

COMPLIANCE-BASED VS. COMMITMENT-BASED: Settling The Management Training Debate





When you think of your company's daily operations, what aspects come to mind? Internal meetings? Client calls? Endless emails? As you mentally list these tasks, think about what they do for your company. Maybe you're picturing your team simply going through the motions.

Aren't you tired of just getting by?

To start making a true difference in the way your company operates, you need to cultivate a workforce that's committed to learning and improvement. Are management training and self-improvement part of your regular routine?



For some companies, the provision of employee training is limited to two basic scenarios:

- 1) when an employee is hired
- 2) on an annual basis to meet corporate or industry requirements

This training model is far from effective or engaging for your team members.

When you provide your employees with professional development opportunities, you give your company a competitive advantage. Consider the following benefits of an investment in management training:

- Operations are more efficient and productive.
- Employees are more engaged.
- Leaders are identified and nurtured.
- Company loyalty is cultivated.

The right investment in management training goes beyond simply purchasing a course and providing it to your employees. You need to integrate training and self-improvement into your company culture.

Management Training By The Numbers

25%*

of employees want more opportunities to do what they do best.

40%*

of employees who receive poor job training leave within the first year of employment.

\$11 billion*

is what employee turnover costs each year.

59%*

of managers don't feel prepared to take on their role.

15%*

is how much management training spending increased in 2014, and the top category was leadership training.

\$70 billion+*

is how much U.S. companies spend on management training annually.

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The Role Of Training In Company Culture

There are two basic approaches used by companies to train their workforce.

Compliance-based training is enacted by leadership or human resources to meet internal or external training requirements (e.g., a construction company that holds training sessions to meet requirements outlined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration). This approach is typically associated with the idea of “checking off the training box.” But, because compliance-based training is set up solely to fulfill company or government mandates, many employees simply go through the motions without reaping any long-term benefits.

Commitment-based training is an approach adopted by companies that want to create a culture of improvement. In this model, management training is available to all employees, not just new ones or high-level leaders, and there is a strong focus on self-improvement within all areas of team members’ professional lives. Company leaders encourage participation in the training, and this commitment to improvement engages employees.

If you were to poll a number of companies, most would probably say they fall into the commitment-based category. Unfortunately, it’s far more likely that they actually implement compliance-based training.

Where does your company stand?



Benefits Of Commitment-Based Training

- **Better employee engagement**
- **Greater loyalty to the company**
- **More regular internal promotion**
- **Elevated productivity**
- **Increased employee happiness and job satisfaction**

Assessing Your Own Professional Training Program

There are several reasons why many companies end up with compliance-based training. Maybe you're required by the government to offer certain training courses. It could be a safety or financial requirement. Perhaps your business is a small or mid-sized operation for which an investment in essential leadership skills training seems too costly. Most commonly, employees simply don't have the time to pause their daily work and focus on training. In these types of scenarios, training becomes more about staying compliant than creating real improvement.

But, the benefits of engaging employees through management skills development outweigh any cost. ***Approximately 87% of engaged employees would stay at their current job even if they were offered employment elsewhere.*** And since one of the best ways to engage employees is through management training, this should be a priority for any organization that's concerned with employee retention.

Take a minute to evaluate your company and its approach to management skills training.

Ask the following questions to find out which outlook you're adopting:

- Are your employees engaged?
- Is productivity high?
- Do you have low turnover?
- Is management training readily available for all employees?
- Are your leaders committed to improving your company?

If you answered "no" to any of the above, your employees are likely subject to compliance-based training, and it's time to make some changes.

Are You Simply Complying? 4 Red Flags To Watch Out For

- ✘ **Disengagement**
- ✘ **Plunging Productivity**
- ✘ **Low Participation**
- ✘ **Falling Retention Rates**

Making The Commitment: Steps To Integrate Training Today

If your company is guilty of implementing training based solely on compliance requirements, there's opportunity to make a cultural shift. Start with a little self-reflection and professional development goal setting, and take the following steps to move toward a commitment-based training model today:

STEP 1:

Assess your problem areas.



Where are your leaders falling short? Have they mastered essential leadership skills? In what areas are you losing productivity? By asking these types of questions, you identify opportunities for improvement within your company.

Use this awareness to outline *professional development goals* for your employees and pinpoint the areas in which management training is most needed.

STEP 2:

Promote change from the top down.

