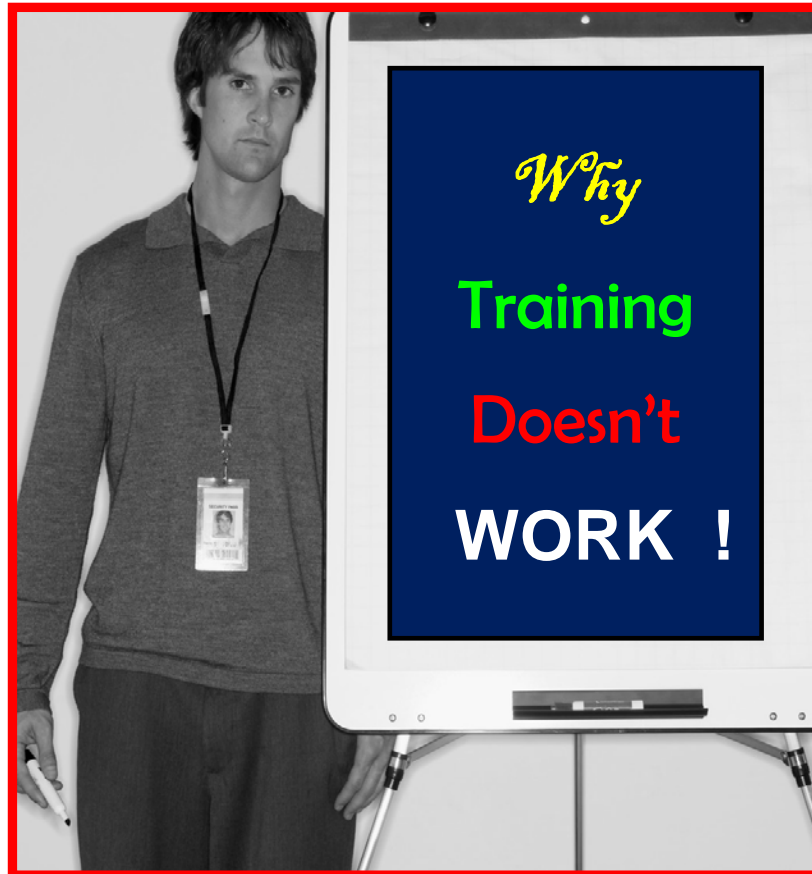# Will Doherty

Improving Business Performance

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. " B.Franklin.

Performance metrics = (Qn x Qa) / t x cost

Why

Training

Doesn't

WORK !

A *Free* Guide for Senior HR Managers :

"Linking Performance Management with Business Strategy".

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March 2008

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Introduction :

The aim of this paper is to help HR Directors and Chief Executives improve the return on their training investment. The logic and rationale of this paper is to move away from the traditional models and costly short term fads and to focus on one objective – Improving Business Performance. This paper will explore and discuss several key areas :

1. Relationship between training and business performance.

2. Consequence and causes of poor training needs analysis or TNA.

3. The lack of ownership and accountability shown by line management

4. Trainer inability to use Powerpoint effectively.

5. Recommendations – Making changes in your HRD strategy.

The paper aims to create debate and reaction as well as give you some common sense ideas that you can adopt to become common practice in your organisation. It will include references where you can make contact with the experts who have the experience and can help you - "Make it Happen !"

About the Author : Will Doherty

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Described as energetic, resourceful and highly creative – Will has over 25 years experience in learning and development. Working with businesses across the world, his career includes supporting many large blue chip global organisations - Recent projects include Hydro power & renewable energy markets, Police and criminal justice sector, Voluntary sector, Banking & Finance, Telcomm's, O&G, IT, UK Manufacturing. Will is a CIPD Lecturer in L&D and a Corporate Member of the Chartered Management Institute He is confident and capable of designing and delivering a performance improvement strategy for your business – "Why not find out ?" Give Will a challenge. Phone +44(0) 1625 530 266 - for a "No Obligation" confidential chat .

Q : Why Train Your Staff ?

Training costs time and money – I am sure you will agree it is not just the direct cost of training that concerns you most but the indirect cost of your people being away from their work and their customers that causes you concern.

