THINK VALUE "NOT RESULTS" Q&A

Q **What inspired you to create this pyramid? What is the common problem that this solves?**

Anyone who has worked for extensive time in the L&D profession knows that, for too long, we have been perceived as "order takers and deliverers" who have a single product to offer: "training". And for too long, too many of us have fallen prey to living up to that misconception – knowing that if we do not respond with a clear offer to fill the order, our clients can quickly go elsewhere and find someone who will gives them what they ask for. On the evaluation side, we have also been too dominated by the notion that all training should be measured with the same four-level yardstick.

The Value Propositions framework is another tool, like performance analysis models and non-training solutions thinking, to help us dig ourselves out of this hole and become better and more valued consultants to the business.

Q **I love the pyramid and value propositions; how should I get started trying to put this into practice?**

As we mentioned in the webinar, there are a number of ways to apply the value propositions.

- Make the VP concepts part of your L&D skill repertoire.
- Clarify client needs and requirements - Employ VP thinking in client exchanges and needs analysis conversations.
- Analyse current L&D portfolio of programs: make note of over- or under-designed programs, assess allocation of evaluation and measurement procedures, currency of needs they address, etc.
- Restructure the program portfolio for the coming year according to strategic priorities and marketplace conditions.

The first points to really start applying the VPs, is to introduce the concept into your own team explaining how they impact not only the conversations that you have internally, but also with your stakeholders.

With your L&D colleagues, it's important to build that logical bridge between the individual Value Propositions and the robustness of the subsequent program design and implementation. How the work within L&D can be guided by the two criteria: How mission critical is the training to the business and what is the challenge in getting the right behaviour to happen on the job at the right time.

What we then begin to create is an internal shorthand, where we understand the scale of the task ahead of us based on each program's value proposition. Though it's crucial to reinforce the point that the hierarchy isn't rigid, so that some programs will move up the pyramid depending on how crucial they are right now for the organisation's success.

When it comes to speaking with stakeholders, there is a tipping point where we as L&D professionals stop becoming the 'order takers' for training and really start becoming business advisors. This is when we must engage our stakeholders in dialogue to understand what they really need and to clarify what can be done to create this. Making the clear link that there is a connection between the value we can deliver and the program that we design and implement. A program that is short in duration,

with limited interaction and practice opportunities, without business support is unlikely to succeed in bringing about any real behavioural change. This may be completely valid, but we need to have a dialogue to ensure that this is the case before we proceed.

When looking at your own programs and initiatives from a holistic perspective, it's important to address the current and future value of the programs that make up the overall portfolio. What has changed in the business situation that needs to cascade through to the supporting training initiatives, do some programs need to be de-prioritized in terms of the resources they require? What new initiatives need to be supported and how does this relate to the L&D budget and resource availability? Your Learning and Development portfolio should evolve as the business which they support changes. In order to stay relevant, but also to be able to support those key business initiatives that appear on our radar, it's crucial that we continually evaluate the value that they offer and make changes as necessary.

When it comes to new initiatives, in many cases the design, creation, and initial roll out of an L&D initiative tends to be extra resource heavy. What is the balance between a new initiative and the resources it requires, with existing offerings? Choices will have to be made as to what fully supports the business and what can be de-prioritized.

Q How do HPLJs go together with this pyramid and the six value propositions?

HPLJ is a methodology for designing programs where there is a need to impact on-job performance. As we saw in the webinar, there are other types of L&D programs that do not require on-job transfer to realize the value they can produce. For these programs that do not seek to produce on-job behavioural change, HPLJ would not apply or be helpful. The rule of thumb is: the greater the need for on-job behaviour change, and the greater the challenges to successfully impact on-job behaviour change, the more you need to follow and apply HPLJ principles and practices.

Q These value propositions sound like focusing on the goal or purpose of training instead of the content and delivery method. That's pretty fundamental and yet rarely done. Why don't more people focus on this already?

This comes back to the point of L&D being seen as being order-takers. L&D has to change its own understanding of its role and re-evaluate how it can bring value to the organisations it supports. Once we begin to show value, then it becomes easier to involve ourselves with both the goal and purpose of training – which is business results.

We in L&D are in the great position that we now have new tools – both in terms of approach and technology to change how we deliver value to the business. It isn't the case that everything we've done hasn't worked, much of it has, but if we look at how we can adjust our existing approaches to take advantage of what's out there these days, we can really make a difference.

The challenge we face to be taken seriously is that a change in both approach and mindset needs to take place. To talk value, we have to deliver value and perhaps more importantly, be seen to deliver this value as an L&D function. When it comes to mindset, we have to be brave and challenge our position but do so by applying good practice and the manner in which we design and implement L&D initiatives.

Q

If I reorganize my learning offerings into a smart portfolio based on these six value propositions, what benefits or positive results can I hope for?

The key benefit is a fluid learning and development portfolio that comprehensively addresses the demands of the organisation it supports and is optimally efficient in terms of resources needed to execute the L&D programs in the portfolio. In other words, how can we deploy our L&D resources in the most efficient way to support the needs of the business. A static portfolio of trainings can rapidly become outdated and costly to deliver, as well as it being difficult for the business to understand what is available.

Another positive aspect is that through having discussions around a program's value, we can demonstrate to the business that trainings are not all the same, that they should be intentionally different depending on what needs to be delivered. This should influence how the business sees L&D, rather than being a stand-alone training function L&D will be seen as a deciding and influential success factor for organisations.

A beneficial side effect of this will be a broader understanding within your L&D department of the value that is expected to be delivered. That a training initiative should be intentional, it shouldn't just be the basic delivery of training. Using the value propositions requires an honest conversation around the very core of each training, what we end up is L&D professionals who really can advise the business because of a broader understanding of what value needs to be returned to the organisation.

Q

On the DEI point - is a client ever likely to admit that it's just a tick-the-box exercise? Won't they always claim that they really want to change the culture? What signs would you look for to help you tell one from the other?

The key benefit is a fluid learning and development portfolio that comprehensively addresses the demands of the organisation it supports and is optimally efficient in terms of resources needed to execute the L&D programs in the portfolio. In other words, how can we deploy our L&D resources in the most efficient way to support the needs of the business. A static portfolio of trainings can rapidly become outdated and costly to deliver, as well as it being difficult for the business to understand what is available.

Another positive aspect is that through having discussions around a program's value, we can demonstrate to the business that trainings are not all the same, that they should be intentionally different depending on what needs to be delivered. This should influence how the business sees L&D, rather than being a stand-alone training function L&D will be seen as a deciding and influential success factor for organisations.

A beneficial side effect of this will be a broader understanding within your L&D department of the value that is expected to be delivered. That a training initiative should be intentional, it shouldn't just be the basic delivery of training. Using the value propositions requires an honest conversation around the very core of each training, what we end up is L&D professionals who really can advise the business because of a broader understanding of what value needs to be returned to the organisation.

PROMOTE®