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YOUR ADVANTAGE

PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR IMPROVING PERFORMANCE VOL. 4 NO. 1

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FOUNDERS' COLUMN

Staying Hot While the Economy Cools

It's undeniable: Our economy has shifted from the Talent Wars of a few months ago to the unofficial Downsizing of 2001.

So, will the demand for superior selling, flawless service, strong performance management, business-literate team members, or leadership and teamwork fade? Will companies become short-term learning ostriches, slashing training budgets and de-investing in their people's talent?

Questions such as these were in the air when we founded Advantage a decade ago. Our answer now is the same as then: Yes, we believe that smart companies will continue to invest in people.

The pressures our clients feel to sustain competitive advantage and wring greater productivity out of fewer resources only strengthens our resolve to deliver a continuous stream of ideas that will ensure our clients stay hot long after the economy cools. (Case in point: see the reply card for a special "Strategies for Hard Times" white paper.)

This issue of Your Advantage is full of examples of how our consulting partners, representing a virtual human portal to the world's best-of-class learning tools, craft custom, integrated solutions that businesses need now. These are proven strategies tailored to today's super-fast, innovative, competitive, just-plain-exhilarating business environment.

So hang in there. These may be turbulent times, but the future has never looked better.

John Hoskins
and Glenn Jackson



The Art and Science of Developing Leaders Early

The sooner you can recognize people's talent, the sooner you can put them into situations where they can stretch and grow. That pays off in dividends," says Greg Tobin, Genentech Program Manager for Oncology Products and head of the company's new *Talent Development Program* (TDP).

Because Genentech was in a period of sustained growth, its sales division needed to prepare for new products and new competitive opportunities by developing more managers and leaders. Genentech senior sales management envisioned a career path process that focused on the area where talent really percolates: the pre-management level. This level was the logical place to nurture sales high-performers who had the potential to grow into managerial positions.

Chris Downey, Senior Manager of Sales Development explains, "We wanted a process that would identify and assess talent, plus give participants a very positive developmental experience." The process needn't be sales-specific. Tobin says, "One of our company catchphrases is 'zigzagging.' This means developing people so they can move into different functional areas. Pulling down the silos that keep people from broadening their experience and perspectives, and allowing their talent to enrich a variety of areas. That's one of the roles of the TDP."

From Great Idea to Powerhouse Program

Advantage partner Roger Shepard and Advantage co-founder John Hoskins collaborated with Downey to transform Genentech's great idea into a powerhouse *Talent Development Program*. Advantage partner Jerome Ley facilitated some of the sessions.

The entire program was designed to be driven by the candidates, who would examine their career goals, self-assess their readiness to move forward, choose their functional interests,

Corporate Issue

Biotech pioneer wants to develop an internal pool of future managers and leaders. Goal: demonstrate commitment to developing employees, a core value with a positive business impact.

Solution

Custom Talent Development Program (Values, Symphony and Audition from Real Learning; Tango from Celemi; Field Coaching from Porter Henry & Co.; and other assessment, leadership, and skill development strategies)

Success Team

*Roger Shepard, APG Partner (CA)
John Hoskins, APG Co-Founder (CA)
Jerome Ley, APG Partner (FL)*

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The Art and Science of Developing Leaders Early

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build management skills, and get involved in managerial activities to continue their momentum. Regional managers would also be involved throughout, to support the process and assess candidates' readiness for promotion. "The TDP builds skills while it evaluates career readiness," says Tobin. "It blends the art and the science of selecting managers and leaders."

Candidates for the TDP were chosen based on a blend of their skills and their personal job preferences. The first program round was a two-day Readiness Workshop held in San Francisco. Twenty-five candidates, plus regional managers and representatives from senior management, attended.

Downey recalls, "Kim Popovits, a Senior VP of Sales, told the candidates very simply, 'you are the future leaders of this organization.' It was a very dramatic statement, and the impact on the participants was stunning. For the first time, they really understood that our company valued what they had to offer."

The workshop began with self-assessment. Candidates used the *Values* exercise from Real Learning to create individual Development Plans that helped them determine what they wanted to work on to get to the next level. "This was very important," says Downey. "TDP makes it very clear that you must be responsible for and take charge of your own career development."

The next step was a "career fair" during which candidates heard colleagues from areas such as sales management, sales training, marketing, and managed-care relationships tout the benefits of a career in their field. Tobin recalls, "People loved the career fair. They said they never knew these other areas even existed. This also supports our 'zigzag' concept. Movement from one area to another, such as a field salesperson who moves into a marketing functional area, is very valuable."

