

THE COACH'S PLAYBOOK

MOTIVATING
YOUR TEAM TO TRAIN

CBTnuets

WHEN TEAMS ARE EMPOWERED THROUGH TRAINING

*GREAT THINGS
CAN HAPPEN.*

Working in IT is hard. But working with a team that is taking intentional steps to improve their skills, knowledge, and abilities makes IT a whole lot easier. Teams that train can make great things happen across your organization.

The Coach's Playbook is a compilation of tips and tricks to help motivate your team to train to become great and make your organization even better.

MAKE A PLAN

Online training rocks. You just can't beat the convenience. But that convenience can be a double-edged sword. Learners sometimes talk themselves out of training in order to attack more "urgent" and less flexible tasks. Here's a tried-and-true trick for making training happen while still maintaining the adaptability.

MAKE A STUDY PLAN!

Create study plans that are structured on a weekly basis, using a realistic estimate of how much time you think your team members can and should spend training. Using a weekly plan allows for a lot of flexibility, but also provides enough structure that, if learners are committed to the plan, training and progress toward certification will happen.

*"Don't learn it just to
learn it. Learn it to
know it."*

- KEITH BARKER
CBT NUGGETS TRAINER



INCENTIVIZE TRAINING

Incentivizing the professional development of your team members is a powerful motivator.

INCENTIVES CAN:

- **DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF TRAINING.**
- **IMPROVE TEAM ATTITUDES.**
- **BE AN EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT TOOL.**
- **INCREASE SHORT-TERM SUCCESS RATES.**

When incentivising training, consider cost and sustainability. Be aware that incentives can send mixed messages about the goals of training, and they may come to be perceived as entitlements.

As a manager, it's important to carefully weigh the pros and cons of incentive programs before making a formal decision. What are the needs of your team? What are the needs of your organization?

INCENTIVES DON'T HAVE TO BE COLD, HARD CASH. CONSIDER THESE OTHER MOTIVATIONAL REWARDS:



WORK-SPONSORED TRAVEL



PUBLIC RECOGNITION



TECH GADGETS & GEAR



ADDITIONAL TIME OFF

IMPLEMENT THE 4 Ps

To get the most out of their training, and to be prepared on exam day, your team needs to set aside time to do nothing but train. Training can be challenging when learners have other commitments (family, working out, volunteer work, etc.), so encourage your team to implement the 4 Ps:

PLAN.

Put training on the calendar. Schedule training in order to plan effectively to accommodate your team's training needs.

PRESENCE.

Discourage your team from checking email, playing on Facebook, etc. while training. Be present!

PRIORITY.

Nothing should take priority over training—it is as important as anything else on your team's calendar.

PERSISTENCE.

Regularly check your team's training progress to ensure they push through challenges and obstacles.

COMMIT

The single most important part of training success is commitment. If your team is committed to their training and achieving successful outcomes, you will be amazed at what they can accomplish. Increase your team's level of commitment by:

GOING PUBLIC WITH TRAINING GOALS.

If learners share their goals with others, they make a verbal commitment to achieve those goals. Encourage learners to consider inviting some of their friends or colleagues to check in with them about how their training is progressing.

PUTTING TRAINING ON THE CALENDAR.

It's such a simple, yet, powerful step. Identify time when your team can train, then ask them to commit to that time.

KEEPING YOUR PURPOSE IN MIND.

Never forget why your team is training. Maybe it's for job security, personal development, or a better paycheck; whatever the reason, keep the purpose in mind to help them get through times when training gets tough.

REWARDING TRAINING ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

Find a reward that is meaningful to the team and/or individuals, and use that as motivation for them to complete their training. Maybe it's a weekend away, a fancy dinner, or even a new tech gadget they've been wanting; whatever it may be, use the reward to keep them going.

“To really succeed at something and enjoy that journey to success, you need to be excited and passionate about the goal and the journey.”

- ANTHONY SEQUEIRA
CBT NUGGETS TRAINER



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

What happens when motivation dries up and obstacles rob your team of their energy for training? Help your team apply the concepts they are learning by:

Encouraging them to **BUILD A HOME LAB**.

SETTING UP A SIMULATOR / EMULATOR for your team to use in their training.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES for your team members to teach others what they've learned. When learners have to teach a concept, they must know it deeply.

BONUS TIP!

PAUSING FOR APPLICATION. Encourage your team to pause video Nuggets to immediately apply what they are learning.

*"The more you know
something, the more
you love it."*

- JEREMY CIOARA
CBT NUGGETS TRAINER



BEWARE OF BURNOUT

Burnout is a very real challenge that managers deal with on a regular basis. And burnout is an issue for training too.

Overcoming burnout can be a daunting task. Help your team by:

ENCOURAGING THEM TO TAKE A BREAK.

If your team is already burned out, they may need a break. Taking a break allows for mental recovery, gives learners a chance to physically rest, and refuel socially. Just make sure to set a time limit for the training break.

ADJUSTING THE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT.

Making subtle changes to the environment where learners train can help reenergize their training efforts. Add a roaming office gnome to the training space, motivational images, etc. Or, change the location entirely! Encourage learners to train outside, in a coffee shop, or even in the server room. Simple adjustments can stimulate learners in profound ways!

MIXING IT UP.

Learners can get burned out on training if they are focused exclusively on one topic for too long. Encourage your team members to mix up their training by exploring another topic (if only briefly) to help them get re-energized.

