

ZT

ZUKUNFT-TRAINING
DAS ONLINE-MAGAZIN FÜR AUS- UND WEITERBILDUNG

A close-up portrait of a man with a shaved head and glasses, wearing a dark suit jacket. He is holding three whiteboard markers (black, red, and grey) in his hands, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

ORGANISATIONS NEED A NEW WAY OF LEARNING

INSTIGATING A LEARNING REVOLUTION

ALBRECHT KRESSE

SPECIAL EDITION



ORGANISATIONS NEED A NEW WAY OF LEARNING

■ A CALL FOR A LEARNING REVOLUTION ■

Training that is tailored to meet the specific requirements of a company is becoming increasingly important in order to help staff to gain important skills. The concept of education offers the decisive tool for developing such competencies. What lies behind this concept, which promises nothing less than a revolutionary learning experience?

by Albrecht Kresse

Florian Müller looks up at the clock. 12:15 and 23 seconds. The hands are crawling round the clock face. Dr. Rippenbalder is busy clicking through diagrams for yet another project management model. Florian feels a tickle in his throat. The seminar is as dry as the Gobi Desert. His boss wanted to help him out by sending him. Open Project Management Training didn't sound bad, and with an expert like Dr. Rippenbalder, author of several hefty volumes on the subject to boot. "Top quality for top performance" it said on the online platform on which Florian had registered for the seminar. Even the course description

had sounded exciting. But now he was drowning in a deluge of concepts. Learning facts had never been his strong point. "Professional development is like school," he thinks to himself, sinking a little deeper into his chair.

One would like to call out to him: "Florian! Hang in there! You're not alone!" But every day, thousands of students experience something similar. They sit around in dreary seminars and training courses, asking themselves why learning has to be so taxing. Their employers are equally frustrated – why do they invest so much when they get so little back? Every year, Ger-

“We need a revolution in learning methods within the organisation.”

man firms spend around 30 billion Euros on professional development. And it's not just Florian who suspects that most of the money that is spent simply goes down the drain; because it's invested in the wrong staff, the wrong topics, and the wrong methods and courses. What it boils down to is that we spend far too little time thinking about the quality of learning, about didactics, about training architecture – in other words, about the basic requirements required for effective learning. This is a huge mistake, and yet, this is where the greatest potential for designing more effective and more efficient professional and personal development lies. We need a revolution when it comes to learning within organisations; a move towards new frameworks and formats that enthuse our staff, supporting them as they put what they have learned into practice, and helping them to take responsibility for their own personal development.

It's the didactics, silly!

Only around 10 per cent of what we learn is ever put into practice – not exactly a ringing endorsement for the training industry. This poor rate of transfer demonstrates how ineffective training delivery is. The mistake lies in incorrect didactics. The mere word is redolent of blackboards, exam stress and cramming. Before you know it, all those mental images that have been ruining the learning experience for people like Florian for so long, have developed.

But didactics is far from being a dreary topic. It can be fresh and full of life, if only you want it to be. With the right didactics, even dry subject matter can be communicated in such a way that learning is fun, and far more of what is learnt is evident in the participants' everyday work.

Broadly speaking, didactics is concerned with the basic theoretical and

“Edutainment – a concept which combines the elements of education, training and entertainment.”

practical framework for teaching. Which learning objectives will we pursue; which methods and means will be used; what does the subject matter look like? And above all, who is the target audience and what prior knowledge do they have? What are their peculiarities and needs? Good didactics is oriented around people, and not the other way round.

The need for fresh didactic concepts grows with every passing year. While older audiences may still be content with formal teaching from the front, having never known anything else, younger employees tend rather to get frustrated with antiquated learning rituals. Generations X and Y grew up with

video games, iPods and smartphones. They want to learn playfully and above all independently. Florian himself is an enthusiastic gamer at home. Perhaps he'd be better served with some kind of smart project management learning app ... ?

One thing is certain – old-fashioned chalkboard didactics no longer enthuse brighter employees and only result in a rather dreary and strenuous attainment of learning objectives. But is there really such a thing as perfect didactics? Well, there's more than one way to skin a cat. In my organisation, we're following our own path with edutainment – a concept which brings together the elements of education, training and entertainment. It's about communicating the right amount of the right content to the right audience at the right time, using the

right methods (education), offering participants a maximum of interaction and professional feedback (training) and making them enthusiastic about a given topic with the right measure of entertainment and positive emotions (entertainment). The goal of edutainment is for people within organisations to learn more effectively in a shorter time. Numerous successful projects and positive client feedback have confirmed that edutainment works.

