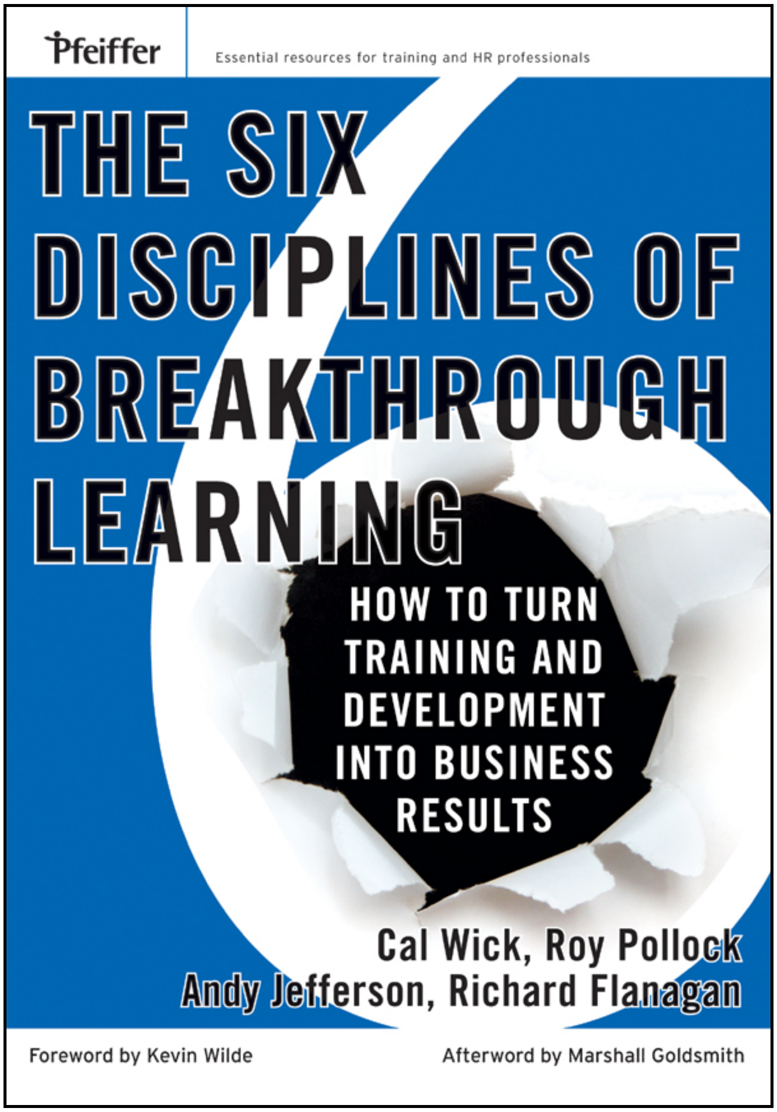
A BRIEF GUIDE TO:



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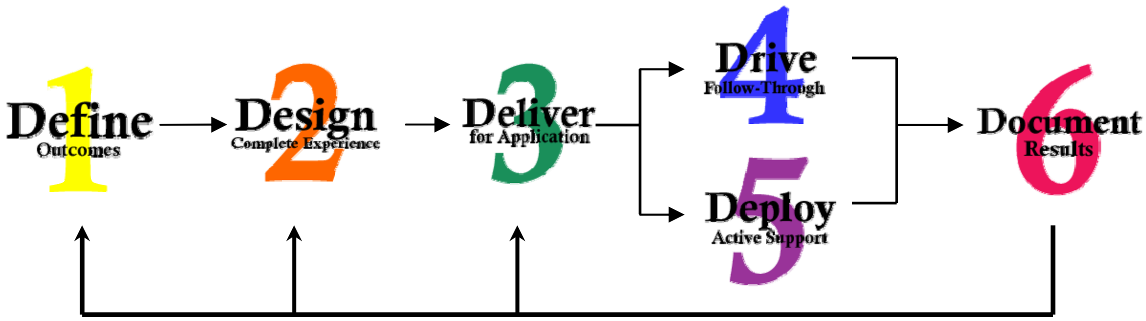
Introduction

This guide provides a brief introduction to the *Six Disciplines of Breakthrough Learning: How to Turn Training and Development into Business Results* by Wick, Pollock, Jefferson, and Flanagan (Pfeiffer, 2006 ISBN: 0787982547).

Companies that are the most efficient at turning training and development into business results practice six disciplines:



The Six Disciplines (6Ds™)

D1: Define outcomes in business terms

Organizations invest in training and development with the expectation of a return in terms of improved business results. Therefore, the first discipline is to rigorously define how the training program will contribute to the organization's mission and productivity. After successfully completing the training, what will learners *do* differently and better that will contribute to their personal and business success?

Defining outcomes *in business terms* is key to successfully practicing this discipline. Traditional learning objectives are not sufficient; they define what will be covered or learned, but not how it will be *used* to benefit the business. The latter is vital to secure management support and to establish, in advance, how success will be measured.

