

Employee Ownership Report

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Business Literacy Training: Getting to the "Ah-Ha" Through Maps

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One of the rewarding parts of training is the "ah ha," the moment when a participant in a training class "gets it." In business literacy training, "getting it" is not just nodding in agreement, or the correct answer to a question. It is when the participant understands what the concept means, why it is important in the organization, and how he or she makes an impact. Our goal is to elicit as many "ah ha's" as possible.

One of the tools we use in our business literacy training programs that always results in "ah ha's" is maps.

What Are Maps?

Maps used for learning are visual depictions of processes, flows, activities, relationships, roles, and goals. Maps include both the big picture and the details all in one place. These are not process maps, road maps, or flow charts. They are custom illustrations that depict the learning content in a graphically appealing and organizationally specific way.

Why Are They Effective?

In lecture style training, the learning is usually linear – presenting one element, then the next, and then the next. Yet what adults need for the learning to be stored into long-term memory are the framework, the details, and the connect-

tion to the learner. Maps accelerate the learning process because these elements are presented together in visual form. The learner can then invest his time and energy delving into the deeper relationships and meanings, and, in business literacy training, his fit and impact.

Research has shown that participants remember only 20% of what they hear (i.e. lecture). But participants remember 90% if they are actively involved in the learning. One of the first questions we hear when a map is reviewed is, "where am I?" That tells us they are immediately involved in the map, looking for how they fit and how they make a difference (which, by the way, is one of the goals of business literacy training).

How Do You Use Maps?

Maps can be used in a variety of ways:

➤ The centerpiece of a training program. Add facilitated exercises and discussions to the map, and you have a training program.



➤ One element of a traditional training program. Use the map to teach one element within a larger program.

➤ A game. Create rules, cards, and other game elements to have fun.

➤ In meetings. Use the map to review concepts, discuss roles, and introduce goals.

➤ As reference tools. Hang the map on the wall and reference it in one-on-one discussions.

➤ As displays. Share your map at every opportunity.

What Do Maps Depict?

Maps are creative learning tools. The sky is the limit. We've developed maps depicting strategy, business processes, management responsibilities, and departmental relationships. We've also mapped money flow and the profit and loss statement. We've even created a "day in the life" map. Think about a process, a goal, or relationships and create a picture!

Sample: The Donut Company

The Donut Company (see visual included with this article) is one example of the customized maps developed by the Business Literacy Institute (called Money Maps™). The management of a bakery wanted to teach all employees

about the profit and loss statement. The map is a visual depiction of that statement.

The map begins with the sales person making a sale of \$100 to Jam'n Java House. The question is, where does that \$100 go? The map illustrates that each step in the donut-making process costs money, and those dollars are subtracted from the original \$100. As you move along the road, the dollar stack shrinks. For example, the stack shrinks by \$23 for materials used in the process (flour, etc.) and by \$10 for delivery. At the end of the road, after paying taxes, The Donut Company has \$4 left (which, by the way, was a surprise to most of the company's employees.)

This map allowed bakery employees to see where the dollars go, rather than having to interpret a report that was difficult and intimidating to read.

Recommendations for Creating Your Own Map

1. Customize it to your organization, culture, and people.
2. Triple check that you haven't excluded anyone (they will notice).
3. Include big picture elements, such as mission, vision, or goals.
4. Don't include "everything" in the map (allow learners to make the connections and delve deeper into the issues).
5. Use it in a variety of settings.