



## Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry

80% of our Learners are still using their new skill 5 months later - we guarantee it!



# Are You Annoyed By How Little Line Managers Support

## The Skills Training Of Their Teams?

Discover simple and effective ways to encourage & support Line Managers to support the skills training.

[www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk](http://www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk)





# Are You Annoyed By How Little Line Managers Support The Skills Training Of Their Teams?



## Introduction

Hi, my name is Darren A. Smith, Founder of Making Business Matter – A Training Provider.

If you are like most HR Managers, Training Officers, and Learning & Development Managers, you are probably frustrated by 3 problems when it comes to Learning & Development:

1. People attend training courses but do very little with the learning afterwards.
2. Line Managers are not engaged in training.
3. Training evaluation is nearly never completed, or if it is, is completed poorly.

In this Guide, we will focus on challenge 2. Challenges 1 and 3 are *two separate Guides*.

This problem related to Line Manager support is a problem experienced by all HR Managers, Training Officers, and Learning & Development Managers. In fact, a *CIPD Learning and Development survey conducted in 2007* concluded that 23% of Line Managers do not take learning and development seriously. We suspect that a further 50% pay some attention, leaving only a quarter of Line Managers who are fully supportive.

This guide includes 12 proven solutions to get Line Managers to support the skills training of their team members. When implemented, any of the 12 proven solutions in this Guide will make a big difference. When combined, they will noticeably improve the way your employees maximise their learning after a training event. The ultimate goal is to achieve behavioural change.

I hope you find this Guide useful and I wish you every success.

Darren A. Smith  
Founder  
Making Business Matter



## Foreword

This series of guides sets out to provide solutions to three extremely common issues faced by the vast majority of organisations irrespective of their size, location or nature of their enterprise. The issues roll up into a single challenge – How can we make sure that the time, effort and resource invested in training reap rewards? This challenge has been a thorn in the side of training and development professionals and their stakeholders for a very long time. Mary Broad and John Newstrom's work in the 1980s and Broad's book, 'The Transfer of Training', spelt the answer out clearly. For training to be effective, it needs not only to be designed well, but also needs support from managers back in the workplace.

Darren Smith has provided 16 straightforward solutions that address these issues, from practical advice on distilling learning and converting it into behaviour change ('real' learning) and mindset change, to effective engagement. Covering approaches from mind mapping and 'trigger' habit development, Smith offers practical actions to extend the impact of training beyond the classroom and back into the workplace.

The profession will welcome these guides and the help they offer.  
By Charles Jennings, Founder of the *70:20:10 Learning Model*.



## Contents

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Are You Annoyed by How Little Line Managers Support the Skills Training of Their Teams? | Page 01 |
| 1. Get Line Managers On Board from the Beginning  | Page 03 |
| 2. Show Line Managers What Great Looks Like   | Page 04 |
| 3. Knowledge is Power and is to be Shared   | Page 05 |
| 4. Share the Power of Coaching  | Page 06 |
| 5. Create a 30-Minute 121 Supporting Session Brief                                      | Page 07 |
| 6. Negotiate a Win-Win with the Line Managers   | Page 08 |
| 7. Use an 'Off-the-Shelf' Method  | Page 09 |
| 8. Offer a Pragmatic Solution   | Page 10 |
| 9. Identify How Your Organisation Measures Up   | Page 11 |
| 10. Get Their Attention   | Page 12 |
| 11. Realise that Your Relationship Needs Work   | Page 13 |
| 12. Make a Clear Case for Supporting Learners   | Page 14 |
| Are You Annoyed by How Little Line Managers Support the Skills Training of Their Teams? | Page 15 |
| About Darren A. Smith   | Page 16 |

From the Home of  
Sticky Learning







# 1. Get Line Managers On Board from the Beginning

Your response to the title above is probably, 'Yeah, I know'. However, few HR Managers, L&D Managers, or Training Officers actually make this happen. Getting Line Managers on board is about two things;

- Giving Line Managers the opportunity to ask questions instead of showing them yet another PowerPoint presentation of a great rollout, and
- Sharing the actual problem. This is why...

