

# HIGH IMPACT TRAINING!

*8 Steps to Ignite Your Staff, Maximize Your Return,  
and Power Your Organization's Success*



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Productivity, Attention Management, Work-Life Balance



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*Maura facilitated one of the **most transformative learning experiences** I've ever had.*

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Monica Giannobile, Purdue University

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## Introduction: Your Step-by-Step Guide to Training That Gets Results

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It's not your imagination: Purchasing and planning corporate training is a big job. How do you sort through all of the options out there? What are the most important factors to consider? And, most importantly, how do you make sure that training delivers the results that you need, and therefore maximizes the return on the money?

The right training can have an impact on an organization that lasts for years – but only if you choose carefully. That's why I created this guide. As a veteran trainer, I wanted to share the insights and proven practices that will help you select the right training for your organization and then utilize that training to create meaningful change.

I hope you find this handbook helpful! If you have additional questions about training, please reach out to me at [mt@maurathomas.com](mailto:mt@maurathomas.com).

*“It's really hard to find training that actually causes you to **change how you act**. You leave Maura's training a different person. That's really uncommon.”*

*William Minter, Vice President, PinnacleAIS*

## Effective Training Starts With Leaders

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No matter what type of training your company is interested in purchasing, the first step is always the same: **Get leaders involved** in selecting the training.

Why is this so important? Leaders can best articulate the company's needs and evaluate whether the trainer can serve those needs. Also, remember that quality trainers will only want to work with you if *they* feel like it's a good fit, too. And they can better judge this when they get to speak with the leadership (of the people being trained) during the initial needs analysis.

Unfortunately, too many companies neglect this step. I know this because I often get calls from office administrators who have been tasked with soliciting training proposals, but who haven't been given the information they need to do the job well. If that's you, set yourself up for success. Do your research first, but then include the decision-maker on the initial call with you and the provider you're considering. Then write up the results of the call to present to the decision-maker or committee, along with your recommendation.

If you have a Learning and Development professional on staff, (or you *are* the L&D professional), ensure that they have the insight into the department's needs to make the appropriate recommendation. If not, the department (or company) leader should be on the call to make the most efficient use of time.

If you simply solicit bids and use those to choose who to interview, you may miss some important nuances, and the ability to learn something about the process from experienced trainers. In this case, the company may indeed "check the box" that they offered training. But just because training happens, that's no guarantee that it will lead to lasting, meaningful change.

*"The techniques you've given us are **extremely practical** and **easy to implement**. You are so dialed in to what each of us experiences on a daily basis. Thank you for providing such an **approachable system that anyone can do.**"*

*Amy Solliday, Vice President, Old Navy*

## Evaluating Your Training Choices

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Now let's get down to the specifics of choosing among various training options. Here are some of the questions to consider as you talk with different trainers or review their materials.

- **What is the content of the training?**

Training is more likely to have a positive impact on your organization if the content is customized to your needs. "Off-the-rack" training just isn't as beneficial, especially for soft skills (those that are hard to quantify, like productivity, leadership, communication). The capabilities that the training imparts should be tied to the long-term results you want to see. It's the responsibility of the trainer to customize content that increases participants' understanding, transfers a skill set, and gives them the tools to implement change.

- **How will the training be delivered?**

The success of the training also depends on *how* it's presented. How will the trainer keep attendees engaged? How will s/he create belief in the concepts so that participants come to the desired conclusions and take action after the training?

- **Does the training include time for experiential learning?**

Any training session should give participants the tools they need to start making changes. But if they're left on their own to "find the time" to implement those tools after the training concludes, the odds plummet that they'll actually make changes. It's better if the trainer plans to include hands-on learning during the training itself. That way, participants are ready to "hit the ground running" when they're back on the job.

*"Since your training, **everything is going fantastic**, and I love, love **love the tools** you recommend! I have been using the principles from the seminar, and I have **found so much more time in my day** ... thank you!!!"*

*Dana Garaventa, Human Resources Manager, Opus One Winery*

## It's Not All Up to the Trainer: 6 Ways You Can Make Training Stick

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Once you've selected a trainer, that *doesn't* mean the success of the training is now solely in the trainer's hands. Leaders play a pivotal role in determining whether the messages of the training will take root. As you prepare for training, be sure to follow these important steps to maximize its impact.

