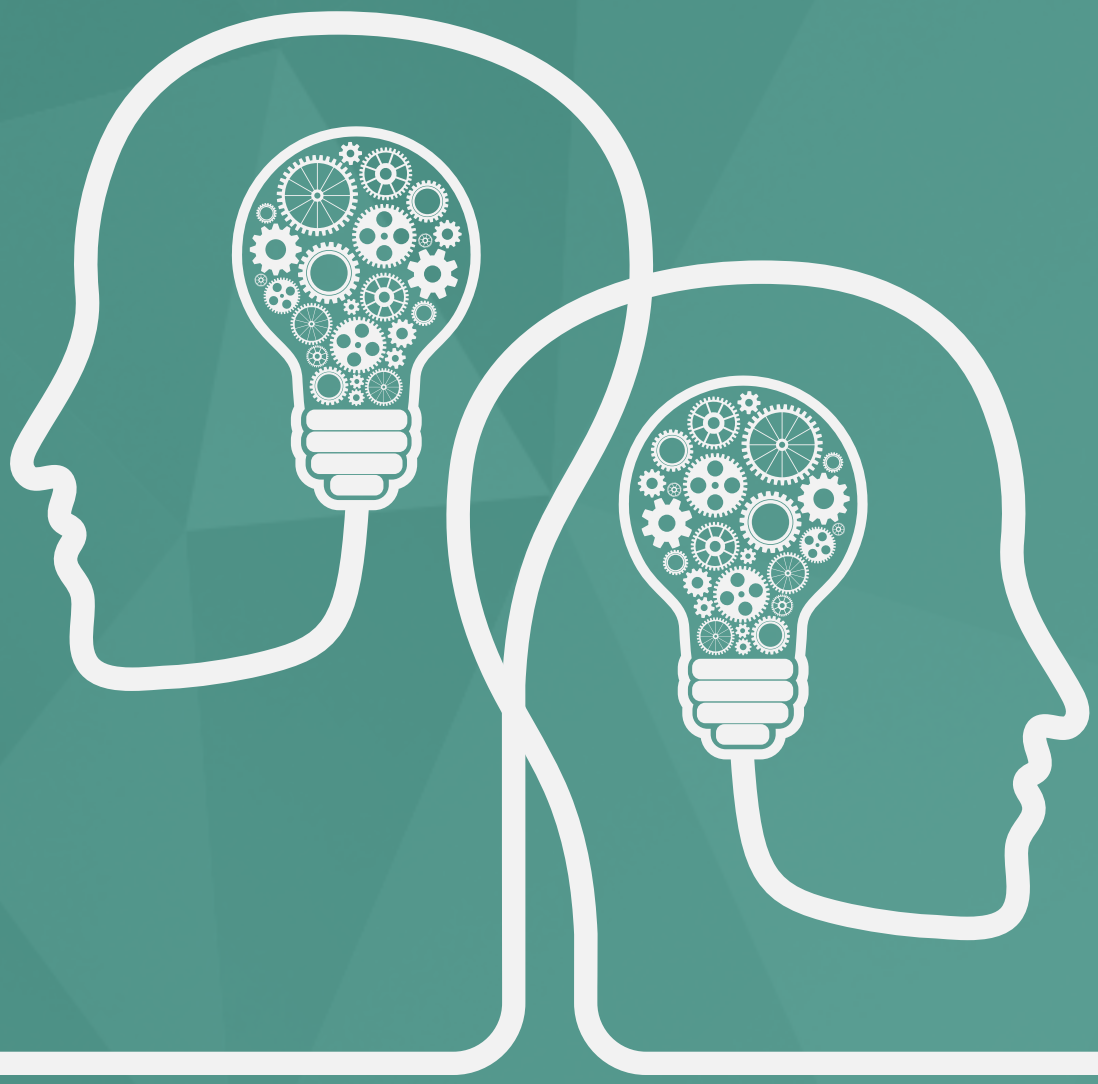
EAGLE'S FLIGHT™



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETS

FOR CHANGING BEHAVIOR AND DRIVING ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

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Introduction

We've all been there: You announce a new training program, and you're met not with complete enthusiasm but with groans from both employees and leadership. Training today is largely synonymous with stilted presentations, boring PowerPoints, and confusing or slow-paced online learning software. What's worse than being boring and stilted is the fact that this kind of training is just not very effective.