In the Harvard Business review article, 'Before You Can Get Buy-In, People Need to Feel the Problem', Dr John P. Kotter tells a great short story of how an executive got the board to buy-in to a problem by dumping a lot of rubber gloves on the boardroom table. The challenge for us is that there is no immediate downside of not learning. Building a specific bigger picture is key and largely revolves around the turnover of staff. This phrase is paramount:

'Companies won't train workers because they might leave, and workers leave because they don't get training.'

Our means of gaining buy-in is through 'Learning To Learn', which is the first part of our unique training method Sticky Learning®. LTL is designed so that all Learners and Line Managers can engage in the training programme. On this half-day training course, the Learners are taught how to learn, how to identify their learning styles, how to form habits and how the brain remembers. It also provides a valuable opportunity for Line Managers to understand and explore the learning programme.



## Action

Provide an opportunity for Line Managers to explore the training programme - perhaps over lunch provided by HR. Create a compelling problem that Line Managers are responsible for solving, for e.g. 'We spend £1.1m per year on staff turnover, including recruitment, performance reduction as people leave & as they arrive, induction training, etc. How can we reduce this by half?'

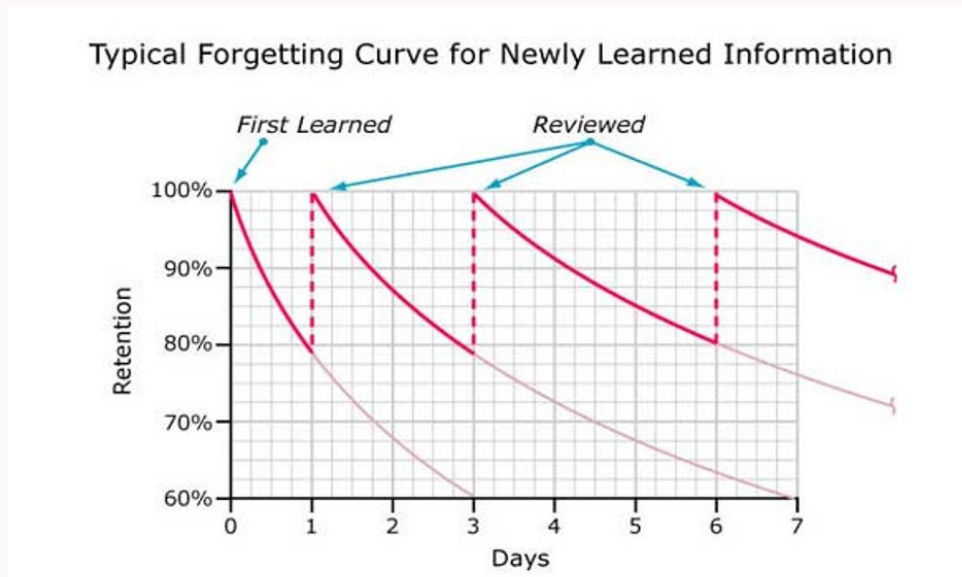


## 2. Show Line Managers What Great Looks Like

Many organisations promote people based on their technical knowledge and achievements, rather than their people skills. This is known as the 'Peter Principle'. Therefore, many Line Managers don't know what great actually looks like when they're trying to support their team's development.

Explore the topic of what great looks like with the Line Managers. Ask them what they think a great Line Manager does and what a poor Line Manager does to support Learners during their learning. The answers won't be all that new to you, but they will encourage Line Managers to set a good example.

According to Ebbinghaus' *Forgetting Curve* your Line Managers will forget quickly. The discussion about great and poor Line Management support will have been forgotten within 10 days. Therefore, you need to prod their memory with a 1-minute video reminder, or a 1-page scorecard, or a simple email of the 3 main points discussed.



This Forgetting Curve shows how much is remembered over time and the effect of retention.