Selling products or generating solutions

For me, training architecture is the central issue for any successful action,

because the basis for effective skills transfer is laid during the preparation phase. This is where the trainer's view of him or herself has to change, from seeing themselves, not as a product salesperson but rather as someone who generates solutions. It's about carefully identifying the customer's needs and then coming up with a solution that the customer most likely wouldn't have found on their own. An enquiry about a specific training course is all well and good. But is this really what the customer needs? Are we really scratching where it's itching? The trainer needs to ask questions, to do some research and to form their own picture of the situation. Individuals with a range of skills are required for the subsequent development of the solution: course architects, consultants, e-learning experts, graphic designers, content creators and others. More is achieved if tasks are shared intelligently, because a great trainer isn't automatically great at coming up with course designs and formats. And we shouldn't just let any old Dr. Rippenbalder loose on innocent students. So, networks are the future, and the trainer as a one-man band will soon be a thing of the past.

The challenge for organisations, then, is to increasingly invest in professional training architecture and format development. Many of them will have rules, standards, guidelines and processes for practically everything, except training. Therefore, they cheerfully bring in a whole range of service-providers, each of which works according to a completely different philosophy. That makes about as much sense as using two incompatible software tools within one single department. In 20 years of professional experience, I've only ever met one customer who could explain his didactic process to me and who had me adapt my training format to conform to his concept.

You can learn how to learn

If learning is the most important metacompetence of the future, then we need professional offers for the concept of learning how to learn. To give an example: all the knowledge in the world is available on the web for free and yet many managers still spend two to four hours a day googling mindlessly all over the place. Instead of developing expensive web-based training for conducting performance appraisals, all the necessary videos and content could be gathered from the net in three minutes flat. The only prerequisite is that you not only find the relevant content, but also that the appropriate metacompetencies are available, with which this content can be ingested in a useful manner. All of this has to do with self-directed learning competence which, sadly, is not often encouraged by those responsible for personnel development in a conscious and structured manner.



Albrecht Kresse

Visual Summarizer

Albrecht Kresse is an expert, speaker and author on innovative personnel development. As the founder and director of the edutrainment company, he develops tailor-made solutions, together with his team, for medium-sized German companies and international firms that are world leaders in their respective fields. Numerous enthusiastic customers and a range of awards attest to the effectiveness of the edutrainment principle that is introduced in Mr. Kresse's new book, "Edutrainment. Better, faster, easier learning within organisations." He has been awarded the International German Training Prize and the German Professional Development Prize for his work. He is also an expert member of "Club 55".

www.edutrainment.com

“Better,
faster,
easier learning
is possible
with approaches
such as
edutrainment.”

Among other forms of training, we also need media competence training – how do I use search engines or sites such as YouTube for learning languages or soft skills or for acquiring specialist knowledge? Video-based, self-directed learning has become a popular trend. Higher bandwidths now mean it even works on your mobile. The trendsetter here is the Pink University. Stefan Frädrieh is following a different path with his platform “GEDANKENTanken” (fuelling up with thoughts). Experts post their content here in the form of videos, and licensed trainers - functioning more as learning facilitators - use them for their work with trainees.

As far as the skills for self-directed learning are concerned, an enormous need exists within companies, while at the same time it also represents a huge potential saving for businesses. So before you follow Google’s example, by simply giving your staff half a day a week for self-directed learning, why not first take a moment to communicate how this time can actually be put to good use.

Conclusion

It’s true; we need new and more effective didactics together with better frameworks and formats for people development. Better, faster and easier learning is possible with approaches such as edutrainment. In my opinion, this is a learning revolution, because it means freeing ourselves from rigid, dry learning settings and repetitive ways of thinking and working. So let’s welcome the input of training architecture. In future it will take centre-stage - to the benefit of trainers, who will be able to position themselves as genuine learning experts. The Florian Müllers of this world stand to profit hugely from the fostering of self-directed learning competencies. Finally they’ll be able to learn in a way that is compatible with their own personal learning style. I’m pleased for Florian. He’s got a special place in my heart – in my new book about edutrainment, he and three other characters (a people development executive, a trainer and a business manager) make for exceptionally vivid practical relevance.

by Albrecht Kresse

BETTER, FASTER, EASIER LEARNING WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

THE NEW LEARNING CONCEPT FOR ORGANISATIONS
WHO WANT TO TAKE THEIR PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT FORWARDS EFFECTIVELY:
EDUTRAINMENT COMBINES EDUCATION, TRAINING AND
ENTERTAINMENT SO THAT YOUR STAFF CAN LEARN BETTER AND FASTER.



