

Beyond Training:

How to re-order the brain to achieve remarkable results

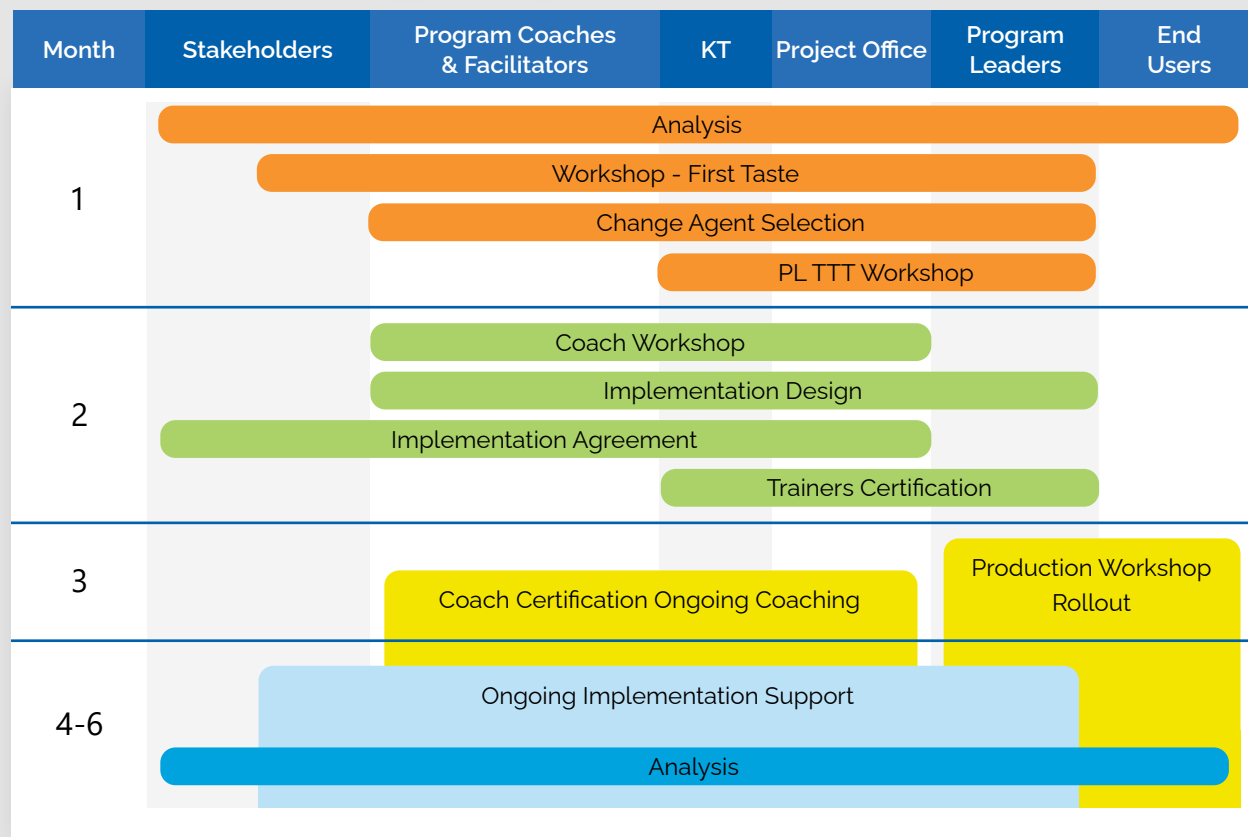


The brain is so sensitive to external experiences that you can literally rewire it through exposure to cultural influences, according to John J. Medina, neurologist and developmental molecular biologist (Harvard Business Review, May 2008).

Dr. Medina speculates that as a result of this sensitivity, there could be a Boeing brain or a Goldman Sachs brain. Other research suggests that when attention is paid to a new behaviour for at least three weeks, the brain moves the activity from running in “software” (which uses a lot of energy) to a “hardware” implementation (less use of energy) when the connections in the brain have been literally re-ordered.

