There are no shortcuts to develop skills. Web-based training can convey information, but confidence and capability are honed through practice – REAL application – and feedback.

Since I’m in the training business, I like tests and I’m going to give you one now. Select the correct answer to the following question.

What is the best way to reduce weight and improve your health?

a. Use a natural herbal energizer and weight management supplement, containing a unique blend of specialized herbs and a patented ingredient, the only weight-loss product specifically designed to improve and promote better blood circulation.

b. Download Fat Manager, the software program that teaches, entertains, and motivates. All you have to do is enter your weight, and Fat Manager does the rest.

c. Order Hypnosis for Health, which includes two hypnosis sessions (Round is a Shape and That's Blechy) that get you moving again and naturally shaping the body you were meant to have.

d. Put down the chips and get up off the couch.

Flying in the face of common sense, we humans like to look for shortcuts, when what we really need to do is put down the chips and get moving. Simple? Yes! Easy? No.

Okay, I’ll give you another test; this one’s closer to business. What is the best way to get call center representatives to speak courteously and professionally?

a. Have them listen to the new audiotape, Speaking Good ‘n’ Loud.

b. Have them read the latest book by call center gurus, Ima Rich and Yuri Knot, entitled Courtesy Equals Cash: Conversations with Customers.

c. Have them take the web-based training module – one of the 35 that your company purchased – entitled, Wazzup! Slang and Other Customer Courtesy No No’s.

d. Listen to them and give them feedback.

Tough, isn’t it? You want to pick a, b, or c (or maybe, even DID pick one of those!) but the correct answer is d. Simple? Yes. Easy? No.

Improved skills don’t come from reading a book or listening to an audiotape or taking a WBT module. Improved skills come from practice and feedback.

As a longtime training professional and e-learning developer, I’m here to tell you that we’ve duped you. We’ve convinced you that you can trim down, tone up, and have a chiseled employee with ‘virtually no work on your part’. Over the past several years, we’ve hyped e-learning:

• “…accelerates key business processes by empowering your employees, customers, and partners with the information, skills, and relationships that ensure consistent results.”

• “…an online learning environment that is not only easy to use, but one that is warm and welcoming.”

• “…we enable fast-moving companies to accelerate knowledge transfer, facilitate continuous learning, and drive higher levels of performance.”

• “First year ROI - $5.6 million. Vendor X delivers live e-learning that helps get training results, which will increase retention and improve the bottom line.”

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