### Action

Show Line Managers what great looks like and remind them about it 10 days later, and ideally again 30 days later, so that it sticks in their memory. Share with them that Google's famous analytics team examined data from thousands of employee surveys and performance reviews and concluded that 'Coaching' was the skill that best characterised an effective Line Manager.



### 3. Knowledge is Power and is to be Shared

Dr Edwin Locke conducted a piece of pioneering research in the 1960s on goal setting and motivation. In his article, 'Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentives' he states that employees are motivated by clear goals and appropriate feedback. He goes on to say that working towards a goal provides a major source of motivation to actually reach the goal, which in turn, improves performance.

This research is an important piece of knowledge to share with Line Managers, because by understanding the essence of this research, Line Managers can improve the performance of their teams. 'Sell more', 'Do it better', and 'I need it done next week' are outdated phrases that need to be replaced.

A Line Manager will agree that setting SMART objectives with their Learner will achieve great things. In contrast, telling Learners to 'Be a better time manager' will achieve very little.

For example, 'Be able to use the 4D Time Management tool effectively to assess and deal with emails more efficiently' is a specific objective that will achieve much better results.

Line Managers who understand this premise will feel more informed and will be able to implement this simple technique to achieve better results.



#### Action

Share the essence of the research with the Line Managers so that they feel empowered to task their Learners with improving their performance. If you would like a specific example for each skill, please [contact me](#).