Q : Can you afford to train ?

Q : Can you afford not to ?

Training in simple terms is about getting a person, a team, or a company to perform to a standard. Performance is what counts ! It is what people get hired for, get paid for and if they do not perform it t is what they are fired for !   Performance can be measured / expressed / defined using this simple equation :

Performance = Quantity of work done x Quantity / time taken x cost.

1. Current Thinking : "Inputs"

The text books, universities and personnel institutes focus training activity on changing or improving a persons level of : Knowledge, Skill, their Attitude and Habits. These are frequently called "inputs." (1995 Rummler Brache).

Similar to baking a cake – the focus is on the ingredients and raw materials that some how will inter-relate and perform to required standard. If we cut to the chase – despite all their action plans, promises of coaching and best intentions – no sustainable improvement occurs ! Worse still you still get an invoice from the training provider who promised you so much but as your managers comments – it has added no long term value to your business ! I call this "*Left to Right Development"* . (Often referred as the "Vacuum View" of performance)

INPUTS		OUTPUTS
Skills / Knowledge	**=**	**Performance**

I know of many training companies who say they can change or influence peoples Attitudes and Habits – I would recommend caution - this can and should only be done by a responsible qualified therapist or counsellor who understands and is trained in human psychology.

This paper advocates your L&D team place a stronger focus on the "Outputs" – identifying and addressing performance metrics, processes and expectation gaps that affect the business. In practice it means developing people to address their performance level - work from Right to Left output to input – review their performance output and work back through their processes and interactions to make measured improvements. This approach is more measurable because it relies on empirical, observable and measurable data. This will add more value to your business as the return on effort / investment is more efficient and immediate.

The L&D team will need to change their attention from HR dated theory and generic models to focus on real performance problems, processes and business issues that are hurting your customers, affecting profitability and causing friction and frustration amongst the team. They will need to come up with and deliver bespoke solutions that are new, creative and innovative.

In summary the words trainer and training are defunct – we want / need performance improvement consultants who can problem solve.

2. Training Needs Analysis - Inadequate analysis

When a performance issue arises, in many businesses training is the knee jerk reactive solution that is prescribed when in fact it is not needed.

During my research I came across a comprehensive diagram that summarises the nine performance variables that can influence and affect your organisations performance. These variables should form basis and approach how your L&D team can carry out an effective needs analysis or rather a "performance improvement review !" (See appendix 1 at back of paper). The key point in this diagram is the little part knowledge and skills plays in the bigger picture of performance improvement.

Q : Why do companies spend / waste so much money on training - addressing knowledge and skills issues (inputs) when the other performance areas (Outputs) need addressing ?

Traditional Approach to Training

Common practice involves a line manager contacting HR for a training course because an employee is not performing to the standard required. The response is to send them on a programme without probing deeper as to why and analysing the need in greater detail. What the training and line manager fail to realise is the limitation of training as a performance improver.

L&D fail to identify with the context of the poor performance, the quantitative metrics and expected standards required. (See key questions recommended by *Rummler & Brache "Improving Performance" p202 Ideal Needs Analysis).

The most comprehensive approach is to work back from your customer – where the actions of all the team and their processes result in an "Output". This is where the most damage can happen if we get it wrong and where the smallest adjustments can make the biggest impact. In Appendix 2 I have permission to show you a copy of Ideal Performance focussed training function blueprint

Hint Tip : Review appendix 1 and 2 and buy the book.*

3. Line Managers Responsibility : (Prof Charles Jennings 2006)

The key to the process is not to look at any problem that a manager brings to you as a training problem.

1) Avoid 'solutioneering'. Define who's involved and affected by this particular business performance problem.

2) Identify with the manager "What's happening now?" Get accurate data.

3) What does the manager want to happen; what would success look like?

4) Work with whoever's involved - usually the manager of the business unit, to actually calculate the cost of that gap.

This is a very interesting exercise, very often managers and according to Jennings managers will push back and saying they can't do it, but in fact Prof Jennings has never been in a situation where he has not been able to identify what the cost of poor performance is. The outcome is usually a figure which is far in excess of what people think initially**.**

There is an issue in terms of managers understanding that a key part of their role is to develop their people and that any problem around the developing of their people is their problem and it's not the training manager's problem.