You may recall leaving a training course with the enthusiasm of the recently converted. Scales fall from your eyes, you saw the world in a completely different way - only to reflect after a few weeks that, while it was a great course, you're still in the same old, same old routine. Like a rubber band, you were stretched only for the duration of the training class. After the tension was relaxed, you reverted to your previous ways. While this is a frustrating experience for the learner, commercially it's a disaster. Both the opportunity cost and actual cost of the training were not recovered. If the meaning of the training course is the behaviour change that resulted, the training course had no meaning.

Typical Implementation workflow



The KT Solution

Kepner-Tregoe (KT) has examples of companies realizing spectacular business results. We also have examples of respected clients buying training from us – and not seeing the investment returned. The difference that makes the difference is in the implementation. Success follows when time and attention to clear and integrated 'triggers for use', tooling, facilitation, and coaching have been used to integrate change.

In a well implemented, mass-training rollout, the ground is prepared before any training is done. Thought is put into identifying the entry points for the behavior change and establishing how the business will support the individual from their first few cycles of behavior change until it is integrated into behavior and the investment is returned.

In addition, stakeholders and change agents – individuals selected for their peer respect and change leadership reputation – drive change throughout the implementation. They begin by entering a pre-rollout training track that prepares and supports them to make changes in the work environment, test the new process, and refine the implementation so that it is accepted within the company culture and at the individual level.

Preparing the ground for a large training roll-out also may involve the creation of job aids to support the

behavior change – everything from posters, to customized aide-mémoire forms, to tooling integrated into software.

Coaching is a vital component of a behavioral change implementation. And that coaching needs to evolve with the learner over time – from encouragement in the first few days or tries, to new innovative opportunities once maturity has been established. Coaching does not 'go away': it evolves into the way business is done.

The importance of coaches and facilitators cannot be overstated. But for coaches and facilitators to succeed they need:

- Advanced technical knowledge of the skill-set to be implemented
- A change implementation model for the skill-set
- An automatic system for alerting them to opportunities for coaching and facilitation

Advanced Technical Knowledge

There is no getting around the truth that any coach, coaching any discipline, needs to be more proficient at the technical skill of the discipline than the people that are being coached. This takes commitment. In the KT implementation workflow, coaches are required to attend standard and advanced training, coach/facilitator training, and meet certification requirements to ensure that they understand how to use, coach, and implement the skills. Since they will be ahead of the general population in KT process knowledge and use, they will continue to be an asset to the organization beyond the intensive coaching phase of the project. Management can rely on them to serve as change designers and change leaders in future cultural change activities.

Change Implementation Model

KT has successfully used the Performance System model to help apply good quality processes to an existing infrastructure. This model helps explain human behavior in terms of individual experience, critical because only when working at the level of the individual can we gather sufficient momentum to break through the natural resistance that people have to change.

Automatic Systems

Part of the Performance System is the need to be presented with essential actions. An automatic system needs to be in place that offers up "coachable moments", the opportunities for coaches and facilitators to support new skills. If coaches have to go looking, they'll find something else to do; and if coaches wait for people to come looking for help, they'll be waiting a long time.

Results

When we take a group of people who have been through KT training and are using it as part of their value to their employers, we can identify a measurable level of performance. For example, in service and support organizations, this may be time-on-task, jobs awaiting attention (backlog), or mean time

to resolve (MTTR). Whether troubleshooting on their own or in teams, when KT processes have been embedded into the workflow for the group of people performing that troubleshooting, the typical results are a 10 to 20% reduction on time-on-task, 40% reduction in backlog, and 40% reduction in MTTR.