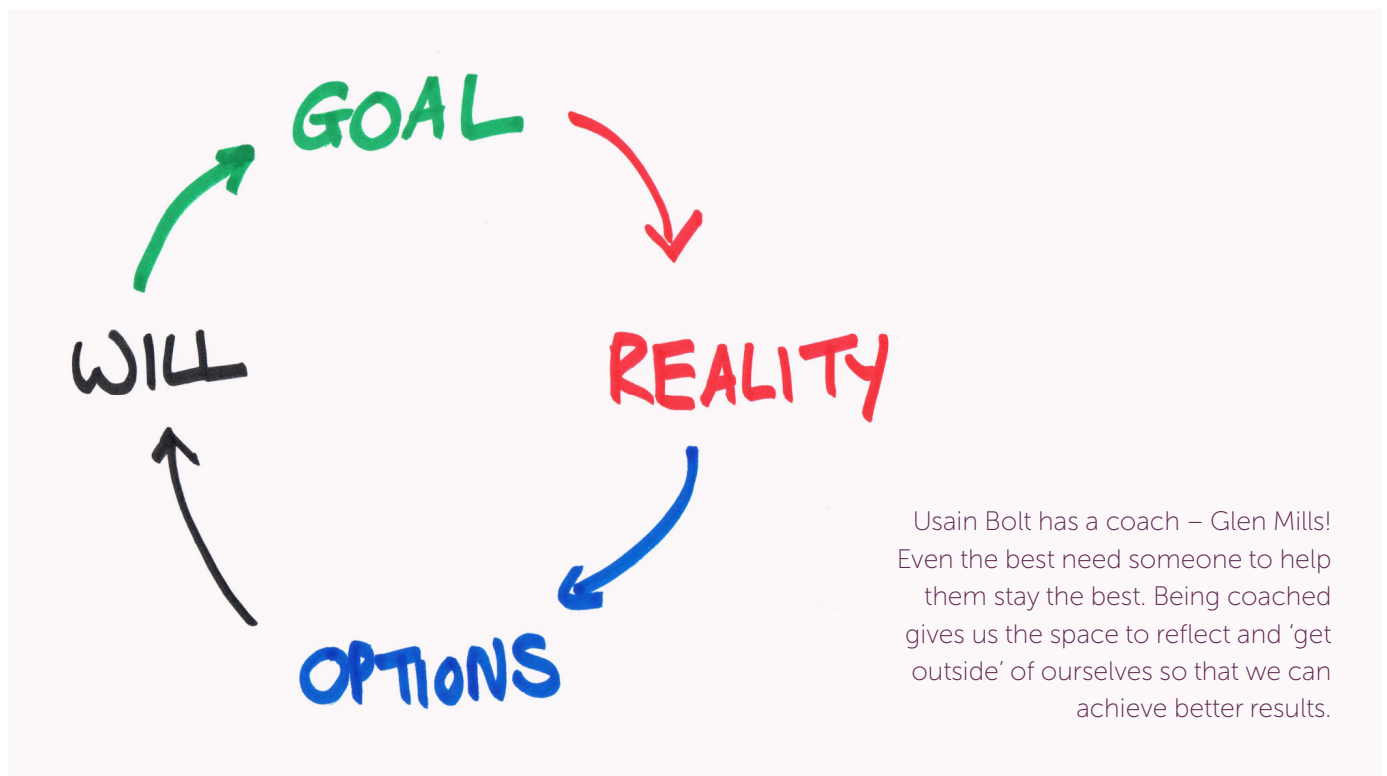
## 4. Share the Power of Coaching

Many Line Managers have never been trained in **coaching**. It's likely that they'll have heard of it, and some may even think they've done it. However, the chances are that they'll be achieving, at best, only satisfactory results.

Great results can be achieved with just a little knowledge and practice. In this post, we share **effective questions that you can use with the GROW model**. By sharing the principles of the GROW model with Line Managers, along with some simple yet effective suggested questions, they'll soon be achieving fantastic results.

In summary, the GROW model is the most widely used model for coaching. The acronym stands for:

- 'G' of GROW is for 'Goal' - What do you want to achieve?
- 'R' of GROW is for 'Reality' - Where are you now?
- 'O' of GROW is for 'Options' - How can you achieve your goal?
- 'W' of GROW is for 'Will' - What is stopping you from achieving your goal?



### Action

Take the Line Managers through the GROW model of coaching with a 30-minute bite-size training session (See next page). The model will give them the confidence and the first steps they need to begin coaching effectively. For an advanced version, refer to **the formula for change**.



## 5. Create a 30-Minute 121 Supporting Session Brief

Creating something for someone to 'shoot at' is always easier than them having to start from scratch. By sharing what a 30-minute 121 supporting session looks like, the Line Manager can use it as a base for their learning support and build on it as they wish.

### A 30-minute 121 briefing would look like:

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Time      | 30 minutes.  |
| Who       | Line Manager and the Learner (Their report).   |
| Objective | To understand 1) What are the Learner's objectives for their training? 2) How are they performing against those objectives? 3) What does the Learner need from their Line Manager in order to achieve those objectives?  |
| Format    | Over coffee, not formal.   |
| Success   | The Learner has a breakthrough about what they need to do better to achieve their learning objectives.   |
| Questions | G: By the time your hand hits the door-handle at the end of the meeting, what would you like to have achieved?<br>R: What have you done about this issue/change so far? What results have you seen?<br>O: What if you had total autonomy – what might you try instead?<br>W: What might get in the way? How will you overcome any obstacles? |



Try combining a 121 with the Time Management technique 'Pomodoro'

### Action

Create a brief for a 30-minute 121 between a Line Manager and their Learner to use as a guide and for them to build upon.





## 6. Negotiate a Win-Win with the Line Managers

You've tried persuasion. If that hasn't worked, try negotiating. There are [8 ways to resolve a conflict](#) and negotiation is a valid form.

On our [negotiation training course](#), we share with Learners a simple, yet very effective tool called, 'If you... then I...'. In this [1-minute video](#), you can learn how to use this effective negotiation tool to get what you want.



A Screenshot from the Video

For example, 'If you can add 'Learning' to your team agenda this week, then I'll see if I can re-arrange your training dates.' In my experience, once you are familiar with this tool, you'll be using it at work and at home to 'win' all sorts of things.

### Action

Use this simple yet effective negotiation tool to help you get what you want when you are speaking with Line Managers.