The learning and development or training manager needs to understand that they're not simply running a fulfilling service, based around the conspiracy of convenience. Traditional training departments were reactive, they did run fulfilment services and they engaged in this conspiracy of convenience with managers. The conspiracy is when the manager comes to the training manager and says, 'I've got a problem, my people need training'. The training manager says, 'Fine, we'll develop a training programme'. So, the training manager develops a training programme, delivers that training programme, no-one measures it. The business manager is happy because he or she feels that they've fulfilled the requirement that they had - which was the training problem. The training manager feels happy because he or she has done what their job is all about - i.e. have delivered training. And because no-one measures it, nothing necessarily happens, but everyone's happy. So it really is a

conspiracy but measurement before and after the workshop shines a light on both sides of that conspiracy. As soon as you carry out effective measurement it does make the process transparent and really gets to the bottom of what value has been created.

UK Spend on Management Training ?

According to the market research company Keynote expenditure on management training in the UK is set to rise from £17.9 Billion to £19.46 Billion by 2008 ! (PM Oct p66).   However …..the point of this statistic is :

"90% of all training is a waste of time and money !" (Detterman & Sternberg 1993)

Detterman's research identified three possible reasons -

1. Training is not transferred to the job – either for cultural reasons (no interest or reward from the organisation for people to change their behaviour and apply the learning) or structural reasons (barriers to or lack of opportunity to use new skills).

2. Training design and or delivery is poor and therefore not seen as useful or relevant.

3. The participants are not willing, able or "needy" to learn.

Knowing that training is not offering best value the UK government has decided by 2010 to close down The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), with an annual budget exceeding £11bn to improve UK skills. The government announced its intentions in a White Paper which underlines details of the transfer of £7bn from " L&S Training" to "Education" – i.e local authorities to help colleges and sixth forms deliver the reforms needed to raise the education and training leaving age to 18.

4. Trainer's Incompetence

Building on point (2) identified in the research by Detterman & Sternberg I would like to explain the term "Training Incompetence " and provide you with several solutions to address this problem.

Recently I met the team from a communications and presentations consultancy called M62. Led by Nick Oulton – He is an expert in producing and coaching other senior managers how to use Power Point as an effective communication tool. - I guarantee Nick's experience and his range of solutions will impress you and his workshop could improve your training departments credibility, taking your L&D team into the 21st Century.

Hint / Tip : Give him a call or follow the link to M62 in the appendix.

Q : Does your external training provider rely on Powerpoint ?

Q : Do your internal trainers, managers or sales teams use Powerpoint ?

Q : How many training providers have been shown how to professionally use power

point as an effective communication tool ? (Creating attention and retention)

Many of your trainers will have attended IT training workshops that demonstrate the features and functionality of the software but how many have been coached how to use it as an effective communication tool that supports communication and learning psychology ?

As Nick states in his workshop - Microsoft estimate there are 450 Million power point users in the world today, at this moment, today, the corporate world will be giving 30 million presentations. Each presentation on average will have 30 slides, 28 of these slides will have a heading followed by numerous bullet points full of text.

A review of these presentations reveals 4 levels of " Trainer Competence "

Level 1 : Trainer puts their slide up and just reads it out.

This is death by Powerpoint in the extreme – It is dull & boring, insulting to the intelligence of the audience and makes the role of the trainer redundant. The information could be delivered by a robot or sent out in advance.The audiences brain disengages, Nick calls this audience abuse and yet trainers in some outsourced consultancies do this on a daily basis – worse still - you pay them for it ! These trainers very often have not researched the needs of your audience – they don't care or worse still their training manager has demanded this approach to ensure STANDARDISATION and CONSISTENCY. This is commonplace with large training companies using sub contracted trainers.

Level 2 : Trainer puts their slide up and add libs – providing their own explanation around the words on the screen.

The slide acts as a cue card for the trainer – it gives them a list of what they want to say in the order they want to say. Not effective for audience but helps the trainer. For some trainers this is the norm and they are taught this way of presenting on their professional course.