That's because these training programs do little to change participant behavior for the long run. Employees may learn about valuable new skills through passive forms of training, but passive consumption of knowledge just doesn't guarantee application. That means that companies are left investing thousands of dollars—and dozens, or even hundreds, of hours away from the desk—in training that fades from the trainees' memories shortly after the PowerPoint presentation is powered down.

But the right kind of training—the kind focused on behavior change—truly has the power to transform employee morale, engagement, and workplace contribution. In this guide, you'll learn the secrets to instituting training and development programs that truly change employee behavior for the better and thereby contribute to organizational growth.

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Teaching New Behaviors, Not Just Skills

Most training programs focus on teaching skills—but that's not enough to see real results. For training to be truly effective, it must teach new behaviors, not just new skills. Consider the influential behavior change model developed by Dr. BJ Fogg, founder of the Persuasive Tech Lab at Stanford University.[1] According to Fogg, a behavior change only occurs when three factors are present:

Motivation: What's the incentive or goal for performing a certain behavior, and how desirable is that incentive?

Ability: How difficult is the behavior to perform?

Trigger: Is there a signal or "spark" to incite the behavior?

If someone's motivation to perform a behavior is high, they are likely to perform the behavior, even if it's difficult or unfamiliar. Conversely, someone may perform a behavior if it's relatively simple, even if their motivation to do so is low. In all cases, the behavior must be triggered.

Fogg breaks down motivations, abilities, and triggers further. He posits that motivation comes in three different "flavors":

- Awarding pleasure or avoiding pain
- Instilling hope or reducing fear
- Awarding social acceptance or avoiding rejection

Abilities, meanwhile, are influenced by what Fogg calls "simplicity" factors.

- How much time, money, and physical effort will a behavior take to perform?
- Does the behavior force someone to step out of his or her comfort zone or routine?

These simplicity factors determine how much ability performing a certain behavior takes. Finally, triggers can come in three different forms:

- A facilitator
- A spark
- A signal

A facilitator triggers behavior when motivation is high but ability is low.

A spark triggers behavior when ability is high but motivation isn't.

A signal triggers a behavior when both ability and motivation are high.

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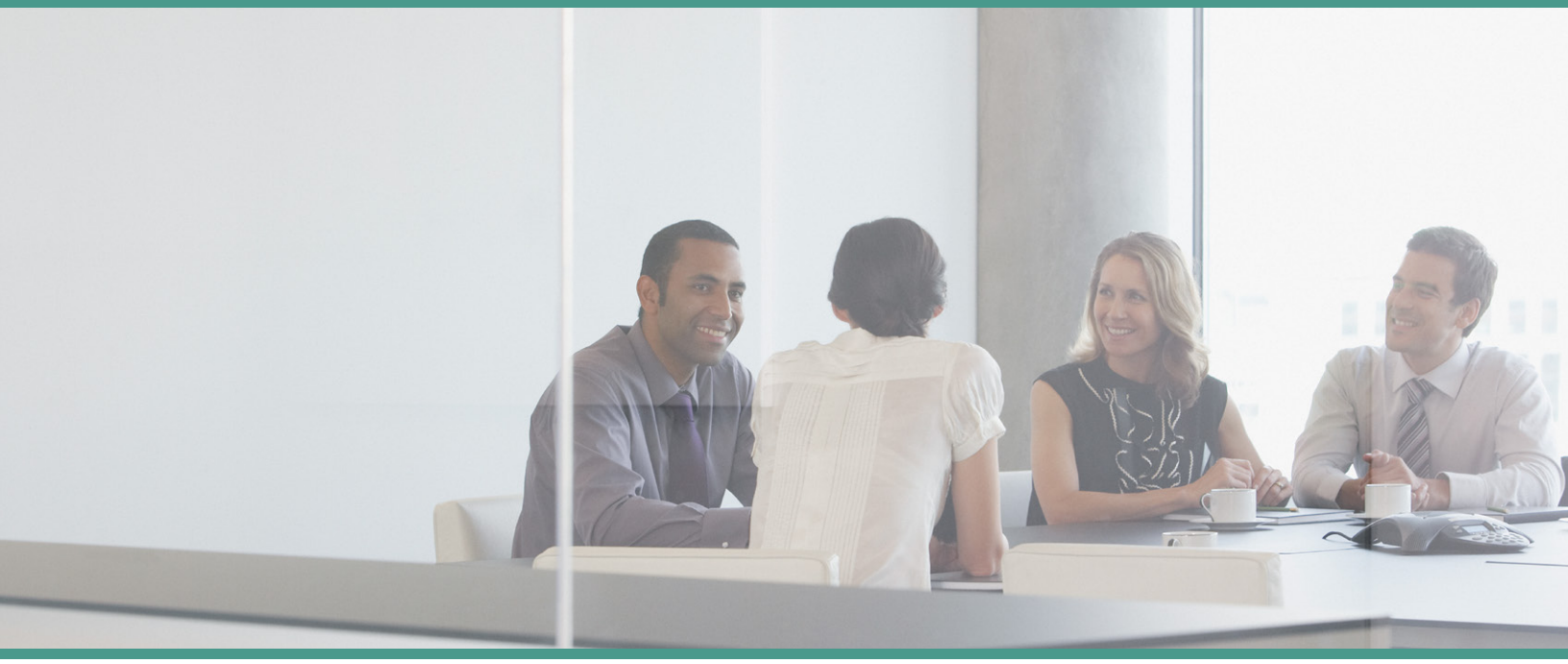