Defining expected workplace outcomes in business terms is a responsibility shared between business managers and the learning organization. Management should not allow programs to proceed unless the benefit to the business can be clearly articulated. Likewise, training and development professionals should not accept the responsibility for conducting a program unless the business benefits are clear to both line and learning managers.

D2: Design the complete experience

Learning and development produces performance improvement only when it is transferred and applied to the participant's work. Maximizing the effectiveness of training and development requires designing and managing all three phases of the process:

- **Phase I:** Preparation in advance of formal instruction, including the development of "learning intentionality" through discussions with supervisors.
- **Phase II:** The structured learning experience which may be virtual, instructor-led, action learning, or any combination thereof.
- **Phase III:** Transfer and application, continued practice, and learning on the job.

Traditionally, the design of training and development interventions focused almost exclusively on Phase II – the structured learning experience. The evidence is clear, however, that transferring learning to the job in a meaningful manner depends as much on external factors – such as managerial support – as it does on the training itself. In other words, a great training program is necessary, but not itself sufficient to deliver the results management wants.

The most effective programs address the *complete* experience. Their design includes meaningful Phase I pre-course preparation that is used and reinforced in Phase II, as well as a system for managing the post-instruction (Phase III) period to ensure that new skills and knowledge are put to work.

D3: Deliver for application

For training and development to pay dividends in terms of improved results, participants must be able to make the connection between what they learn during instruction and how they can apply it to their daily work.

The third discipline practiced by the most effective programs is to *deliver for application.* Material is presented in ways that emphasize application to minimize the learning-doing gap, motivate participants by illustrating the benefits, and prepare them to put their learning to work.

To achieve this goal, each topic must be firmly linked to business needs and realities. Examples and exercises need to be credible and relevant to the participants. Goal setting must be taken seriously. During the course, participants should be encouraged to stop and reflect on how they can use what they just learned to help them be more effective. They should be given adequate time and guidance to set strong goals for post-course learning transfer.

D4: Drive follow-through

Numerous studies have shown that there is a critical “window of opportunity” for practicing new skills and establishing new habits after learning something new. Yet, historically, the immediate post-instruction period has been ignored by program designers. As such, it affords the greatest opportunity for improving learning outcomes.

The fourth discipline of highly effective learning is to put in place systems and processes that drive follow-through, learning transfer, and application.

Participants’ objectives for applying what they have learned must be treated like other business objectives. They must be tracked, measured, and recognized, not put in binders and forgotten. As long as learning objectives are treated as "optional," the return on training investment will be suboptimal.

During the transfer and application phase, participants need to be reminded of their developmental obligations periodically, just as they are reminded of their business objectives. The most successful programs apply processes and systems to ensure periodic reminders to keep learning transfer top of mind. Web-based follow-through management systems such as *Friday5s®, ResultsEngine®,* and *DevelopmentEngine®* have been developed specifically to support the transfer and application of learning and development.

Participants in corporate training and development programs are adult learners in a non-academic setting. To maximize the value of the learning, they need to pause and reflect periodically on their current and prior experiences. "If there is no time for reflection,” Fred Harburg, Fidelity Financial’s Chief Learning officer wrote recently, “there is almost no chance for improvement." A system of follow-through management needs to not only remind participants of their objectives, but also provide a forum for guided reflection to help them draw out and consolidate the lessons of their experiences.

Companies that have implemented post-course follow-through management have seen dramatic results. Participants in programs with follow-through management put forth greater effort, have more discussions with their managers, and make greater progress than those in traditional programs where follow-through was left to individual initiative and chance.

In studies spanning a wide range of programs and industries, Marshall Goldsmith and colleagues have identified a consistent relationship between the degree of follow-up and the degree of improvement. Those who were seen to consistently follow-up on leadership programs were judged to have improved the most. Those who failed to follow-up were rated as unchanged or less effective.

D5: Deploy active support

Follow-through management is most effective when it is linked to on-going support that assists learners in applying new methods and mastering new skills. The fifth discipline of highly effective programs is to ensure adequate sources of support to accelerate transfer and application.

Support from direct supervisors is essential. Well-designed programs ensure that managers know and agree with their direct reports' development objectives and that they are committed to support their achievement.

Nothing undermines a training program more quickly than a manager's indifference or disparagement of new knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Senior management needs to set the tone. Managers at all levels should understand that it is imperative to endorse the training and make clear the expectation that the new learning be applied on the job.

Other important sources of support include instructors, peers, and coaches (internal or external), as well as printed or online guides to application such as *GuideMe*®.

Historically, the instructor's or facilitator's role was limited to the formal instruction period. This is unfortunate, because they are both knowledgeable and respected and, therefore, ideally suited to provide advice during the critical transfer period. To do so, however, they must have both the tools and the time to do so effectively.

D6: Document results

The investment in training and development should be treated just like any other corporate investment. That is, the results should be documented and the program's impact assessed to ensure that the investment is producing an adequate return for the stakeholders.

