



Event based training can be a key revenue contributor or a draw on company budgets and finances. To achieve the maximum return you need to manage the business side of training as efficiently and as effectively as you manage the educational side.

In the pages that follow, AccessPlanIT, a leading supplier of training management solutions, offers invaluable advice on how to avoid the five costliest mistakes in managing training programs while improving the quality, financial return, and overall business impact of your training initiatives.

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## **Mistake 1: Administration devours resources**

As the scale of your training programs begin to grow, every aspect of your operation grows. Your audience grows, your course offerings expand, and the frequency with which you offer courses continues to increase. More resources are required to manage the workload. As a result your bottom line begins to take a beating. Costs mount as training managers wrestle with a slew of administrative tasks associated with course date management. Managing registrations, waiting lists and resources can present a huge administrative burden. Far too much manual effort is spent processing registration requests, confirming bookings, communicating with registrants and processing payments.

Managing training schedules and instructors can be enormously time-consuming. If you're relying on any manual processes for issuing invoices or collecting payment, you're consuming even more resources. Reporting often takes a back seat and you are unable to assess the overall effectiveness and profitability of your organisation.

To avoid losing the battle to these costs and tasks you must streamline training administration by replacing time-consuming manual processes with a dedicated solutions designed to automate the workflow and logistics associated with your training programs. Doing so will allow you to increase the scale and reach of your training programs without further taxing your resources.

*AccessPlanIT's Course Manager solution is a purpose-built solution for training providers dedicated to improving business processes and creating customer success through effective training programs.*

*Course Manager automates and streamlines all core processes involved in the day to day management of a training department including registrations, scheduling, communication, marketing and reporting. Integrated finance functionality automates invoicing and facilitates online payment.*

*Research by expertus revealed that over 70% of organisation felt they could increase the efficiency of their administration and operation by investing in technology.*

## **Mistake 2: Failing to capitalise on sales opportunities**

Can clients register for your courses 24 hours a day, 7 days a week? Are they able to access live courses catalogues? In today's competitive marketplace it is vital to capitalise on every sales opportunity. Since training makes an important contribution to your company's revenues or departmental budget, you'll want to sell your programs as effectively as possible. However, many organisations fail in a couple of key areas: course registration and marketing.

Lack of automation in the registration process is surprisingly prevalent in many training programs. Customers spend too much time and energy searching for and then trying to register for courses. Many systems allow you to register an interest but often prevent you from 'capturing the sale'. If you are to maximise the sales potential of your training programmes these processes must be thoroughly automated. You need to offer an intuitive Web-based registration facility, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To increase course registrations you need to improve the marketing you put behind your training programs. You need to have system in place that allow you to leverage data to automatically target and deliver invitations about new training offerings to prospective students.

*AccessPlanIT's Course Manager provides you with an automated online booking and payment portal available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The system automatically generates and delivers associated correspondence to learners.*

*Course Manager provides you with advanced analytics and marketing tools that help you better target and market your course offerings and increase enrolments. Send personalised 'targeted' email newsletters, announcements, order confirmations, reminders, notices, special offers and much more.*

### **Mistake 3: Rationalisation - business decisions are based on supposition rather than fact.**

Business intelligence is vital to fight the temptation to go with your instincts.

In these times when business confidence is taking a 'bashing' with rising inflation, falling profits and 'soaring' costs, routine business decisions gain a new significance.

As a training provider you are potentially hit from both sides, your customers are looking to minimise expenditure and cutting back on 'non-essential' training and your organisations internal resources and running cost are multiplying.

Rationalisation became a word synonymous with cuts and redundancies but this need not be the case. Failure to take a rational approach to the planning, marketing and delivery of training can erode margins significantly.

Taking a rational approach sounds easy, which indeed it is as long as the right information is to hand. We all believe we know the really important facts about running our business (or training department) but are our suppositions correct. We know that the 'XYZ course' is always full and that we are charging the market rates, but do we really know the actual profit margin this generates after paying the trainer, the venue, caterers, hire of the AV system and so on. How difficult it would be 'drop' the most popular course because of uncertainty regarding it making a good return?

How many attendees are needed to make a course viable? Are you using your trainer to best effect, how much 'slack' time have they? Do you know the break-even point? Do you have the time to work out all the equations necessary? Is relevant finance information available to course administrators? Is it viable to take time out to generate all the information needed to make a 'real business decisions' rather than assuming you know?