> "Traditional training that focuses on expanding someone's knowledge or skill set often addresses the "ability" component of Fogg's model—but motivations and triggers are usually absent."

Here's an example of the interplay between motivation, ability, and triggers. Let's say you want a manager to give his or her direct reports immediate feedback. First, you'd need to explain why immediate feedback is important—for example, it helps employees improve their performance far more quickly, helping the manager's department become more efficient and higher-performing.

Understanding the "why" **motivates** the manager.

Then, teach the manager how to give quality, actionable feedback so that his or her **ability** to do so becomes great.

Finally, establish a **trigger**. For example, instruct the manager to provide feedback to an employee within 24 hours of the employee sending in a deliverable. Receiving the deliverable acts as a trigger that indicates that a behavior is required.

Traditional training that focuses on expanding someone's knowledge or skill set often addresses the "ability" component of Fogg's model—but motivations and triggers are usually absent. That means that participants are unlikely to actually change their behaviors or apply their new skills after the training.

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Influencing Participants to Make Behavior Changes

Essentially, the problem with traditional skills training is that there's nothing motivating participants to actually use their new skills in their jobs. But development programs can change that—or at least increase the chances of employees using their new skills—through the power of influence. The Eagle's Flight Point of Choice Model outlines how that influence should play out in training on five different levels:

1. The Prepared Facilitator

During a training session, a facilitator should be thoroughly prepared so that they can focus on making the experience exceptional—rather than worrying about what comes next. Instead of speaking "at" participants, they facilitate discussions consistently throughout the entire training program.

2. Engagement

Behavior won't change if the training isn't engaging. Make the training feel safe so participants will feel comfortable to be fully involved. The facilitator must walk the fine line of learning with participants and projecting expertise through a mastery of the material.

3. Relevance

Participants need to know how the training and skills they're learning are relevant to their everyday reality. Facilitators should demonstrate connections between what participants are learning and how those new skills are applied on the job.

4. Ownership

When participants take personal ownership of their learning, and outcomes, it becomes far more powerful. Don't let participants blame others for a learning outcome or "coast through" the training while hiding behind others' efforts.

5. Point of Choice

This is the turning point for participants, where they can freely choose to apply their new skills on the job. No training program can force participants to make behavior changes. Not to mention, forced change isn't nearly as effective or sustainable as change instituted freely by individuals.

The Point of Choice paradigm puts the power and opportunity to change in the participant's hands, and if the training to this point has been effective, most participants will make the choice to change their behaviors.