BEWARE OF BURNOUT

(CONTINUED)

What's better than overcoming burnout? Preventing it entirely!
Help your team avoid training fatigue by:

SHARING GOALS WITH YOUR TEAM MEMBERS.

Encourage your team members to share their training goals with friends and colleagues. Extra accountability and support can help learners get through the hard times of training!

WRITING IT DOWN.

Ask your team, "Why are you training? Deep down, why is this important to you?" Encourage team members to write down their answers to these questions and keep them visible! Put them on a sticky note they can put on their computer monitors. Write them on an index card and pin it to their cubicle walls. Help your team keep their purpose in mind and in sight!

CREATING REWARDS.

Create a reward that your team can work toward—and be excited about! It might be a bonus, extra time off, or a chance to buy that new tech gadget the team has been dying to get. Whatever it might be, reward success in achieving training goals.

MAKE THE TIME

We are busy people. The pace of life is increasing, with no sign of slowing down anytime soon! So how do we find time to train when we lead such busy lives?

WAKE UP EARLIER.

Never a popular suggestion, but as a manager, you probably know all too well that it really is the most effective way to create more time in the day.

USE THE CALENDAR.

Encourage your team to treat every appointment on their calendars with equal importance—including their training. Once training is on their calendars, expect them to really commit to it. Don't allow your team to reschedule or postpone their training under any circumstances.

BREAK TRAINING INTO 10-MINUTE INCREMENTS.

Most of us can find a way to make 10, 20, or even 30 minutes work, but an hour can just seem overwhelming. So encourage your team to attack their training in smaller segments in order to boost progress.

GET CREATIVE WITH WHERE YOU TRAIN.

Your team doesn't have to relegate their training to their desks or homes. The commute, in the waiting room at a dentist appointment, or waiting on kids to finish up their sports practices are precious minutes that can be used for training!

PROVIDE DOWNTIME FOR TRAINING.

The reality is that training makes your team better at their jobs. Work with your team to provide an occasional half-day off to train.

“Be patient. You’re not going to learn IT overnight.”

-GARTH SCHULTE
CBT NUGGETS TRAINER



EMBRACE FAILURE

Many learners struggle with the question, “What if I fail?” Failure is one of the most compelling fears we deal with as humans.

As a manager, you have the opportunity to model a healthy attitude toward failure. The nature of IT is learning; allow your team to learn from failure, apply those lessons, and improve. Help learners overcome their fears of failure by encouraging them to:

LET GO OF THE IDEA THAT FAILURE IS BAD.

We’ve all experienced failure, but far too few of us have discovered how to embrace failures as learning opportunities that can help us grow. Let go of the idea that failure is inherently bad. Choose to look at it as a chance to better understand what more can be learned.

MAKE UP THEIR MIND TO PASS THE EXAM.

No matter how long it takes, no matter if they don’t pass on their first attempt, help your team to decide here and now that they *will* pass their exams. And you will support them until they do!

TRUST THEIR TRAINING!

Training works. If it didn’t, certifications wouldn’t exist and they certainly wouldn’t be an expectation within this industry! Recognize that training is a process. Your team may feel overwhelmed at the beginning—and maybe even in the middle—but in the end, they’ll be ready! Commit to their preparation and they will be prepared!

BONUS TIP!

TRAIN IN THE NOW.

Don’t let your team worry about tomorrow’s training or next week’s exam. Help them be fully present and engaged in the training they’re doing right now! Empower them to put in the effort to learn all that they can today and the exams will take care of themselves.

“If you’re afraid to change, you’re destined to fail.”

-SHAWN POWERS
CBT NUGGETS TRAINER



CREATE A TRAINING CULTURE

Managers have the power and opportunity to create a culture that values training! In order to encourage your team to embrace training and enhance their contributions to your work, take steps to create an empowering training environment by:

PROVIDING A COMFORTABLE PHYSICAL SPACE.

Designate a conference room where training exclusively happens for a couple of hours each day. Let your team members sign up for their preferred time for training.

DESIGNATING ALLOTTED TIME FOR LEARNING.

Establish clear expectations for your team as to how much time they can—and should—train each week.

DRAFTING TRAINING POLICIES.

Put your expectations in writing! Create policies that clearly explain time, location, and incentives programs (as appropriate).

CELEBRATING SUCCESS.

When your team members achieve their training goals, be intentional about celebrating them and their achievements. Whether it be a recognition program, gift cards, bonuses, or simply verbal recognition at the next team meeting, take steps to celebrate success in order to repeat it!

BONUS CONTENT!

DEAL WITH DISTRACTIONS

Most learners are training in addition to working full time, meeting personal/family obligations and responsibilities, and more. With all this on their plates, your team may be struggling to deal with the distractions that prevent them from training. Help them deal with distractions by encouraging them to:

CHANGE LOCATIONS.

If your team trains at work, give them training locations away from their desks! Find a conference room or an empty desk they can use. If they're at their desks, others expect that they are there to work—not train.

UNPLUG.

The temptation to check their email “real quick” is sometimes overwhelming. So, shut down that temptation by encouraging your team members to turn off their phones so they don't get texts or email notifications during the brief time they've set aside for training.

PARTNER UP FOR STUDY BUDDIES.

Create opportunities for your team to find someone with similar training goals with whom they can train. Sometimes, the added accountability of having another person in the room, focused, and committed to training can increase a learner's focus.

FOCUS!

Having “too many distractions” is sometimes code for “I can't focus!” Take steps to help your team improve their ability to focus. Consider using methods or tools such as Focus Booster or other apps to help them focus on their training.

CBTnuggets

www.cbtnuggets.com