That evening, candidates mingled with senior managers at a reception and asked questions about the prior day. The rest of the day was spent developing coaching and interviewing skills.

Regional managers played a large role every step of the way. Downey says, "When we rolled out the program, regional managers facilitated parts of the process, evaluated what participants were doing, led discussions. They truly embraced the entire process. We knew we had a program when it became so evident that management ran it, owned it, and believed in it."

"For the first time, they really understood that our company valued what they had to offer."

The program reconvened in Chicago the following month. Twelve candidates were identified as ready for management interviews and received further training to increase their readiness. "Most people need assistance on people-management issues such as developing a leadership style, field coaching, and interviewing," says Downey. So Shepard and Hoskins developed a workshop that focused on setting staff expectations, coaching, and team building. They incorporated elements of Real Learning's *Symphony* and *Audition*, and Porter Henry's *Field Coaching* programs.

The rest of the candidates went through Celemi's two-day *Tango* business simulation. "*Tango* addresses key skills applicable to a highly competitive environment, such as hiring in a tight labor market and developing your people. It's also used to observe how high-potential people demonstrate various skills and behaviors in new situations," explains Shepard. Downey recalls, "The people sitting at the *Tango* tables were absolutely blown away. They were saying, 'This is the coolest thing I've ever been through!'"

After the program concluded, candidates were encouraged to use their new skills by asking their managers for assignments such as helping prepare for a division sales meeting. Candidates who might soon transition into their first managerial positions were assigned a coach to provide guidance.

A Commitment to Internal Talent

The *Talent Development Program* clearly reflects Genentech's commitment to career pathing at every level. Tobin says, "What the TDP is all about is showing the corporation's commitment to internal talent. Candidates made a point of saying how great it was that the company was investing in its people."

Thus far, the TDP has resulted in eight promotions into management positions. "We've got a formula for success, and we'll crank up the program to meet the needs of expansion or turnover," says Downey. "We're also looking beyond that initial level. We're always considering, 'Does this person have the potential to go a few steps beyond the manager position?' This program is about identifying and supporting people's talent as far as they want to go, so that they can truly become the future leaders of Genentech."

(For more about the *Talent Development Program*, use the reply card to request a reprint of "Grow Your Own Managers.")



Miller Heiman's Industry Standard, *Strategic Selling*[®], Goes eLearning!

by David Pearson, Miller Heiman Director of Global Sales Alliances;
and Jenna Poinier, Miller Heiman Web-based Initiatives Manager

The downfall of nearly every training initiative is the absence of solid follow-up and reinforcement. This is why Miller Heiman, Inc., is pleased to announce its first eLearning course: Web-based Reinforcement for *Strategic Selling*[®]. World-class sales organizations that have adopted the Miller Heiman sales methodology can now receive a full year of reinforcement via the Web. This approach leverages previous investments in *Strategic Selling*[®] by ensuring that the concepts are retained and used consistently by the sales force.

“Sales organizations are running at a faster pace than ever. They are looking for new and innovative ways to more effectively implement sales process without encumbering the salesperson’s schedule,” says Sam Reese, Miller Heiman President and CEO. “We are pleased that this product accomplishes a compact, hard-hitting course for salespeople complemented by comprehensive management reporting and tracking.”

The new Web-based series consists of three components: assessment, reinforcement, and re-assessment. The assessment measures the salesperson’s knowledge to establish a baseline proficiency of *Strategic Selling*[®] concepts, followed by a full year of quarterly modules that continue to reinforce the concepts of *Strategic Selling*[®]. Salespeople can complete these modules at their convenience by

Salespeople can log on to Miller Heiman’s Web-hosted learning center 24-7.

logging on to Miller Heiman’s Web-hosted learning center 24-7. A series of management reports are available that show each salesperson’s knowledge level and areas of strength and deficiency, and a comparison of group results. The reports make it easy to provide targeted coaching, and can be exported for use with CRM applications and other reporting software. The entire system is hosted and administered by Miller Heiman.

“The critical hurdle for the success of any sales training program is to have participants apply what they have learned back on the job,” says Ed Schneider, Miller Heiman client associate from Bergen Brunswig Corporation. “Miller Heiman’s Web-based Reinforcement Series is a fantastic method for getting over this hurdle to help organizations better implement *Strategic Selling*[®]. It’s a great tool for helping managers coach and reinforce the material. This value-added resource helped in our selection of Miller Heiman as our process partner.”