According to *a 2015 study conducted by Root Inc. and Kelton Research*, 57% of company workers say their senior leaders don't support management training programs. If your leaders don't value training, why should your employees? People are, by nature, imitators. So, compliance-based training is often the result of having leaders who fail to value training – and the rest of the company following suit.

If you want to adopt a more effective approach to training, it's imperative that your leaders communicate their personal commitment to training. Encourage them to be active in the search for an ideal training program, and make their involvement transparent to the workforce at large.



STEP 3:

Find the right program for you.

Not all organizations are created equal. The problems your company faces are unique, and they may not match the needs of any other company out there, even within your own industry. Look for a program that meets your specific requirements, and make a commitment to it.

When you're dedicated to improving your workforce over the long term, your employees are apt to make management training a priority, too. And given that 85% of the global workforce consider themselves to be on the job market, making your employees feel valued enough to stay with your company is critical.



Selecting The Best Management Training Fit

Recognizing that you need a management training program isn't enough. For your commitment-based training program to achieve maximum effectiveness, it must speak to the typical problems your employees face and the skills they currently lack.

While some training providers push off-the-shelf solutions, it's essential to find a professional development program that fits the specific needs of your company. Training doesn't have a "one-size-fits-all" application. ***Think of the training program selection process like purchasing a tailored suit: Once you find the right style, you have to customize the fit.*** Select a program that matches your goals, and tailor the courses to address your company's needs.

By identifying the issues you seek to correct on the front end, your choice of training programs on the back end becomes much easier. Examine the following areas of essential leadership skills at your company to determine which elements your management training program should focus on.

Communication

With benefits spanning your entire corporation from top to bottom, this is undoubtedly one of the most impactful training topics to include in any professional curriculum. Communication has the power to make or break your organization, so it should be a high priority. When there are gaps in *communication effectiveness*, employees feel confused, misguided and dissatisfied. Your managers must be able to communicate expectations, concerns and instructions in a professional, tactful and powerful way.

Coaching

Never undervalue managers' *ability to coach their employees*. The capacity to motivate and guide workers to achieve success is the mark of a truly great leader, and the level at which your teams perform is a direct reflection on that team's manager. Coaching employees involves knowing how to help them overcome weaknesses, refine their strengths and consistently improve.

Change Management

Most organizations find it difficult to enact change. In fact, about *70% of change initiatives fail*. That's why change management is a valuable area of development for your managers. The ability to lead, promote a sense of calm and maintain productivity levels during times of change is a major asset. Don't wait until your managers are in the midst of a transition to start training them. Assess how your company has handled change in the past and where your approaches have fallen short. Then, proactively prepare your leaders for future initiatives.



Delegation

Do your leaders struggle to delegate tasks to their team members? When managers fail to master delegation, productivity usually suffers. Without a proper focus on strengthening delegation skills, managers are spread too thin and employees tend to underperform. It's also important to delegate manager-level tasks to other team members if you want to identify employees with future leadership potential.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable. How is it handled within your company? Do your managers use it as a learning opportunity for team members? Give your managers the tools they need to identify conflict, engage both parties in positive discussion and mitigate the conflict's negative impact.

Talent Management

Evaluate your leaders' success in terms of hiring and retaining winning talent. Strong managers know how to build and sustain strong teams, which results in a more stable company and increased employee satisfaction.

As you assess these areas within your organization, think critically about what your managers need in order to be truly effective, and use those insights as the building blocks for your commitment-based training program.



Gauging Success

Self-evaluation is vital to success on both on a corporate and individual employee level. Once you've moved to a commitment-based training approach, you should regularly analyze your training methods to gauge their impact on your team.

• REVIEW YOUR GOALS

Remember those professional development goals you set for your employees and managers? Use them to evaluate the people who participated in your management training program.

- Did your selected program help them realize the improvement they wanted to achieve?*
- Are they keeping their management efforts in alignment with your company's standards and commitment to improvement?*

• CHECK THE METRICS

Look at your numbers. Determine concrete metrics to compare the results of your current training program against past employee performance.