Level 3 : Likes to put an image in bottom right corner – Commonly referred to it as clip art, **C**rass, **L**ittle, **I**nserted, **P**icture, **A**lways, **R**ubbish & **T**rite

Why put in clip art ? They know it is a boring slide tried so they try to give it some interest – result : We now have a dull boring slide with dull boring clip art in it.

Level 4 : "I've got a digital camera and I can use photo shop."

"This is attractive rubbish but still rubbish." It has not solved problem of putting text up in front of brain and reading it out for them. And yet they cannot remember the relevant details and they loose attention / interest within seconds.

A key feature in Nick's approach and his presentation is the use of established learning psychology – this includes techniques such as "Visual Cognitive Dissonance !"(VCD). He also explains the importance of using bite sized chunks for short term memory and how to link visual and auditory modalities that will increase access to the delegates long term memory. This approach increases trainer control enabling them to focus the delegates minds on the information that is most important and the information you want them to remember. This has powerful applications when training sales executives how to present so they can influence your customers buying habits.

Advice – sit in on one of your trainers presentations and see what level is being demonstrated. To avoid these habits contact Nick and learn how to professionally use Powerpoint as a tool that aids and supports the presentation rather than take it over.In addition he will train your team how to increase the audience's attention and their levels of retention.

Evaluation : Challenge Kirkpatrick's Model

The most popular and well established model for evaluating a training programme Uses Donald Kirkpatrick' s 4 levels of evaluation :

1. Reaction of student - what they thought and felt about the training
2. Learning - the resulting increase in knowledge or capability
3. Behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application
4. Results - the effects on the business or environment resulting from the trainee's performance

Hint / Tip : This model is out of date – it places the wrong emphasis on the performance improvement process. Cut to the chase - There is only one indicator that counts : Level 4.

Last Sunday I read with interest the Sunday Times survey, sponsored by the CIPD, it identified the league table for the top 100 Companies to work for. Training was a criteria and the best companies for training were identified on p48. 10 companies were identified with a % score for training being of "Great Benefit".

The score was based on the qualitative feedback from employees within the businesses saying – " it was a benefit for them personally", "It is Outstanding", "Great opportunities to learn and grow !" What is lacking is any quantitative measurement or direct comment how this training has helped improve the business performance. What annoyed me was this article was sponsored by the CIPD – the lead body in training. Process management, problem solving and performance measurement are key metrics and these are the new tools of the trade for a performance improvement consultant of the future.

In some organisations the training department, manager and trainers are held to ransom by their Kirkpatrick evaluation scores, as are some outsourced training providers. Challenge this paradigm, find out what happens after the course !

Learning and development can be a painful process and sometimes you have to be directive and challenging. There will be resistance, negativity and denial – not because of the trainers approach or personality , not because of the training material or how it was presented – but because the delegates line manager failed to explain clearly why they needed to go on the training. Some people you will never please and it is not a training need they have but a performance management and behaviour adjustment on the part of the delegate that is required.

Training follow up :

It is not as important what happens on the training course as what happens before and after. From my experience I find 9/10 it is the line manager that sends the delegate who fails the training process – not the trainer :

- Inadequate pre course objectives set and agreed with the delegate.
- Unrealistic expectations that training will address performance issues.
- Abdicating performance management to the training department.
- No reason explanation given to delegate why they are going.
- No explanation what to expect during the course.
- No liaison with the trainer / facilitator confirming objectives.
- No ownership / commitment by the delegate for completing post course objectives.

- No post course encouragement from line manager to delegate to make change.
- No understanding of the limitations of training in creating behavioural change.
- No cost analysis – time and cost of training : Benefit / improvement expected.
- No time line : By this date you will demonstrate these skills / behaviour.
- No sanctions / penalty for not attempting to apply the learning.

Hint / tip :

If the training adds limited or no measured value i.e it is not visibly supporting the performance of the business and is costing you – STOP It ! Focus on the line manager who should be :

1. Managing their teams performance.
2. Developing their potential.
3. Turning their potential into measured - value adding activity.