Miller Heiman will continue to enhance its leadership position in sales process implementation by leveraging technology to assist sales organizations in meeting their business objectives. Web-based Reinforcement for *Strategic Selling*[®] is the first of many programs that Miller Heiman is developing for the Web.



REPLY CARD

When Sales Is Negotiation

More Advantage clients are finding it helpful to think about selling and negotiating as concurrent processes.

As Advantage alliance partner ThoughtBridge explains, “One common sales paradigm is that first you sell; then, later in the cycle, you negotiate. The paradigm that we subscribe to is that sales and negotiation are *parallel* processes, particularly in complex sales situations. That’s because you are both selling (persuading your counterpart that you have something to offer) and negotiating (ensuring that your needs—and theirs—can be resolved in a way that brings value to you both) during the *entire* sales cycle. When organizations consider customer relationships in this context, many find that their competitive leverage depends on helping their salespeople enhance their ability to analyze and execute the negotiation side of selling.”

Makes perfect sense, especially to a leading Internet company that recently implemented ThoughtBridge’s *Dealmaking: 7 Elements of Negotiation* program as a complementary follow-on to Huthwaite’s *SPIN Selling*[™] training. Watch for more on this subject in the next issue of *Your Advantage*.



REPLY CARD

You Got It, Toyota: Unleashing Performance Mastery

In 1999, Mike Morrison became Dean of Toyota Motor Sales, USA's newly-created University of Toyota. As head of the learning organization at Toyota world headquarters, Morrison was seeking a way to reinforce the mandate and expand the capabilities of the University. With the help of Advantage Southern California partner Mike Castling, he discovered Real Learning Company's *Performance Mastery* programs, tools, and outcomes. The search was over.

Today, Morrison and the University of Toyota are intent on helping Toyota Motor Sales (TMS) become a true learning organization. Morrison's partners are a team of highly collaborative and imaginative learning experts who include Castling, Real Learning President Richard Hodge, Real Learning Vice President Tim Blakesly, and University of Toyota Associate Dean Will Decker.

Previous TMS manager/supervisor training had been long on theory but short on ways to put learning into practice. Real Learning's initial solution was *Tools for Great Managers (Tools)*, a program based on principles and processes from their best-selling *Symphony* and *Conductor* learning systems. (The program's genesis is a story in itself: a Herculean effort by Real Learning to create a fully customized, case-rich, three-day annual meeting curriculum, in an experiential format, for 250 operations managers from across the U.S. Real Learning met the extreme 12-week time crunch, and participant feedback showed the program was a winner. Morrison said, "I was hoping for a double on this, and I got a home run!")

Tools for Great Managers

Tools gives managers a process for planning and exceeding individual, team, and corporate goals. Each program module is customized to the critical business issues and strategic goals of participants' actual work environments. A companion desktop toolbox, containing index reference cards to use for reinforcement, was created to keep new skills alive. This, combined with a rich set of Web tools, makes the learning easy to apply back in the real world.

"The reaction to *Tools* has been remarkable," says Castling. The modular version was piloted for Toyota's huge parts facility in Ontario, California, which will run an expanded curriculum this year. Several other divisions have also expressed interest and are in the early stages of implementation.

"I was hoping for a double on this, and I got a home run!"

Corporate Issue

Learning arm of global automotive leader wants to reinforce its mandate and expand its capabilities to internal customers. Goals: 1) help company move toward becoming a true learning organization, 2) continue developing world-class managers.

Solution

Custom Tools for Great Managers (*Symphony, Conductor, and related modules*), *Dress Rehearsal*, and *Audition*—all from *The Real Learning Company*

Success Team

Mike Castling, APG Southern California Partner (CA)

Richard Hodge, President, Real Learning Company (AZ)

Tim Blakesly, VP Professional Services, Real Learning Company (CA)

Tools for Great Managers training is delivered by Blakesly and his team of internal and external facilitators. Toyota is so committed to the program's success that Blakesly occupies an office at Toyota part-time. He acts as a full-time business liaison on behalf of the University, working with Castling to connect the needs of TMS business units to Real Learning solutions.

Demand for Performance Mastery Grows

Based on the success of *Tools*, Toyota University added Real Learning's *Dress Rehearsal* program to their curriculum. Hodge explains, "Toyota is steeped in a rich culture of unexcelled quality. The challenge is to sustain that quality with the speed and flexibility required by the new economy. Toyota recognizes that the only way to achieve this is for leaders to trust teams to make the right decisions, and then empower them with skills, knowledge, and authority. That experience is what *Dress Rehearsal* delivers."