When times are hard we instinctively avoid new expenditure but this is not always the wisest decision. Investing in tools that facilitates not only efficient working, improved customer access to services and most important of all provides the information needed to make on-going decisions is essential. 'Hard times' drive innovation and thought in 'the survivors'. The need to make the most of resources and potentially newly restricted opportunities is vital. Can training provider do this with their current systems?

*AccessPlanIT's Course Manager is designed for the training industry to facilitate 'true' training event 'management'.*

*AccessPlanIT's Course Manager has a suite of tools built in that help you make the right business decisions. Every course and course event allows fully costed resource to be assigned, with an instant over-view of the courses financial viability being visible in 'real time', i.e. automatically up-dated when a new attendee books on the course.*

*Reports detail cost/profit of every event passed and future and a minimum number of attendee can be set which will allow an automatically triggered email to be sent to the administrator in*

*time to cancel or consolidate the attendee with another course. Reports are also available to allow detailed break-down of costs per training event. Reports also show numbers of attendee per event, even being able to give a breakdown by age and ethnicity.*

*The unique strength of AccessPlanIT's Course Manager lies within the 'always on' web based technology, generating information to allow training administrators to be pro-active and responsive in their decision making, turning I think I know into I really know.*

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#### **Mistake 4: Attendees are the only ones that learn.**

Do you poll candidates beforehand to assess their needs? Do you use post course evaluations to identify areas for improvement? Training can—and should—be a continual learning process for both the trainee and trainer. Obviously, the more you know about your audience, the more effectively you can personalise your programs, fine-tune content, package offerings, and target offers. So you need to interact with attendees not only during the training sessions, but also before and after. Polling registrants allows you to collect feedback about your programs. By making your training a closed-loop process you can continuously improve the relevance and value of the content offered.

These tasks are easily accomplished with automated solutions. You can also track customer feedback history to document program effectiveness and to discern program and student trends. Think of the marketing and delivery of training as an opportunity to create and build one-to-one relationships and you'll enjoy mutually rewarding, sustained relationships.

*AccessPlanIT's Course Manager solution delivers the business intelligence needed to understand your students' needs and expectations. You can poll registrants before and after course delivery. Multi-dimensional reporting allows you to gauge results and continuously improve your training programs and processes. Response can be linked to specific courses, trainers, venues or clients.*

## Mistake 5: Failure to Communicate

Communication with the customer is vital, many training organisations being guilty of focusing on the attendee and failing to keep the customer, i.e. the employer, fully involved. Experience shows that gaining the commitment of the employer or his representative, e.g. the HR manager, generates loyalty, leading to increased repeat business.

Sometimes, there is an assumption that the employer simply decides that an employee needs training, books that training and then forgets about it. Common sense tells one that the reality is different. Sending employees on training is a major expense, an investment and commitment; employers want to know how their person is progressing, their attendance record, any awards gained or other any achievements. Creating this communication link, builds relationships which leads to more business. But how does a busy training manager develop this information based relationship.

There are cases where training organisations may fail to capitalise on the most obvious repeat business, for example where re-fresher training is a mandatory requirement. Manual reminders, diary entries etc are doomed to fail, while a computerised system will generate the reminder and email the employer while you concentrate of less routine activity.

The poor completion rate of NVQ's and other modular courses is frequently blamed on trainers or assessors failure to involve the workplace. This phenomenon is often the result of the amount of assessors being bogged down with paper work and routine administration leaving neither the time nor the systems to create an effective communication network.

*AccessPlanIT's Course Manager has powerful auto-generated notification which triggered by key events, e.g. a candidate falling behind their set target, failing to attend, certificate about to expire, etc. Additionally, your customer will be able login to Course Manager and track progress, etc. A National Award Winning Accessplan user claims increased completion rates in the order of 70%.*

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### **Make no mistake: Course Manager is incredibly valuable.**

The ever-expanding role training plays in an enterprise creates an urgent need to manage the business side of the programs more efficiently and effectively.

AccessPlanIT's Course Manager provides the powerful and integrated set of tools you need to automate the management and business of training. All functionality is delivered via a simple Web interface. Deployments take only a few weeks meaning your organisation realises a much greater return on investment in training—quickly.

For more information about Course Manager please contact us at:

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