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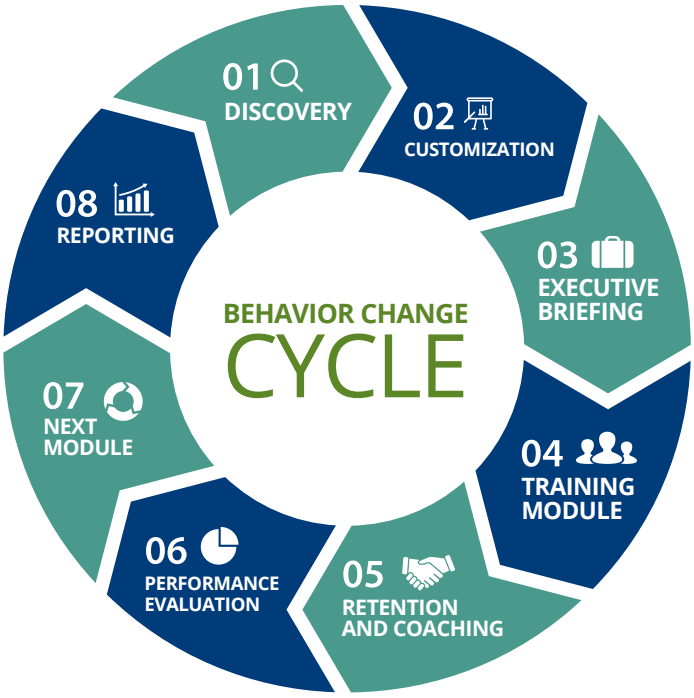
How to Produce Sustainable Behavior Change

Unfortunately, even if training participants decide to make behavior changes, those changes don't often stick. Thanks to the forgetting curve, a whopping 70 percent of training often can't be recalled by trainees just 24 hours after it's learned.[2] That's why programs that focus not just on teaching participants how to change behaviors but also on how to sustain those changed behaviors are so important.

Sustained behavior change requires a combination of learning through engaging content and a disciplined process after the training session that supports the application of that new learning. That's why Eagle's Flight has developed an eight-step Behavior Change Cycle proven to support and nurture changed behaviors long after the training day. The steps in that cycle are:

1. **Discovery:** Up-front work is done to understand a company's current reality.
2. **Customization:** Training should be tailored to a company's specific business needs and adapted for the participants' level.
3. **Executive Briefing:** Involving leadership and gaining their support shows that training is truly a company priority.
4. **Training Module:** Participants learn through interactive, discovery-based learning that helps them model behavior changes on the spot.
5. **Retention and Coaching:** The follow-up support via retention tools, digital learning, and coaching is just as important as the training itself.
6. **Performance Evaluation:** Training is never "one and done"; participants' progress should be tracked and measured to ensure sustained learning gains.
7. **Next Module:** The cycle starts again with more discovery-based learning.
8. **Reporting:** Measurable ROI is what separates a decent training program from a highly effective one. Learn the impact of your investment through custom reporting.



Training programs that involve these eight steps result in permanent behavior change. The learning decay curve straightens out, and sustained behavior change drives the company's desired results.

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Fostering Behavior Changes That Stick Through Experiential Learning

Let's take a closer look at the Behavior Change Cycle's fourth step. What does discovery-based learning look like—and how is it different from typical training methods?

Experiential learning is a training method that engages participants through an immersive, themed training event. The event is engaging and interactive, so participants can learn by doing. Hands-on learning where participants work through problems together requires active engagement, rather than the passive listening that's required by traditional, presentation-based training.

But why do experiential training events need to be themed? By masking common work scenarios with a theme, participants are transported to another world that they don't immediately recognize. The new environment allows them to "let their guard down"—they're not concerned with producing expected behaviors, because they don't know what behaviors are expected in this new, unfamiliar environment. Ultimately, taking participants out of their day-to-day reality allows them to feel safe, encouraging them to take risks and learn through their mistakes. If a training scenario exactly mirrored their on-the-job environment, failure wouldn't feel like an option. But failure can be another powerful learning tool!

> "Experiential learning is a training method that engages participants through an immersive, themed training event."

Plus, themed training scenarios—like an expedition through the jungle or a search for treasure—make the learning more visceral, memorable, and just plain fun. The training doesn't feel like training at all—and that's what makes it stick. After the training event, a facilitator debriefs the participants, revealing the connections between the training exercise and their professional reality. The debrief illustrates how the newly acquired skills are immediately applicable to the real world.

The numbers back up experiential learning's effectiveness. Studies have found[3] that when participants learn by doing, they retain on average 75 percent or more of the new information and skills learned. Compare that to the 10 percent retention rate of learning through reading materials and the five percent retention rate of learning via lecture. Learned behaviors clearly aren't being sustained with retention rates that low.