- **Train enough people**

Including more participants in a training often provides better results than training only one group, department, or division. Change is difficult enough as it is — but it's even harder in a vacuum. A small group working to make changes inside a larger organization can meet resistance when others are unaware of changes, or are surprised by new behaviors — or when new behaviors conflict with existing policies.

- **Think about buy-in *before* the training**

You can't teach anyone anything that they don't want to learn. When you make training mandatory, but don't bother to generate buy-in, you're likely to be met with resentment and even efforts to undermine the training.

For example, if an employee believes that he doesn't need the mandatory training or that she doesn't have time for the training, s/he might look (deliberately or subconsciously) for reasons that the training "didn't work," so that s/he can be "right."

For maximum success, employees should:

- Agree that the topic of the training is an issue that affects the team.
- Believe that the training will have benefits for them.
- Want the benefits the training promises.

There are many ways to uncover attitudes and generate buy-in that a trainer can help you with, including team conversations, a pre-training introduction to the material, formal or informal needs assessments, and input on selecting a solution.

- **Create an atmosphere of openness**  
To head off any employee complaints that the training is not needed, it helps to have leaders talk openly about how they themselves could make improvements in the area being addressed. This creates a safe space for employees to admit to their own skills gaps and embrace the learning with an open mind.
- **Demonstrate that leaders are “all in”**  
In the same way, when leaders participate fully in the training, it sets a positive and open tone for learning to occur.
- **Don’t forget follow-up**  
After the training is complete, things can get off track in any number of ways. Leaders might never mention it again, or fail to create accountability for the changes the training was designed to facilitate.

Here are some ways leaders can increase the probability of long-term change after training is complete:

- Commit to behavior changes themselves and model the new behaviors. This reinforces for the team that change is necessary.
  - Make the language of the training part of the language of the organization.
  - Incorporate learning objectives from the training into individual goals and/or performance reviews.
- **Consider your work culture as a whole**  
Sometimes, the problems the training is intended to address can be symptoms of the need for larger cultural changes within the organization. As a productivity trainer, the issues I’m called on to address are often caused or exacerbated by leaders’ behaviors or entrenched corporate habits. For example, knowledge workers need downtime away from work to maximize their creativity and motivation, but a boss who constantly sends **late-night emails** might inadvertently be robbing them of this time. Another example: An emphasis on fast responses to incoming communication creates an **environment of distraction**, which is detrimental to work requiring deep thought.

*“Maura’s training was a **game-changer** for our organization.”*

*Ronda Rutledge, Executive Director, Sustainable Food Center*

## Empowered Productivity Training

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If you're thinking about productivity training for your organization, I'd like to tell you a little bit more about what topics I cover and how I make sure that training fits your needs. I offer training for both teams at large (based on my first book, *Personal Productivity Secrets*) and for leaders specifically, targeting the culture (based on my second book, *Work Without Walls*).

### Are these issues at your company?

As a recognized expert in [attention management](#), productivity, workflow management, and work-life balance, I can help with issues like these:

- Your staff seems “busy” but isn't making enough progress on important goals.
- They're missing deadlines.
- You have questions about resource allocation. For example, some people seem too busy, and/or some people don't seem busy enough, or you're unsure about whether you are staffed appropriately.
- Employees complain about company communication tools, such as email, chat, or meetings.
- Burnout or turnover is a problem now, or you fear it could become a problem in the future.
- The office is a high-pressure environment.
- Team members appear stressed, harried, or frazzled.
- Leaders are thinking about purchasing a tool such as customer relationship management or project management software.
- The company is moving, or considering a move, from one email or productivity suite to another, such as from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Outlook, or from Outlook to Google Apps.
- The staff isn't making good use of any of the above tools.
- Your industry and work environment are fast-paced, but thinking and deep “brain work” are required for high quality outputs. How can you reconcile the two?