## 7. Use an 'Off-the-Shelf' Method

Our unique training method **Sticky Learning®** was designed by L&D professionals using over 100 years of experience based on feedback from HR Managers, Training Officers and L&D Managers. The feedback largely concluded that there are 3 problems when it comes to training, which Sticky learning® resolves:

- A. People attend training courses but do very little with the learning afterwards.
- B. Line Managers are not engaged in training.
- C. Training evaluation is nearly never completed, or if it is, is completed poorly.

There are 3 ways that Sticky Learning® helps the Line Manager:

### 1) Learning To Learn

Every Learner, before they attend an MBM training course, attends a ½ day **Learning To Learn** training course, which teaches the Learner how to learn more quickly, retain more, and enjoy their learning. For the Line Manager, they attend a 1-hour briefing afterwards, where they learn how to support Learners to achieve their 'ILO' (Individual Learning Objective).

### 2) Individual Learning Objective

At Learning To Learn the Learner is asked to complete an ILO so that they can get used to doing so. This prevents Learners from 'rocking-up' to training and not knowing what they want. In essence, the ILO asks, 'What do you want from the time you are investing?'. This question enables the Learner to reflect on a specific learning objective, which they then present to their Line Manager for approval.



### 3) Manager Pieces

As the Learner progresses through the Sticky Learning® method, the Line Manager is emailed 'Manager Pieces', which contain a briefing of what they need to do next. This may include suggestions on how to support their Learner to identify their ILO, a knowledge vault containing videos, research, and further learning to help them engage more as a Line Manager.

## Action

Contact us to discuss how we can improve Line Manager engagement for you.



## 8. Offer a Pragmatic Solution

Line Managers are busy and they want a simple and practical solution to a problem. Offering a pragmatic solution will certainly show that you understand their pressures. This is better than asking for something that you both know they'll default on, which will decrease the trust between you both (The trust formula is based on 4 elements).

Most Line Managers will have team meetings. Ask the Line Manager to add a 10-minute 'Training' slot to their team meeting agenda. Share with them that the key question to ask the team is, 'Who is going to achieve their learning objectives?' Learners may respond with, 'What learning objectives?', or 'I just haven't got time'. By asking this question, the Line Manager will realise the status of the team's learning and from there, can offer appropriate encouragement to the team members.

A hand-drawn diagram illustrating the trust formula. On the left, the word 'TRUST' is written in blue, followed by an equals sign. To the right of the equals sign is a horizontal blue line. Above the line, the words 'CREDIBILITY + RELIABILITY + INTIMACY' are written in blue. Below the line, the words 'SELF ORIENTATION' are written in blue.

The 4 elements of the trust model

|                   |                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Credibility:      | 'He knows his stuff.'             |
| Reliability:      | 'He always delivers on time.'     |
| Intimacy:         | 'We know a bit about each other.' |
| Self-Orientation: | 'I want to know more about you.'  |

Think about someone who you don't trust - I bet you can identify one element from the trust equation that they fail to deliver.

### Action

Offer the Line Manager a practical solution that fits with an opportunity already in their diary. It should only take 10 minutes to execute, such as an agenda point at their next team meeting. By introducing this agenda point at the meeting, learning will become a key point of discussion.



## 9. Identify How Your Organisation Measures Up

The CIPD survey (see page 1) concluded that nearly 75% of all Line Managers are not giving the time, care and attention required to support team development. We know that Line Managers are integral to the development of their team, and team members often look to their Line Managers for guidance about how much they should focus on development.

We also know that Line Managers initiate over half of the conversations about the effectiveness of training. Gibb (2002) suggests that greater Line Manager involvement in learning and development promotes the notion of 'lifelong learning'. Often, Line Managers know on an intellectual level that they should be supporting, coaching, and helping, but they're just not. The solutions in this Guide will help.

Brian Tracy's [continuous improvement formula](#) offers a great way of understanding the power of lifelong learning.