Conclusions : ("Why training doesn't Work" 1998 Nanette Miner)

Your training might be failing for any one of these reasons:-

1. Training is applied for the wrong reasons

2. The training has been created by the wrong people

3. The Paulette Principle "everyone rises to his/her level of incompetence."

4. No Reinforcement Back on the Job

5. People are Made to Feel as Though They are Being "Fixed"

6. Be Willing to Accept that Some People are Untrainable

Recommendations :

- Move out of the 20th Century - Stop using the words "trainer" and "training needs analysis". It associates and assumes training is "Universal" solution to performance problems.

- Recruit / retrain your L&D Team to become performance improvement consultants.

- Move your learning and development or training department away from a fulfilment model and develop their consultative skills to be able to be a business partner. Equip them with the new skills required (Problem solving, management consulting) and understand the models that would work for them.

- Get the L&D Manager to stop being transactional - become more transformational.

- Line managers must do the job they are paid to do & take on their responsibility to develop their people – not outsource to L&D.

- Ownership and team work. Individuals are responsible for their own level of ability – they need to take the initiative and address their performance gaps before someone else does.

- Develop a culture of sharing best practice, openness and honest feedback. Challenge poor performance – do not tolerate mediocrity.

- Set high standards for all the team – hold team reviews and ensure people have accountability for their actions.Make sure you have a leadership model that uses a situational approach – treating everyone as an individual that links everyone's effort with the core business strategy.

- Stop "Death by Powerpoint" at all levels in the business – (Go to M62 web page)

- Focus your evaluation on Kirkpatrick Level 4. Find out the real cost of the problem and spend time and resources proportionately.

Remember :

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. " anon.

Send me an E.mail outlining what you plan to do differently – Starting tomorrow......

If you have found this paper of benefit - For a free copy of my other papers : –

- "How to Set up a Leadership Programme",
- "Copyright Theft Explained "
- "How to Carry out a TNA"
- "Future of L&D 2008-10"
- " LINK Coaching Model"   How to effectively Coach.

Send me an e.mail :   william.doherty@ntlworld.com.

Training's Role in the 9 Performance Variables

	Goals	Design	Management
Organisation Level	**Organisation Goals** • Has the organisation's strategy and direction been articulated and communicated – and understood ? • Does this strategy make sense in terms of the external threats and opportunities and the internal strengths and weaknesses? • Given this strategy, have the required outputs of the organisation and the level of performance expected from each output been determined and communicated ?	**Organisation Design** • Are all relevant functions in place ? • Are all functions necessary ? • Is the current flow of inputs and outputs between functions appropriate ? • Does the formal organisation structure support the strategy and enhance the efficiency of the system ?	**Organisation Management** • Have appropriate functions goals been set ? • Is relevant performance measured ? • Are resources appropriately allocated ? • Are the interfaces between functions being managed ?
Process Level	**Process Goals** • Are goals for key processes linked to customer / organisation requirements ?	**Process Design** • Is this the most efficient and effective process for accomplishing the process goals ?	**Process Management** • Have appropriate process sub goals been set ? • Is process performance managed ? • Are sufficient resources allocated to each resource ? • Are the interfaces between process steps being managed ?
Job / Performer Level	**Job Goals** • Are job outputs and standards linked to process requirements (which are in turn linked to customer and organisation requirements).	**Job Design** • Are process requirements reflected in the appropriate jobs ? • Are job steps in appropriate sequence ? • Have supportive policies and procedures been developed? • Is the job environment ergonomically sound ?	**Job Management** • Do the performers understand the job goals (outputs they are expected to produce and standards they are expected to meet ?) • Do the performers have sufficient resources, clear signals and priorities and a logical job design ? • Are the performers rewarded for achieving the job goals ? • Do the performers know if they are achieving the job goals ? • ***Do the performers have the necessary knowledge / skill to achieve the job goals ?*** •If the performers were in an environment in which the five questions above were answered yes – would they have the physical, mental and emotional capacity to achieve the job goals ?