*“I am LOVING using your System! What a difference to finally feel  
**I am controlling my day** instead of my day controlling me.”*

*Rainee Busby, President, Fokal Fusion*

**My training packages feature *all* of the following, included in the price:**

**Pre-training consulting.** I take a consultative approach with all client engagements, and the consulting begins with the first phone call, before there is even an agreement to work together. During this consulting, we'll:

- Assess whether my services are a fit for your organization and uncover issues that might prevent you from maximizing the return on your training investment.
- Map out a plan to set your organization up for success in its training initiatives.
- Talk about how you can get participants in the right frame of mind to reap maximum benefit from the training.
- Discuss appropriate class size. More participants results in decreased per-person costs, maximizing return.
- Talk about raising awareness among leadership and priming them for new habits before the training, which can pave the way for maximum adoption of the learning.

**On-site workshop delivery.** My content is based on more than two decades in the corporate training industry. It's been continually refined and improved as I've trained over 27,000 people in over 1100 companies. I'm also an award-winning keynote speaker, and a Certified Speaking Professional. I work hard to make my delivery entertaining and engaging, and also educational, based in proven adult-learning principles, with concrete takeaways that are implemented right in the room.

**Hands-on learning.** When participants start implementing what they've learned while I'm still onsite, it sets the stage for change to take hold.

**Participant materials to enhance engagement and retention.** All of my programs include a copy of *Personal Productivity Secrets* or *Work Without Walls*, or both, as appropriate.

**Post-training leadership consulting.** I'm always available to coach leaders on how to model changes and establish accountability.

**30- to 90-day individual participant follow-up programs.** I support participants as they implement changes, so the learning continues long after the training is over. This is uncommon in the industry and improves the odds of the new behaviors taking hold. 98% of surveyed participants say this follow-up program is helpful in reinforcing the training.

**Varied options to meet your needs and your budget.** I can deliver training from a few hours to two-full days. Pricing is dependent on several variables.

**Maximized value.** With my focus on lasting impact, this training should be viewed as an investment rather than a cost. My clients report gaining a minimum of an hour more productive time per day, so the result can be equivalent to an additional staff person, at a fraction of the cost. Clients also report feeling better about their work, and enjoying it more, so the indirect benefits of increased engagement, plus reduced turnover and absenteeism can provide exponential returns.

*“I most notice the impact the training has had in general - I am **far less stressed** while I **get more done** in every aspect of my life. It was one of the best business decisions I made this year.”*

*Griffin Davis, Vice President, Market Hardware*

*“I was blown away by Maura’s productivity system, with its **real-world practicality** and **outstanding tools**. I religiously apply what I learned from Maura and cannot imagine a better way to organize my day.”*

*Craig McGee, Human Resources Manager, Orion Engineered Carbons*

*“This class was amazing! **Great insights** and topics were **extremely relevant** to managing my day.”*

*Lance Sandlin, Manager, Dell*

*“I have to admit that attending this seminar was probably one of the **best investments of time** that I have had the privilege of participating in.”*

*Debbie Amelung, Customer Service Supervisor, Advantica*

## Let's Continue the Conversation

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I hope that this guide has taken some of the guesswork and intimidation out of selecting training for your company. To say thank you for reading, I'd like to offer you free previews of my books:

- *Personal Productivity Secrets*, called a "home-run" and a "game-changer."
- *Work Without Walls*, called "convincing" and a "must read for leaders."
- *Attention Management: How to Create Success and Gain Productivity Every Day*, called "a practical, ground-breaking solution."

Just follow the links above to download a free chapter of any or all.

I'd also be happy to help you choose the right training for your company. You can set up a free consultation by calling 424-226-2872, emailing [maura@regainyourtime.com](mailto:maura@regainyourtime.com), or viewing my calendar and making an appointment at your convenience [here](#). This is a no-pressure conversation, and I'll make sure you come away with strategies that will make your training more effective, whether or not we decide my services are the best fit for you.

If you'd like to see what my clients say about my programs, and the impact they've had at organizations, you can view more comments and several case-studies [here](#).

I look forward to hearing from you!



Maura Thomas  
Speaker, Trainer, Author



P.S. If you're still not ready to get in touch, perhaps one of these will offer more help:

"Time Management Training Doesn't Work," on Harvard Business Review

"Shopping for Corporate Training? Don't Make These 4 Mistakes," on my blog

"For Your Best Productivity, Manage Your Attention, Not Your Time," on Forbes