The University then developed a video introducing *Dress Rehearsal* to business units. All University staff, all corporate lawyers, 100 managers from Toyota Financial Services, the entire Financial Services Customer Services division, and all Lexus field service staff have gone through the program. Participants report valuable results such as increased cross-team communication, better team focus on finding solutions, and more supportive team members.

Next, Toyota University turned its attention to *Audition*, a Real Learning program that helps interviewers and managers select the

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You Got It, Toyota: Unleashing Performance Mastery (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

right candidates for corporate positions. *Audition* is a natural choice for an industry leader such as TMS that is committed to choosing, aligning, and retaining the right talent. This program has been fully customized around the talents and competencies Toyota has found important to exceptional performance. *Audition* will be rolled out in Spring 2001 to 250 participants.

And there's more on the way. As a Japanese organization, TMS is already very good at process. APG/Real Learning is crafting an entire development program that will help employees build on that expertise by learning how to accomplish goals even more quickly and efficiently.

Audition is a natural choice for an industry leader such as TMS that is committed to choosing, aligning, and retaining the right talent.

What Performance Partnership Is All About

Obviously, this partnership is working. What's the secret? Toyota University has said that they value having access to a partner that can do things so quickly and efficiently; that no matter what their internal customers need, Real Learning can build it; that programs are tailored to exact business needs, enthusiastically received, and achieve results for diverse audiences and groups. There's also personal chemistry and trust between all of the partners.

Moreover, this performance partnership goes beyond specific solutions to today's business needs. Toyota has shared long-term strategic plans with Real Learning, even inviting Hodge to facilitate an executive offsite that included the President of Toyota Motor Sales, North America.

This kind of true collaboration, innovation, and commitment is what performance improvement partnership is really all about. It's also how true learning organizations are built. Our guess is that this partnership will only get better.



Lighting the Fuse of Product Launches

Achieving Sales Excellence™

A leading biotech firm recently used a customized version of Huthwaite's *Achieving Sales Excellence* (ASE) to boost sales skills in support of a major product launch. The company ran ASE concurrently in four U.S. locations.

"This sales organization was a highly-experienced and critical audience," says Advantage consultant Linda Lytle. "But they were absolutely entranced by ASE. The training was a tremendous success."

APG and Alliance Performance Systems completely customized the ASE program around the company's new product. Implementation involved 23 facilitators, rigorous preparatory training for company district managers who co-facilitated, and dry runs with distribution managers who provided valuable feedback.

"I've never seen a group across the country coalesce as well. It was an amazing experience. This initiative absolutely attests to the value of using ASE to gear up the sales team for a critical product launch."

Achieving Sales Excellence is a powerful, systematic approach to maximizing sales performance that helps sales professionals better understand the buying process, strategically influence buyers' decision criteria, and deliver better value to customers.

Apollo 13

A Fortune 200 company recently used the *Apollo 13* team and leadership simulation, from JCH Associates, to blast off an extensive product launch initiative.

The action-packed behavior change experience emphasized how leadership, teamwork, and trust are essential for successful product launches. It was presented to 120 field sales managers, and then to 100 marketing managers. The *Apollo 13* skills were also conveyed to other management training the client had already implemented.

"We used the metaphors and parallels between NASA launching space vehicles, and launching new products successfully," says Advantage consultant Chris Hickey. "We carried the theme throughout. The connection really worked, and the client said that the simulation nailed their needs perfectly."

Apollo 13 is an innovative, action-packed team and leadership simulation that uses the Universal Studios movie "Apollo 13" as a stunning illustration of the power of effective leadership and teamwork.

When “Built From Scratch” Is Best

Mercedes-Benz Credit (MBC), the trucking capital finance arm of DaimlerChrysler, operates in a unique niche. It supports three levels of customers—truck manufacturers, truck dealers, and fleet owners and truckers—in a very competitive market.

“We felt our people needed to be more educated about our industry in order to provide additional value to customers,” explains Training Coordinator Marcie Seyfarth. “We also wanted to improve credit quality and productivity. Recognizing that our business needs are unique, we found very few external educational programs available, so we turned to Advantage for a customized solution.”

“Our goal is to be really good partners with all of our customers.”

The solution from Advantage partner Jeff Tucker and Advantage consultant Greg Gunther (and his Frogkick, Inc., team) was two workshops built from scratch. Tucker says, “MBC had a lot of new people coming in who could benefit from more knowledge about the nuances of the truck transportation industry. It also wanted to reduce credit application cycle time and improve credit decisions, which would reduce overall cost of sales. We needed to create a custom solution that would address both needs.”