IN THE PRACTICE

Alongside the edutrainment projects that are highlighted and which have already been implemented successfully within organisations, the role of practical relevance takes centre-stage. Four characters accompany you throughout the entire book – a people development executive, a marketing manager, a trainer and a departmental head of sales.



ENTERTAINMENT

Alongside Albrecht Kresse's provocative and humorous style, you'll enjoy an attractive magazine-style format with visualisations and photos as well as fascinating models and sketches. You won't be able to put it down.



THEORY

Get to know the edutrainment method and discover how training for adults can really lead to success. Together with insights into the history of learning and expert interviews, we shed plenty of light on the future of learning



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An Interview

with
Albrecht Kresse

Mr Kresse, in your lectures, books and articles you are an advocate of the mature self-directed learner. Aren't you afraid that your business model will implode?

I learnt from Sven G. Jánoszy that genuine innovation is about consistently destroying your own business model. So I'm aware of the danger, but I think that there will always be enough for people like me to do. I design people development programmes, prepare tools and methods for sharing knowledge and provide the necessary skills for self-directed learning. It'll be a few years before trainers become extinct.

You personally are an advocate of the approach known as edutainment. What does this concept mean for you, and what makes edutainment different?

My fundamental thesis is that when learning is successful, it always has to do with the right mix of education, training and entertainment. The appropriate mix has to be identified afresh every time. So we've developed a set of methods that are applicable to all topics and fields. The fun, the entertainment isn't an end in itself, but rather a kind of neural doping that we all need in order to develop the energy and endurance we require, beyond our natural comfort zone.

In your book, you talk in detail about the concept of training architecture. Why is this issue so important to you?

A former colleague of mine once had a business with the beautiful name of "The Learning Architects". In my opinion, that's exactly what this is all about – developing various forms of learning architecture. That's where people like me come into the picture. In this industry, customers generally feel that the trainer and the content are all that matter, and they are not particularly concerned with the course design. It's a bit like saying, "Beethoven was just a composer." If we want to raise the quality of our design, we have to change that attitude. It makes complete sense that training architecture is more expensive than pure training delivery. A good framework can also be provided for trainers who've been bought by the organisation at a low cost. We are increasingly involved in the production of concepts that we no longer deliver ourselves. That's exactly the kind of task sharing that I'm talking about.

In the edutainment company, we're currently building our own Edutainment Lab. This is where we test exercises and training formats – our collaboration with higher education institutions is just starting. I recently visited a European Sales Centre in Austria, where students were filmed with infrared cameras during role plays. There's





also an ECG and there are psychologists sitting behind a one-way mirror, who evaluate the conversation immediately. I went out and bought an infrared camera and skin resistance meter immediately. Together with experts and colleagues, we now want to examine ways in which we can create a mobile solution for our sales training from this extremely costly Sales Centre. That's something that I enjoy, something that motivates me.

Where do you see the greatest field for potential for change?

Even though I come from the field of communications and sales myself, I see the greatest potential in new didactics for technical training. This is the area where the old motto still dominates, "The top expert becomes the trainer" – often with regrettable side effects such as an abundance of poorly designed slides. It's easier to measure effectiveness in technical professional development. Just imagine you could reduce the training time on a new machine from three months to one month, just by changing the didactic architecture. A good design would be well worth EUR 100,000 and the costs would be recouped in no time.

And what advice do you have for students who find themselves on an old-fashioned course?

I'm constantly amazed by the capacity for endurance of many people who sit through these kinds of sessions. Last year, I left two courses before the end, although they were fine in terms of content. However, in my view, they were extremely unsatisfactory in terms of the methods used. We should all give ourselves permission to do the same, and, of course, to offer the trainer or speaker some honest but friendly feedback after the fact. That's why you have seminars, of course. The second option is to put good courses and topics together for yourself. For me, that's edutainment for self-directed learners: how can I access the right content? How can I not simply study a topic in my everyday life, but also try it out in practice? Who will be able to give me feedback? And, most importantly, how can I design my own learning so that it's fun for me personally?

Recently on holiday, I met a lady who had just celebrated her 101st birthday. She was still playing tennis at 99. After breaking her femur during a game of tennis, the porous bone was no longer stable enough to heal, and it had to be replaced with titanium. "They won't let me play tennis anymore," she complained. As we spoke, our conversation covered the whole time-span from the invention of the telephone in her youth to the perma-use of smartphones by young people in the train; she would actually prefer to speak to them herself. The next day, she informed me that she wanted to set off to an adult education event on environmental protection. An impressive example of enjoying lifelong learning.

Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Kresse.

Where others only train, edutraining creates enthusiasm for your own skill development and creates networks for active learning with autonomous self-learners.

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