

CREATING A 'BRAIN-CENTRIC' WORKPLACE

Ways to motivate your staff to embrace lifelong learning

In the last segment I touched on the many reasons why training fails in organization. Here we are going to look at some ways to make your organization 'brain-centric' by giving your staff the opportunity to engage in lifelong learning.

For a start it is important to realize the difference between adult learning and child learning. Child learning or pedagogy is motivated by external influences such as a teacher who will teach the child on what is to be done and why. Adult learning or andragogy is of a different paradigm. Unlike children, adult learning is self directed learning. The adult learner has to be self-motivated and must find a reason that is valid enough for him or her to learn a new skill or acquire new knowledge. This is where the trouble lies. Many adult learners sometimes fail to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Sometimes this turns out to be an oncoming train. By this I mean that adult learners feel the need for instant gratification of the knowledge they acquire in that it should be useful and beneficial for them.

When you teach a child mathematics, he/she may acquire the formula to solve the problem. However, the child might not understand the context in which the formula might be useful. Think on how you learnt the times table in school. It was rote learning. Many of us did not see the need or the necessity to learn it but we learnt it anyway. It was only later in life that this proved useful. The motivation to learn as a child was an external one. This motivation came in the form of a reward for learning or possibly a punishment for getting the answer wrong. However, applying this method of imparting knowledge to an adult might not be the right way to do it.

In organization if you want to get your staff to embrace lifelong learning you need to create a brain centric environment that allows for staff to embrace lifelong learning. Adults learn best when the environment is a non-threatening one that acknowledges positive reinforcement.