The results of training and development are more difficult to quantify than some other sorts of investments, but that is no excuse. Relevant outcomes need to be quantified to justify continued investment. Documenting results is also essential to drive the continuous improvement needed to stay competitive. Only by comparing the actual results to the expected results is it possible to improve subsequent cycles.

Evidence of activity (number of courses offered, number of people trained) should not be mistaken for evidence of productivity. Increasing the number of people trained is of value only if the training actually improves results. If no one uses what they learned in the training, then training even more people is a waste of resources.

Finally, learning organizations will benefit by more effectively marketing their results to their key stakeholders – management, shareholders, future participants, and fellow learning professionals.

Implementing the 6Ds™

D1: Define outcomes in business terms

Make certain that the objectives of each training and development initiative are defined in terms that describe the benefit they will provide *to the business*. Work closely with business leaders to agree on the desired outcomes and measures of success.

1. Interview business leaders regarding their needs and expectations for post-program results.
2. Review the business and strategic plans; identify where learning can add the most value.
3. Establish a joint business-learning steering committee to define outcomes, set priorities, and ensure tight linkage between business needs and training initiatives.
4. Agree with business leaders on the definition of success as part of the initial design.
5. Create an impact map that shows the links between the business needs, the required knowledge and skills, and the proposed learning experiences.

D2: Design the complete experience

Think holistically and systemically about the learning experience. Include all the critical factors that contribute to successful transfer and application, including preparation (Phase I) and post-instructional follow-through management and support (Phase III).

1. Use the 6D Transfer and Application Scorecard (see p. 7) to identify opportunities for improvement.
2. Ensure that the program design includes plans for optimizing all three phases of learning (preparation, instruction, and application).
3. Encourage learner-manager discussions prior to the program.
4. Optimize the post-course environment to support transfer and application. Pay particular attention to the role of, and support from, the participants' managers.
5. Redefine the facilitator's role to include post-workshop responsibilities and results.
6. "Staple yourself to the learner." As a final check, walk through all the planned activities from the learner's point of view to ensure that they are comprehensive and mutually reinforcing.

D3: Deliver for application

Minimize the learning-doing gap by presenting material in a way that emphasizes and illustrates its application. Set the expectation for transfer and stress the need for application throughout.

1. Be explicit about the business needs the program is designed to address.
2. Make the relevance of each topic clear.
3. Answer the WIIFM ("what's in it for me?") question for participants.
4. Introduce the goal setting process early in the program and provide time after each major topic for the learners to reflect and plan on how they can use what they just learned.
5. Provide examples of high-quality goals for transfer and application.
6. Have the learners practice new skills (and behaviors) in simulations that mimic the business environment.
7. Provide time and encouragement for learners to link new insights to their prior experiences, skills, and knowledge.
8. Ensure adequate time, direction, and oversight for setting transfer and application goals.

D4: Drive follow-through

Treat learning/development objectives like business objectives; ensure that they are well crafted, agreed to by management, followed-up on, and rewarded.

1. Underscore importance of execution in all communications before, during, and after the program.
2. Communicate to managers the importance of their role and suggestions for how they can maximize the return on the training investment.
3. Send a copy of each participant's goals for applying learning to his/her manager.
4. Remind participants periodically of their objectives and the need to practice what they learned.
5. Set clear timelines for reporting progress and results.
6. Use a follow-through management system to track participation and progress during the transfer and application period.
7. Identify success cases and recognize superior performance to encourage others.

D5: Deploy active support

Because learning only produces value when it is applied to the work of the company, provide the support that learners need to most effectively transfer and apply their new knowledge and skills.

1. Engage managers in the process; inform them of their role, provide relevant information about the program, and what they can do to maximize payback to their department.
2. Have instructors check in with the class during the transfer period; budget time for providing on-going support and hold them accountable for results.
3. Provide coaches; track and monitor quality and quantity of coaching.
4. Promote collaboration through learning buddies, teams, shared accountability, on-line collaboration, etc.
5. Provide on-line content that reinforces course principles.
6. Create critical mass of people trained in new approach; rapidly roll out program to enough people that they can support one another as they attempt to implement new ideas and processes.

D6: Document results

Companies invest in learning and development with the expectation of improved performance and results. Learning and development departments must document the results of their programs in order to justify continued investment and support continuous improvement.

1. Define the desired results in business terms prior to launching the program; agree with business managers on the definition of workplace "success."
2. Clarify expected behavior changes and business outcomes; share these with participants.
3. Collect the most relevant data from the most reliable sources based on program objectives; do not focus solely on financial or ROI outcomes.
4. Analyze the results conservatively; discount the results for factors other than training.
5. Compare actual results to those expected.
6. Identify success cases. Use to illustrate program value in reports and to future participants. Analyze for factors that favor success and use to improve future iterations.
7. Conduct a "lessons learned" session with the design and execution team. What went well and should be augmented? What is not working and needs to be changed? Use the information to improve subsequent cycles.
8. Market the results to past and future participants and management.