The first step was conducting customer interviews and research. Tucker and Gunther collaborated closely with Seyfarth during this development phase. “We wanted to reflect the way this company did business, the needs of their customers, their language, and a lot of their processes and procedures,” explains Gunther. Seyfarth brought in an internal credit expert, and Gunther added a banker subject-matter expert who was familiar with lending to the industry. Since senior MBC credit analysts have the dual mission of issuing credit and supporting sales, sales and credit skills were blended into the training.

Corporate Issue

Truck transportation capital finance company needs to boost industry knowledge and credit skills. Goals: improve overall customer value, increase credit quality, sharpen competitive edge.

Advantage Solution

Custom Industry Orientation and Credit Issuance workshops

Success Team

Jeff Tucker, APG Partner (IL)

Greg Gunther and Carol Doeringer, APG Consultants (Frogkick, Inc., NJ)

Building Industry Knowledge

The Industry Orientation Workshop was presented to an audience of recently hired employees. This day-long, interactive session covered issues such as industry trends, why customers buy, and a macro overview of credit quality concepts. “This kind of detailed industry knowledge helps our people respond to customers’ needs better, and helps us manage our overall operation more effectively,” says Seyfarth. Gunther adds, “People got an opportunity to dive deeply into and gain a level of expertise about a specific area, then rotate to a different issue. The synthesis of perspectives was very impressive.”

Improving Credit Speed and Quality

The two-day Credit Issuance Workshop was presented to senior fleet and dealer credit analysts. It included a skill-level pre-assessment, a working capital session, and a case study exercise. During the working capital session, participants playing business roles were required to make increasingly complex decisions as they practiced running a business. The case study incorporated an MBC spreadsheet. “We introduced the concept of scenario modeling, which supplemented MBC’s use of their spreadsheet software,” says Gunther. “This was a real added value because it helped the analysts make better credit decisions.”

“My experience working with Advantage and Frogkick was incredibly positive,” says Seyfarth. “They were extremely responsive to our needs, and created completely custom solutions that were very high quality. The collaborative partnership that developed between us was absolutely a key to success.”

Better Partnerships, Competitive Excellence

MBC will continue to offer the Industry Orientation Workshop to all employees and new hires. Seyfarth says, “Our goal is to be really good partners with all of our customers. That requires service and also knowledge, which the industry training helps us attain. Another plus is that any time employees feel that you’re investing in them from a knowledge standpoint, that’s very beneficial.”

The Credit Issuance Workshop also met the goal. “Our managers would attest to the fact that their people are using the new skills, without a doubt,” says Seyfarth. “If we can get a credit decision back to the customer quickly, that’s good partnership. If we can reduce the cycle time below that of our competition, it might make the difference between winning and losing the deal. So from a competitive standpoint alone, we feel that the credit training has also been very valuable.”

Building a Knowledge Company

Ohio-based Standard Register is a nationwide leader in delivering customized document management and workflow solutions to healthcare, financial, and general business markets. Serving as a strategic partner, Standard Register helps businesses reduce costs and increase revenue. Offerings range from traditional forms manufacturing to commercial and digital on-demand printing, e-documents and related desktop printing and processing solutions, Internet and paper-based billing services, and labeling solutions.

Because of the complex, rapidly changing business environment in which the company operates, Organization Development Consultant Joe Goldwasser wanted to introduce the concept of a knowledge organization to the company's managers. When he turned to Advantage partner Peg Ruppert for ideas, she recommended Celemi's *Tango*.

The *Tango* business simulation helps people learn how to balance their company's tangible and intangible assets. Goldwasser says, "I was interested in *Tango* because although I didn't see us as a knowledge company, per se, at that time, I knew it was important to manage differently in a company where knowledge is an asset."

"We couldn't have timed *Tango* better. It really fit into what was going on in our company."

ing to the soft side of the business, making sure that people are motivated and deployed in support of both the strategy and the service side," explains Ruppert. "It's an ideal solution for companies that are continuing to evolve and want their managers to understand this unique balance. It truly builds the foundation of a knowledge company."

Tango training for a group of cross-functional managers was scheduled to take place several months later. Meanwhile, a new CEO joined Standard Register and the senior executive team began a formal reassessment of the company's strategic direction, including its markets, customers, and processes, and how employees would work together to achieve new goals.

Corporate Issue

Leading document management company wants to introduce managers to new knowledge-based concepts. Goal: enable employees to succeed during and after company's strategic transformation.

