



# 6 Employee Training Mistakes to Avoid

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Most business leaders agree that skills development programs are valuable initiatives to strengthen employee and company success. Such programs can improve recruitment, employee engagement, and bottom-line business results. Yet success doesn't happen by accident. In fact, you're much more likely to succeed if you recognize and **avoid these six common pitfalls**:

### 1) Just Do It

Nike® was onto something with its slogan “just do it!” That nudge to overcome fear and obstacles to just get started has merit on and off the playing field. But, if your employee training and development program isn't aligned with your company goals – just as if a team is not aligned with the rules of the game – it's really tough to win. Crossing your fingers and wishing for the best won't get you where you need to go.

Start by articulating your company goals and the skills your workforce needs to support the organization's next steps. Then (and only then) build your training program around those targeted skills.

**PRO TIP: Align your training and skills development programs with your business goals.**

### 2) Follow Your Employees' Lead

Actor Woody Allen famously said, “Eighty percent of success is showing up.” Perhaps, but ... that last twenty percent can be really important. If your workforce is eager to “show up” to build their skills, that's a great place to start, but it's not enough.



Left to their own devices, the humans that are your employees will naturally be pulled to the skills they already enjoy. Which means, you'll have employees getting really good at something that may not be important to your company, while skipping the skills they need to advance their careers. The soul-crushing outcome is employees who never become the competent contributors they deserve to be, despite their efforts to improve.

Be sure your training programs are aligned with individual development plans, so all employees are developing the skills that they (and you) need to succeed.

**PRO TIP: Use individual development plans to guide employee training and development.**

### 3) Offer One Size for All

Fashion designers introduced one-size-fits-all clothing styles more than fifty years ago. Clothing manufacturers and retailers loved that they had only one size garment to make, stock, and sell for consumers across a range of body types. It's a brilliant, inclusive solution – if you're selling muumuus. For skills development programs, though, not so much.

We all learn differently. Some enjoy reading, others learn more from listening, and some skills simply require hands-on practice to master. Learners also have different needs

and preferences depending on where they are in their careers, which generation they belong to, and their level of mastery.

To serve your workforce well, you'll need to offer a range of learning opportunities – online classes, in-person and/or virtual classroom courses, mentoring, internships, inspirational speakers, and more.

**PRO TIP: Include a variety of learning techniques and options for skills development.**

#### 4) Go It Alone

“He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk.” So says leadership expert and author John C. Maxwell. If you're leading a training program at your organization, even if it's aligned with company goals and well-designed, it won't make a difference if no one is using it.

Employees need to engage with training and development programs actively and enthusiastically. Managers should be aligning individual development plans with targeted skills their employees need. Together, advancing employee skills must be a collaborative, transparent effort that focuses on goals, measures progress, actively removes obstacles, and creates opportunities for the skills to improve.

**PRO TIP: Secure support from managers at all levels in your organization before implementing your training and development program.**

#### 5) Measure Once

We've all heard the advice from carpenters who urge, “Measure twice, cut once.” It's a sound reminder that, while measuring is a good thing, measuring once is often not enough to ensure desired outcomes. And once you've made the cut, it can be impossible to correct a measuring error.

Training and development leaders agree that measuring employee skills is important. Yet, all the time, we hear these questions from companies creating and managing skills development programs: “When do we need to measure?” “What to measure?” “Do we really need to capture baseline skill levels?” “Is it enough to track when employees complete targeted learning and development exercises?”

(We offer these answers: “Often.” “Mastery level of targeted skills and competencies.” “Yes.” “No.”)

Baseline [skills assessments](#) are essential to understanding what skills employees have today – and where there are essential gaps to fill. They are also needed to measure progress and assess which development activities are most effective. A learning management system can help track training activities, but you'll want ongoing assessments to measure practical outcomes.

**PRO TIP: Build in regular skills assessments to measure the effectiveness of your training and development program.**





## 6) Don't Look Back

It's tempting to launch a training and development program and keep pushing it forward based on solid research and expectations. But rarely does a program (of any kind) behave the way you expect. Real-life variables and changes can accelerate, decelerate, or derail success – unless you adjust along the way.

The late Jimmy Dean, American singer, TV personality, and entrepreneur, shared this truth about his approach to success, "I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination." That's good advice for employee development program leaders, too. We all – employees and leaders – need ongoing feedback to see what's working and to adjust what's not.

**PRO TIP: Continually monitor and measure the success of your training program. Adjust your sails, as needed, to reach your destination.**

If you're building or managing an employee training program and are looking for best practices and tools, [contact us](#) to see how Avilar's [WebMentor Skills™](#) and [WebMentor LMS™](#) can support your effort.

### About Avilar

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Avilar consultants are recognized as industry thought leaders and have decades of experience in implementation and analysis. Let Avilar help you transform your organization from ordinary to extraordinary.