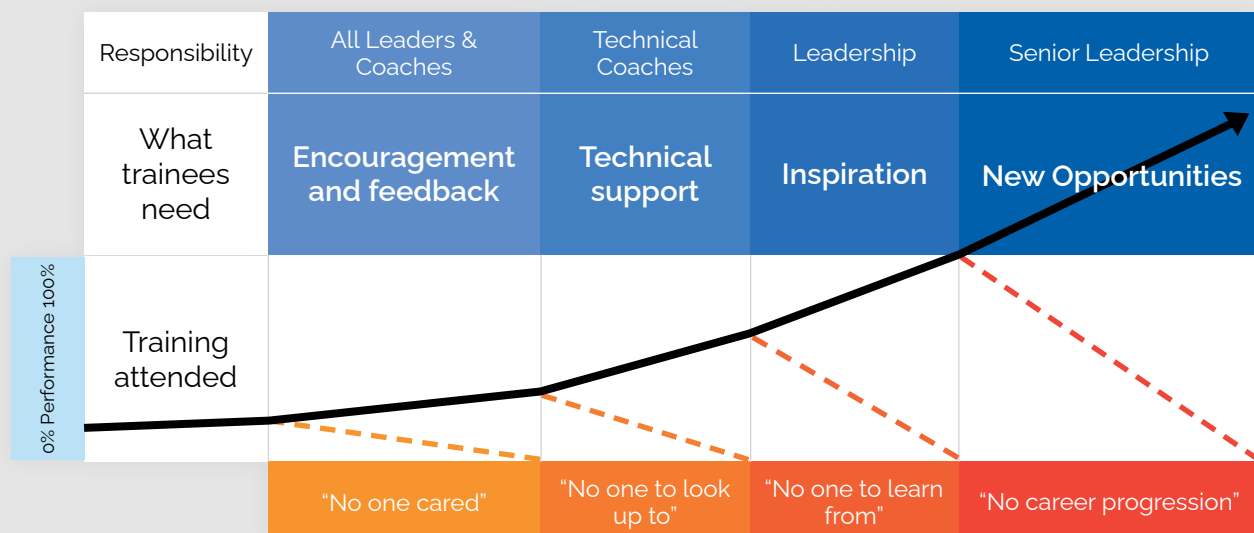
Companies who experience these or similar results shout from the rooftops (actually they accompany us to trade shows to present the results to their peers and let us write scorecards about their successes, many of which can be seen on our website). In our experience in service and support, even organizations who don't fully integrate change with coaching and facilitation see some ROI. Training alone can pay for itself through the efforts of an interested minority who use the techniques right away. Their efforts on a number of tough cases are enough to bring the overall MTTR down by an average of 5%.

Some companies who have not implemented KT processes well, have quickly seen the difference that coaching and facilitation support can make:

- A U.S. division of a multinational failed to install coaching and got no results. Now they've initiated coaching to some extent and credit KT processes for \$1 m in savings.
- A European division of the same company fared similarly - the first team to start regular coaching showed improvement against key metrics; the others did not until they followed up with coaching.
- Another global company reports anecdotally that they improved 'time-to-fix' in those countries where coaching has been done; while other countries, with training only, reported no change.
- A support organisation that initially produced no results from training began providing coaching for problem statements and saw problem characterisation/definition time drop 16%.

As Medina observed in his article, paying attention to change makes change possible by actually re-ordering the brain. The big results from training are achieved by using the full implementation model which KT has developed over much iteration. Training alone leaves the behaviour change to chance. Full implementation pays attention and supports change long enough for people to change their minds and integrate the thinking patterns of successful people into their own behaviours.

The phases of coaching



About Kepner-Tregoe



Kepner-Tregoe (KT) provides capability development and consulting solutions across the world to help build Thinking Organizations that resolve the most pressing issues with clarity and confidence. Founded in 1958 based on ground-breaking research on how people think, solve problems and make decisions, Princeton-based Kepner-Tregoe is dedicated to helping organizations achieve Operational Excellence by improving quality, increasing efficiency and reducing costs. KT Clear Thinking is used at every

level of client organizations: to implement strategy; achieve step-change improvements in operations; increase customer satisfaction in support organizations; and drive superior issue resolution throughout the organization. KT provides Clear Thinking for a complex world. For additional information, visit the company's website at kepner-tregoe.com or their social media platforms on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.



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