Solution

Tango knowledge company business simulation, from Celemi

Success Team

Peg Ruppert, APG Partner (OH)

Brent Snow, APG Consultant (NY)

Glenn Jackson, APG Co-Founder (CA)

Linking *Tango* to New Corporate Strategy

Goldwasser explains, "The *Tango* choice seemed almost predestined at that point because we had begun a process of redefining ourselves as a company. Did we need to change the way we sell? Did we need to think more like a knowledge business? It's the same kind of transformation that many companies are going through right now."

Managers were aware of the strategy work in progress when they convened for the *Tango* training. Executive Vice President Ed Wohlwender kicked off the program, facilitated part of the session, and linked learning to the strategic work happening behind the scenes.

"During the simulation, groups representing companies had to choose a strategy and determine how to implement it. This opened a lot of eyes," says Goldwasser. "Everyone was aware of our company's strategy work, and discussing it in the framework of *Tango* really helped people understand that process."

Learning to Motivate Employees, Manage to Revenue



During the simulation, participants learned how to perceive the intrinsic value of each employee's knowledge, and how to motivate employees to grow and succeed while simultaneously balancing the budget.

The concept of balance really hit home, especially in light of the company's pending strategic shift. Goldwasser recalls one manager's account of what happened while he was driving home the first day of the program. "It suddenly hit him: 'Do I *really* understand how my people want to be developed?' The thought was pretty powerful; he completely missed his exit for home! He felt that realization would be a major turning point in his ability to manage effectively." Another manager said, "The great thing about this exercise was that it demonstrated the delicate balance between all of the variables, and gave us some realistic practice dealing with them. Anyone considered for a senior leadership role should participate in *Tango*."

Goldwasser believes that the lessons of *Tango* will definitely help managers support the company's new direction. "We couldn't have timed *Tango* better. It really fit into what was going on in our company. Next time we run the program, we'll be able to connect it to our new strategy. Because of what *Tango* has helped managers understand, there's no doubt that it will help them support and achieve our new corporate goals."

Advantage Partner Profile

Peg Ruppert



What's most interesting these days?

I'm fascinated by the new opportunities for integrating learning methodologies, particularly "blended learning," which combines eLearning with traditional learning. ELearning enables us to hit people faster, cheaper, and better. Combine that with traditional group interaction in a workshop, and it's very powerful. Using a finely tuned strategy, it's possible to effectively pre-assess, provide basic skill training, and post-assess all via the Internet. When we do spend money and time to bring people together, we can be assured everyone is at a single starting point and the focus is on those specific areas that are enhanced by the group dynamic process.

Are people embracing the high-tech side of training?

When you demystify the tech side, people recognize eLearning as simply another tool in their toolbox. But a very exciting, very appropriate one. It's cost-effective. It's personal. It opens up fascinating avenues for long-term practice, reinforcement, and skill development in exactly the areas people need for their job—everything we've always said was important. Finally having the technologies available to embed this in organizations is pretty breathtaking.

Peg's Picks

Biz Trends

www.hbsp.harvard.edu/hbr

For me, the online Harvard Business Review beats the paper-based mag. Great for creating an archive of current business trends.

Wide World of Tech

www.ZDNet.com

I use this for breaking tech-related news and consumer reports, all at a glance.

Traveler's Aid

www.travelocity.com

As a business owner with two children under 5, I look for sites that make life easier. This one gets me on the plane and on my way without the hassle.

Is everybody ready to play?

It won't be long. The challenge, naturally, is that many organizations are not yet equipped from a bandwidth perspective to fully enjoy the benefits. But we're seeing a real transition in the marketplace right now. Every client I talk to is either just getting there, or they have eLearning and associated technology upgrades in their budget for this year or next. It's definitely coming.

Advantage Announces New Alliance Partners

Miller Heiman, Inc.

Miller Heiman's strategic sales performance approach helps organizations increase revenue, shorten sales cycles, improve forecast accuracy, and build long-term customer relationships. Its research-based sales programs, including the highly regarded *Strategic Selling*[®] program (based on the classic sales planning book), are founded on a solid understanding of the key elements of a successful sales call. (www.millerheiman.com)



Root Learning[®], Inc.

Root Learning helps organizations educate and align their employees around complex business issues. Its unique learning technology employs compelling graphic maps and dialogue that delivers cogent analysis of a company's financial, competitive, and organizational picture. Products and services include the Business MadeSimple[™] program and compelling, customized Learning Map[™] modules. (www.rootlearning.com)



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