### Action

Identify what percentage of the Line Manager's time is spent actively supporting their Learners with their learning. Is your organisation above or below the average percentage? The [PRO tool](#) can help to make a quick and easy estimation.

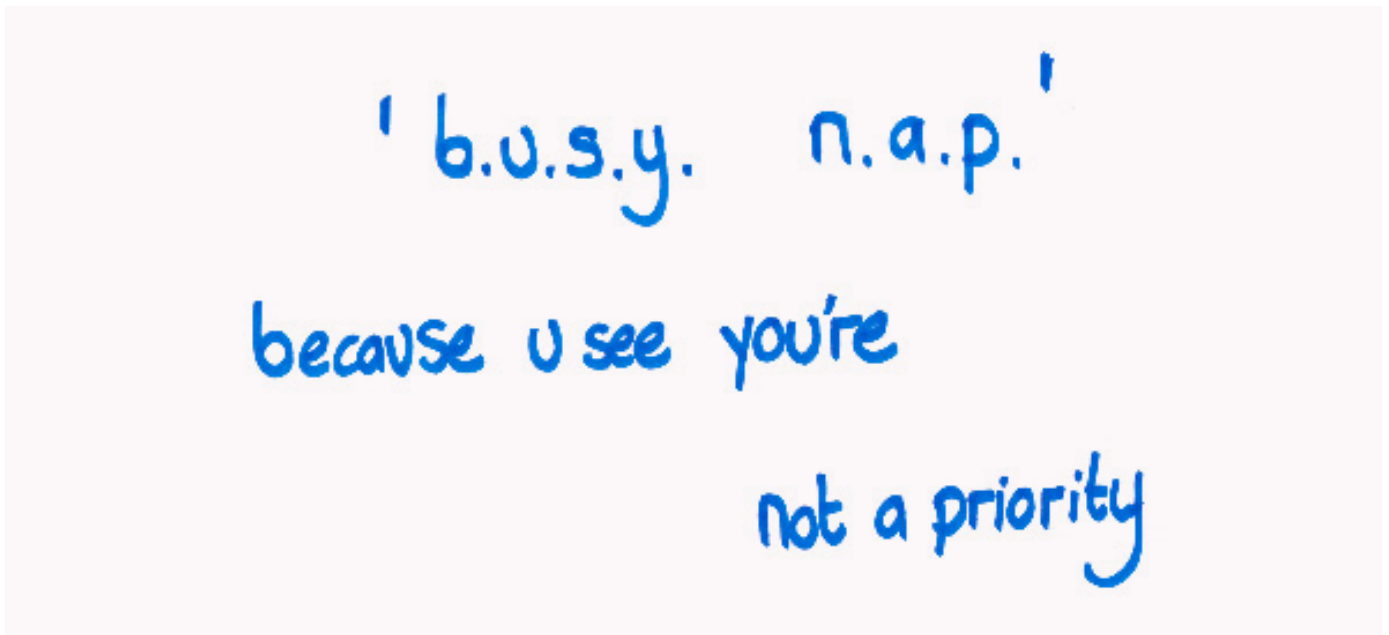




## 10. Get Their Attention

There are many reasons why Line Managers are not engaging with their Learners. For example, they may have a Director's request, a lot of work to do or their own development to deal with. However, when anyone says that they are 'busy', it really means that they are having a 'busy nap' from what you need them to do.

If your request is not a priority, it is because the Line Manager believes that it doesn't solve a problem for him or her, that it doesn't help them deliver their priorities, and/or it doesn't help them to achieve their KPI's and KRA's.



### Action

You may never really convince the Line Manager that engaging with their Learners throughout their training journey is a priority. However, you have to at least make a case. If you are unsuccessful in your efforts, then make it as easy as you can for them to do something, or anything, to engage.

You can also share with them through the 'open and direct approach'. The conversation may go something like this:

To Line Manager: 'This is not a priority for you, is it?'

Response: 'No.'

To Line Manager: 'I understand. You have a lot on your plate. I still need to achieve my objective. What can you please do to help?'



