatic reply by any senior manager or business owner should be “Did you train them?”

There is a very large gap between telling somebody what needs to be done and training somebody to do it properly. Telling somebody what to do and expecting it to be done correctly implies a skill level at least equal to that of the manager doing the telling. If that were always the case then the manager would be talking to peers and not telling subordinates. While directing tasks and evaluating performance of tasks there are two questions every manager must ask themselves –

1. Does the employee know how to do it and have they been adequately trained to do it correctly?
2. Does the employee have the required resources to do it correctly?

If either of these two basic questions are in doubt then it is the manager that needs to be held accountable rather than the employee. The simpler of the two issues is the matter of resources. They either have the needed tools or they do not. One key resource sometimes overlooked is time. If it is

impossible or implausible for the task to be completed in the time given then no amount of training will correct an issue. This is also the most difficult resource to predict accurately and a clear understanding of the task and skill level of the employee is needed. Sometimes this can be influenced by the training as well – a more carefully trained employee will make a more productive use of time.

Training is more complex because it is an ongoing and never ending process in a productive work environment. If you stop training employees then there is a natural tendency for each employee to begin to make their own minor changes over the course of time in the way they do their job. After a few months numerous people with the same job description are doing things in very different ways. This results in an absence wreaking havoc on production as nobody can simply step in to do the work of the absent worker and in dramatic differences in the quality and efficiency of work product.

Telling somebody to do the work in a specific manner without training until they are comfortable in the process results in them feeling like they are being ordered about. By training the processes you wish to use and listening to constructive feedback and ideas to help processes continue to evolve, consistent and ever more efficient productivity will result. If the worker is confident that ideas for improvement will be heard and considered, they will not be inclined to make their own adlib changes to procedures and all can benefit from the better ideas that result.

When considering training needs, remember training extends beyond just your employees. Most companies use vendors and sub-contractors for portions of their work or business. It is far more productive and builds a stronger working relationship to spend a small amount of time training and updating these people on exactly what you require and to any changes in the way you do things than to simply tell them to do it different and shop for a new source if the result is not satisfactory. For local or regularly visiting outsourcing arranging a meeting when needed (after changes or anytime work or product quality falls). Many companies utilize written or diagrammed cloud based training for more distant purposes and for widely dispersed

employees in the same company even.

**Media Contact Name:** Amellia Hope

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**About the author:**

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