

Blending in Action

▶ Introduction

This is a practical look at blending in action. The study focused on the application of ASC's integrated learning model by providing outline results of the programme evaluation exercise and a diary of the programme over twelve months.

ABB Vetco Gray is the world's leading supplier of systems, products and services for onshore and offshore oil and gas drilling and production.

Over the last 98 years, ABB Vetco Gray has built a reputation of quality, innovation, performance, and customer service that is unequalled in the Oil and Gas industry. This commitment continues today with experienced customer support personnel in 60 locations around the world. With its head office at Houston in the USA, ABB Vetco Gray has major production facilities in the United States, Brazil, Scotland and Singapore. Major research and development centres are located in Houston and Aberdeen. Supporting manufacturing and Aftermarket facilities are located in Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, England, Indonesia, Nigeria, Scotland, the USA and Venezuela.

▶ Requirement

A group of key people required advanced time management who in the past did not implement new skills from previously attended Time Management training courses using a traditional approach.

▶ The Approach

- ▶ One to one Introductions.
- ▶ Three 'off-the-shelf' e-learning courses on Time Management.
- ▶ One full day workshop.
- ▶ Access to Time Management resources on the ASC Web site.
- ▶ Mentoring by phone and e-mail.
- ▶ Support group meetings.
- ▶ Quarterly reviews with mentor.
- ▶ Text messaging
- ▶ Focus cards

A control group attended a full day workshop to compare the measurement of outcomes.

▶ Evaluation / Conclusion

Did the programme provide a Sustaining Model? Yes. Can the Sustaining Model be improved? Yes. There is evidence of sustained development when compared with the control group. Participants who received mentoring gave evidence of full or partial integration with working methods and retention of knowledge 12 months after the initial workshop. One control group participant did not complete the evaluation questionnaire as he could not recall any content from the workshops whereas all participants on the sustained model could.

Expectations were met for most people who had defined their own correct level of expectation. It is of key importance that the expected outcomes of the programme are fully communicated to participants at the start of the programme. ASC has introduced one-to-one needs analysis to define more detailed agreed measures rather than relying on input from existing needs analysis methods such as Appraisals or Performance Development Reviews. While these do provide a good general definition of personal needs they do not provide the detail required for deeper evaluation and measurement methods to be used. Detailed measures communicated to the entire group during a briefing one-week before the start of a programme are now used throughout the mentoring period to make necessary adjustments to a participants development.

▶ Example changes noted during the programme

- ▶ “Much more aware of time wasters, both people interrupting and of non-value added activity.”
- ▶ “On a daily basis set myself targets and goals. Review progress during and at the end of each day. Reprioritise as required in the light of any unplanned major events which may arise. Taking more positive control of ad-hoc events that can impact my ability to achieve goals. “
- ▶ “I now ask should I be doing this - does it benefit me?”
- ▶ “I think more about what I am trying to achieve and how to achieve it. I also think about delegation of tasks and the training of my people so that they do not waste time. I use tools when I needs them e.g. To do lists.”
- ▶ “I started to protect my time more from interruptions thereby allowing me more concentrated time on projects.”
- ▶ “Greater focus on Prioritisation of action points.”
- ▶ “A better understanding and use of Time Management tools.”
- ▶ “More delegation to subordinates.”

▶ **Sample comments noted from colleagues or family that indicated a change in behaviour**

- ▶ “That I now take time for them.”
- ▶ “That I guard my time more.”
- ▶ “More relaxed about time (less uptight). Having a more balanced approach to work tasks and solving problems.”

▶ **Control Group Sample Comments**

- ▶ Any change in behaviour - None. But changes noted following the workshop were prioritising work and formalising the use of my diary.
- ▶ “Main benefit expected but not met - Dealing with unrealistic demands from others, figuring out how to get resource commitment when people report to others.”

▶ **Conclusion**

The blended approach produced sustainable outcomes and enabled deliverables to be achieved at each point in the programme. In addition, the ability to address new needs as they arise for the individual and the organisations is a major benefit in bringing agility to the learning and development process.

Time of interventions is key in gaining the most for learning and development elements being used. Our findings concluded the optimum timing for interventions being scheduled enabling a route to automating the administration of the follow-up process.

We would expect others to adopt a similar approach in the future to guarantee the effective return on training budgets..



If you would like further information on developing high performing teams in your organisation contact Alan Sneddon on 01236 737 897.