## 11. Realise that Your Relationship Needs Work

In the excellent Harvard Business Review article titled, 'Why Managers and HR Don't Get Along', Ron Ashkenas makes some excellent points about the relationship between HR Managers and Line Managers. Taking the notion that Muhammad won't come to the mountain, HR Managers can influence Line Managers by demonstrating a better understanding of the pressures that a Line Manager faces. After all, we all just want to be heard.

Advice from the Founder of the 70:20:10 Learning Model. Charles Jennings was the Head of Global Learning at Reuters and latterly founded the 70:20:10. In the same [podcast](#) that launched the 70:20:10 movement, Charles spoke to CIPD about the role of Line Managers and the findings from the latest CIPD survey. His advice from 2007 is still relevant today:



"I think there are a couple of very clear lessons that come out of the survey. One is that the L and D function needs to work very hard to earn a place at the top table. It's not going to be given a place at the top table, as a matter of course, it needs to work very hard. To do that the L and D function needs to build its own capability in order to be able to sit across the table and have those business discussions with senior managers – absolutely that. On the other hand, there's a lesson that Line Managers need to understand - that they have accountability for developing their people. And they need to work very closely with L and D, and they can't pass that responsibility across to the L and D function. It really comes down to a matter of trust – and as in any trust relationship, both sides have to work at it."

The approach that won't work is, 'You need to...' or, 'I've spoken to the Director and...' Whilst going above someone's head is a valid form of persuasion, there are many other methods to try before resorting to the sledgehammer.

### Actions

We suggest that the 'All Together' form of persuasion (see link above), with an encouraging tone, is the best route. For example, 'We've got 9 Line Managers supporting their Learners with a 30-minute 121 each month. How can we help you to achieve that so that you're not left behind?'



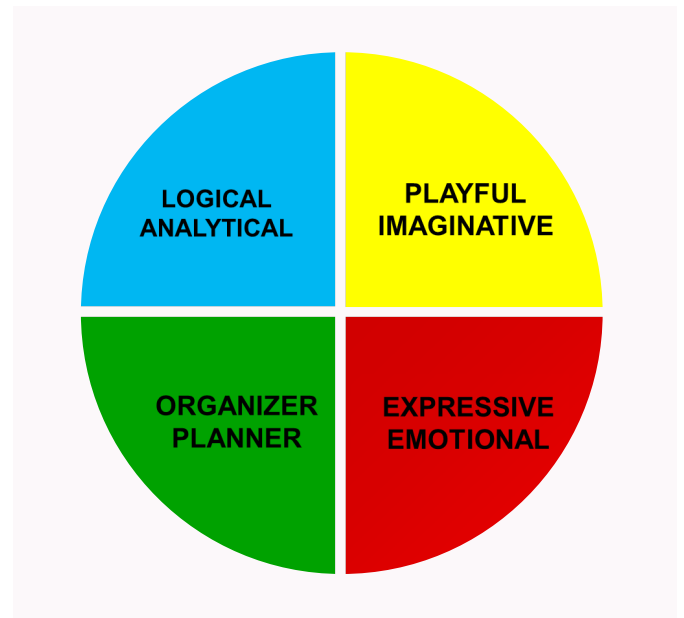
## 12. Make a Clear Case for Supporting Learners

At MBM, we have used the **Hermann Brain Dominance Index** tool for over a decade. The tool is basically a psychometric test, like Myers-Briggs, Jigsaw, or Thomas International. The reason we favour HBDI is because it is easy for Learners to grasp at the beginning, and has a series of deeper levels that Learners can discover as they progress.

In essence, HBDI measures someone's thinking preference. We can think in all 4 quadrants, however we usually prefer to think in 1 quadrant. A simple version of the HBDI model is shown to the right:

The guys at HBDI refer to it as 'Selling to the whole brain'. We suggest that you do this when you engage your Line Managers about their support for Learners.