Creating a "Performance Based" Training Function

"Reproduced with permission : Rummler & Brache "

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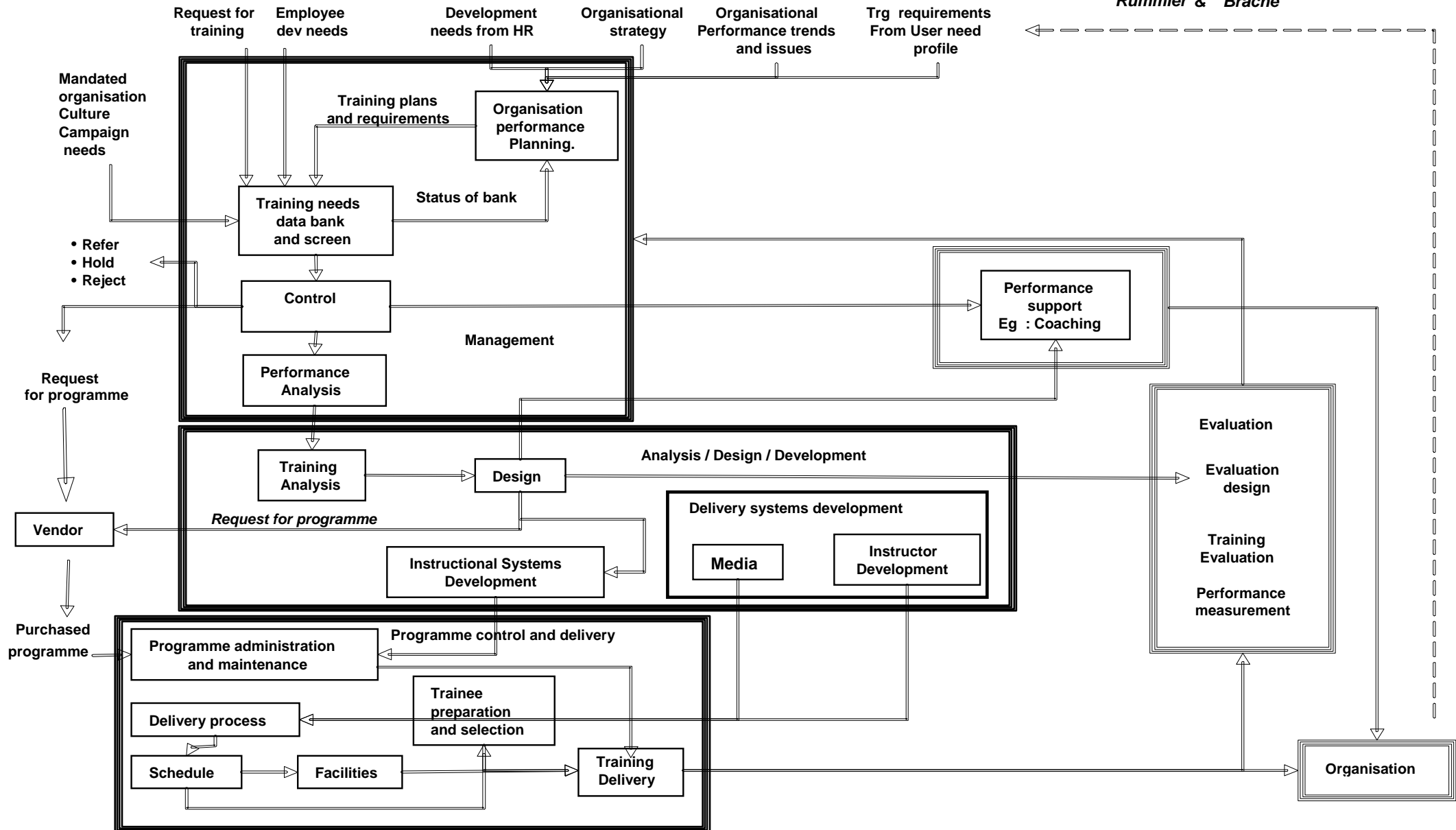
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Sponsored by the CIPD.

Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to work for.   Best for Training ? (p48) 16.3.08

Useful Web Sites :

http://www.performconsult.co.uk/index.htm

http://www.kineo.com/audio-transcripts/kineo-interview-with-charles-jennings.html

http://www.m62.net/SEFS/ID.690/SEFE/ViewItem.asp