- Is retention up from last year?*
- Have you increased sales over last month?*
- Are your employees completing work at a faster rate?*

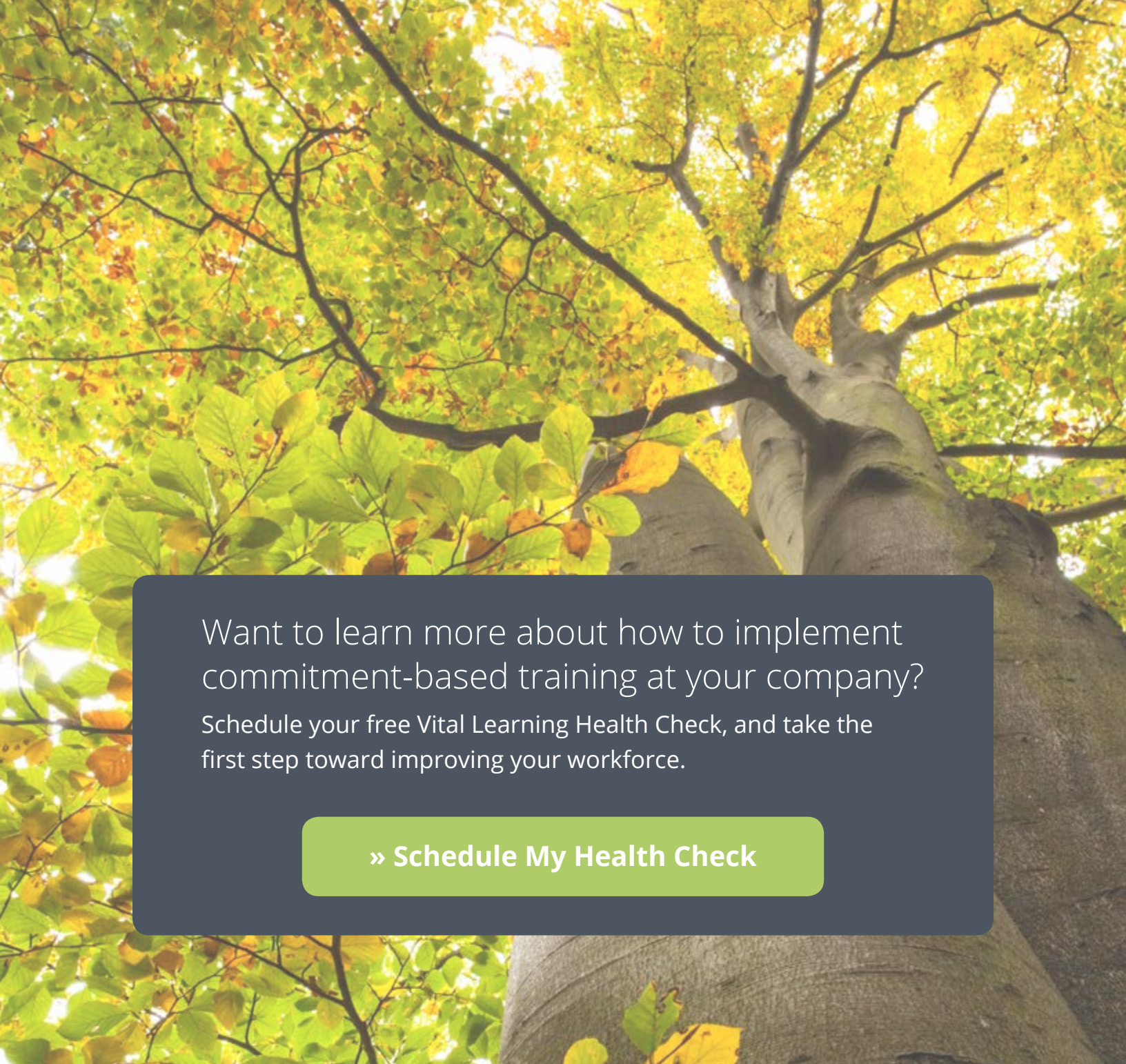
• SURVEY THE PARTICIPANTS

Survey the participants immediately after course completion, and request feedback once they've had time to apply the skills they've learned. At that point, they'll have a clearer perspective on the training program's tangible benefits.

- Did your employees view the management training as helpful?*
- Were they engaged throughout the program?*

• DON'T STOP IMPROVING

Approximately *"83% of companies report that less than a quarter of their training budget, if any, is currently allocated to manager training sustainment."* This means that most companies are wrapping up training and moving on. Instead of checking off the training box and forgetting it ever happened, conduct follow-up lessons or provide refresher courses to keep leaders engaged and their management skills polished.



Want to learn more about how to implement
commitment-based training at your company?
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first step toward improving your workforce.

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