Whether it's a presentation, discussion, or any other format, the basis of the 'sell' is as follows:



### Blue Quadrant - Facts

'Line Manager support has been proven to deliver a 5.45-times return on investment' (The actual study was about external coaches, but this could be legitimately transferred to a Line Manager scenario).

### Yellow Quadrant – Future

'By not supporting your Learners through their learning, ultimately you could be holding back your team because 'if you are not moving forwards, you are going backwards''.

### Green Quadrant – Form

'Discussing development with your Learners can take place in your 121's, so please add it to your 121 agenda.'

### Red Quadrant – Feeling

'By not supporting your team, they'll feel as though the time they put into their training is not valued and is a waste of time.'

## Actions

Sell to the whole brain by ensuring that your **presentation**, email, or conversation includes communication that appeals to all 4 quadrants.



## Are you Annoyed By How Little Line Managers Support The Skills Training Of Their Teams?

### What Next?

I hope that you have found this Guide useful and that you will use some, or all of the solutions, to help you engage Line Managers to better support the skills training of their teams.

We are the training provider to the UK grocery industry. We help suppliers to the big four supermarkets to develop the soft skills that will secure them more profitable wins.

The reason they choose us is because of our combination of **relevant experience** and our unique training method we call 'Sticky Learning®'.

The problem with most training methods is that they do not address the 3 challenges that our research told us that you experience. Our unique training method 'Sticky Learning®' combined with our 5 level evaluation addresses these 3 challenges.

I would like to offer you a **Training Effectiveness Review** using our exclusive scorecard. We will provide you with your organisation's current level, along with suggestions on how you can achieve the higher levels.

Please email me at [das@makingbusinessmatter.co.uk](mailto:das@makingbusinessmatter.co.uk) or call me on 0333 247 2012 to discuss solutions in this report, or to arrange your free Training Effectiveness Review.

I hope you found this Guide useful and I wish you every success.

Darren A. Smith  
Founder  
Making Business Matter



Found this guide useful? Share it »

Forward to a Friend »







# Are You Annoyed by How Little Line Managers Support the Skills Training of Their Teams?

## About Darren A. Smith

Darren spent his first 12 years as a Category Manager at one of the big four UK supermarkets. During this time he managed a number of areas comprising chilled ready meals, cheese, frozen foods, pizza and fresh fruit, along with an area worth £1bn.

Darren then went on to establish Making Business Matter, a training provider that works with suppliers to the big four UK supermarkets. Over the past 12 years, he and his team have supported supermarket suppliers in improving their negotiation skills, category management and time management.

He has written articles for The Grocer, Grocery Trader, Food Manufacture, Harpers, Fresh Produce Journal, British Frozen Foods Federation, Supply Management, People Development Magazine, published a book 'A Complete Understanding of the Groceries Code of Practice', and appeared on the BBC.

## About Making Business Matter

We are the training provider to the UK grocery industry. We help suppliers to the big four supermarkets to develop the soft skills that will secure them more profitable wins.

Our trainers have worked on both sides of the fence and know the challenges of working with the big four supermarkets, plus we also know how they think and what their hot buttons are.

The problem suppliers to the big 4 face is that they are investing money in training but are not seeing a measurable return on investment. This is because most training companies do not understand the mindset of buyers from the big 4 supermarkets and the skills being learnt are not getting put into practice.

Our unique training method, Sticky Learning®, ensures that your Learners are still using their new skills 5 months later, which enables us to guarantee a measurable return on your training investment.

## Links



[A list of our products »](#)

[Subscribe to our blog for people development tips »](#)





**MBM**

## **Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry**

80% of our Learners are still using their new skill 5 months later - we guarantee it!

**[www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk](http://www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk)**

© Copyright 2004-2016 Making Business Matter Limited. This guide is proprietary. Do not duplicate, distribute or train from without written permission. Email [helpme@makingbusinessmatter.co.uk](mailto:helpme@makingbusinessmatter.co.uk) for enquiries.

