

HOW TO...

DESIGN TRAINING THAT ACCELERATES LEARNING

Accelerated Learning is the term used for 'brain-friendly' way of training people quickly AND so that learning sticks. It is a principle that brings together key points from neuroscience and learning theory that encourages working WITH the brain and our natural tendencies, rather than against them.

Accelerated Learning unlocks much of our potential for learning that tends to be untapped by traditional teaching methods. It does this by actively involving the whole person, using physical activity, creativity, music, images, colour, and other methods designed to get people deeply involved in their own learning. It also recognises that people learn in different ways, at different rates and that we do not all have the same abilities and preferences.

There are a number of core principles of accelerated learning that will help you to create training events that are brain-friendly and help people to learn quickly...

1. **Learning Involves the Whole Mind and Body.** Learning is not all merely "head" learning and rational thought: Knowing is not the same as believing or doing. Make learning personal, emotional and sensory as well as logical. This way it is more likely to be remembered and acted upon.
2. **Desire Drives Learning** – when people feel that learning something will benefit them, they are much more inspired to get involved. Exploring 'what's in it for me' (WIIFM) helps to get learners in the right frame of mind.
3. **Provide a Context.** Helping people to understand the 'big picture' before going into detail helps them to position things in their mind. It can also help to deflect lots of questions about why the training is being run.
4. **Learning is Creation, Not Consumption.** Knowledge is not something a learner absorbs, but something a learner creates i.e. learning should be ACTIVE not passive. When people learn for themselves, they create their own neural networks, understand more and are more committed to applying that learning.
5. **Build on Existing Knowledge.** Recognise and use the knowledge and experience in the room. Give people credit for what they already know and can do, and use this as a starting point. There's little point in starting from scratch when you don't need to. It isn't motivating and lengthens the learning unnecessarily.

6. **Collaboration Aids Learning.** All good learning has a social base. We often learn more by interacting with peers than we learn by any other means. Competition between learners slows learning. Cooperation among learners speeds it up. A genuine learning community is always better for learning than a collection of isolated individuals.
7. **Learning Takes Place on Many Levels Simultaneously.** Learning is not a matter of absorbing one little thing at a time in linear fashion, but absorbing many things at once. Good learning engages people on many levels simultaneously and engages multiple senses at once.
8. **Learning Comes from Application (With Feedback).** People learn best in context. Things learned in isolation are hard to remember and soon forgotten. We learn how to swim by swimming, how to manage by managing, how to sing by singing, and how to sell by selling. The real and the concrete are far better teachers than the hypothetical and the abstract.
9. **Positive Emotions Greatly Improve Learning.** Feelings determine both the quality and quantity of one's learning. Negative feelings inhibit learning. Positive feelings accelerate it. Learning that is stressful, painful, and dreary can't compare with learning that is joyful, relaxed, and engaging. Focussing on the Positive i.e. what people should do, what they do well is far more effective than drawing attention to the negative (what they shouldn't do, what they are doing wrong).
10. **A picture paints a thousand words.** The human nervous system is more of an image processor than a word processor. Concrete images are much easier to grasp and retain than written or verbal information.
11. **Create Hooks to Hang the Learning On.** Using mnemonics, acronyms, stories, mind-maps and other tools to make the training easy to recall help the learners greatly.
12. **Create a Learning Environment that encourages curiosity, openness and support.** The room should be set up with the delegates in mind as much as possible, It's not about you showcasing your skills, but about the delegates being able to learn.