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When it comes to choosing a training method, it's smart to look at what the head of the pack is doing. High-performing firms are three times as likely to invest in experiential learning training than lower-performing firms.[3] They typically choose experiential learning activities when training both front-line employees and the executive team. That's because learning by doing works for all levels, from professionals in the early stages of their careers to seasoned leaders. Experiential learning also works for all generations—which is increasingly important as new generations like Millennials and the even younger Generation Z enter the workforce in record numbers. Through experiential learning, older workers don't have to struggle through technology-based learning, and younger workers with shorter attention spans don't have to suffer through "boring" lectures. By working for all levels and types of employees, experiential learning is an incredibly powerful—and cost-effective—way to instill behavior change.

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Build Conviction in Employees

The idea of employees personally choosing to change their behaviors post-training comes down to conviction. You can design and implement an incredibly thoughtful and effective discovery-based training program, complete with months of post-program support—but if your employees don't believe the training is truly valuable to them, there's no chance that you're going to permanently change their behavior.

The key to employee conviction is to overtly tie training to the things that employees care about the most. According to employee engagement experts David Sirota, Louis A. Mischkind, and Michael Irwin Meltzer, those three things are equity, achievement, and camaraderie. Writing for the Harvard Management Update[4], Sirota et al. explain that equity refers to an employee's desire for respect and fair treatment at work; achievement refers to awards, recognition, and pride in one's work; and camaraderie refers to the desire to have good working relationships with colleagues. When just one of these factors is missing for an employee, that employee can be up to three times less enthusiastic about a job, compared to an employee who works at a company that does exhibit all three factors.

It's up to training facilitators and management at large to connect an employee's investment in training to an employee's core workplace desires. For example, improving skills through training and then exhibiting those skills on the job will help employees excel in their roles, ushering in rewards, recognition, and respect from colleagues and higher-ups. Furthermore, training built around experiential learning activities, which requires participants to interact in fun and meaningful ways with their colleagues, works to break down barriers and foster meaningful relationships among coworkers—building camaraderie in the process. Making connections like these explicit before and during training will build employee conviction around the value of learning.

When it becomes clear that training will affect them personally in profound ways, employees will make the personal choice to change their behaviors based on what they learned during training.

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Build Conviction in Organizational Leadership

Besides employees, there's another major company contingent that must exhibit conviction in training for that training to succeed: organizational leadership. Convincing leadership that a major investment in the kind of training that sparks behavior change can be tough. To a leadership team, more training means more money and time spent out of the office. How does that help the company?

The key to building conviction about training in a company's leadership team is to tie development initiatives to organizational goals. Behavior change training shouldn't be viewed as "feel good" professional development—it's a strategic decision that profoundly impacts the company's bottom line.

Training improves productivity, and productivity increases profits. A study by the National Center on the Educational Quality of the Workforce[5] revealed that increasing education levels at workplaces by 10 percent resulted in productivity gains of nearly nine percent. Compare that to similar cost investments in supplies and equipment that resulted in only a 3.4 percent gain in productivity levels—that's less than half the productivity gains brought about through learning.

Training has been linked more directly to increased profits as well. According to the American Society for Training & Development (ATD)[6], companies that invest more in training see significantly higher sales and a larger profit per employee. ATD's study revealed that companies that invested the most resources in training saw a whopping 57 percent increase in sales, and companies with the best performance reported that they trained 86 percent of their employees.

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What's more, training that's coupled with ongoing coaching support garners even better results. Consider this study by Public Personnel Management[7]: Managers who went through training increased their productivity by 22.4 percent. That sounds impressive—until you compare that number to the productivity increase experienced by managers who went through training and eight weeks of post-training coaching: 88 percent. If sustained behavior change is your goal (and it should be), training that's supported by retention tools like coaching is the way to go.

The lesson from these numbers? If your company's organizational goals include increasing productivity and profits, then investing in development initiatives that spark behavior change is practically a no-brainer. Think of it as a chain reaction: investments in stellar training and development initiatives result in a workforce that's more engaged and productive, which results in a company with more profits, which, in turn, results in the opportunity to reinvest in organizational growth strategies. It's clear that behavior change through training is the building block for this kind of organizational success.

Investments in training and development initiatives

A workforce that's more engaged and productive

Opportunity to reinvest in organizational growth

Results in a company with more profits

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Next Step: Get Started with Experiential Learning

Through innovative and interactive experiential learning training and events, we help drive participant engagement and deliver practical business impact. Depending on the goals of your organization, any number of our programs might be right for you. Connect with our team to review your objectives and identify the best solution to help you reach those goals.

SPEAK WITH AN EAGLE'S FLIGHT EXPERT TODAY

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