

## STRATEGIC SOUND BITES FOR TRAINING REINFORCEMENT



In a world that is increasingly defined by differences of opinion it is nice to address a topic where there is overwhelming convergence. Strategy! The practitioners who develop strategy, as well as the academic analysts who critique its effectiveness, are in almost universal agreement: “good strategy” is “simple strategy!” Now, almost assuredly, that strategy is never easy to implement or simple to “do.” But it is easy to understand. It’s analogous to an effective sound bite (i.e., takes complicated dynamics and reduces them to their most plausible essence).

In that spirit we call on the often-quoted sound bites of two Hall of Fame basketball coaches, John Wooden (UCLA men’s coach from 1948-1975) and Pat Summit (Tennessee women’s coach from 1974-2012) as a means of suggesting two “reinforcement strategies that have the potential to give training a boost.”

### “GOOD STRATEGY” IS “SIMPLE STRATEGY!”

#### 1 | MICROLEARNING

*“Be Quick...But Don’t Hurry.”*  
– Coach Wooden

Coach Wooden was describing a philosophy he tried to impart when he taught his teams how to play defense. Clearly, quickness is “good.” It provides you with an advantage that forces your opponent to adjust. But when

you “hurry” you inevitably arrive at your destination “out of control” (an advantage to your opponent).

Consider the implications of that perspective as it applies to the pursuit of effectively implementing a boost strategy grounded in all that constitutes microlearning. As this publication has pointed out on many occasions over the years, trends are distinguished from fads by their transformational potential and documented, ongoing impact. At an absolute minimum, microlearning is a cost-effective and generationally appealing methodology to extend formal learning events by keeping core content “alive” or “front-of-mind.” The caution we feel bears consideration is the “all-in” adaptation of an approach that assumes the “mobile, just-in-time” benefits of microlearning render traditional delivery mechanisms obsolete.

#### 2 | TRAINING TRANSFER

*“If You See a Turtle Sitting on a Fence Post, You Know it Didn’t Get There By Itself.”*  
– Coach Summit

Coach Summit was responding to a question that asked her to explain “the secret of her success.” She routinely went to great lengths to describe her success as a function of so much more than her (and she would do so with both conviction and world-class humility). As she saw it, her success was a function of the community she worked so diligently

to build during her tenure. There were the players (of course!); the parents of those players; her assistant coaches; the administration and faculty at the University of Tennessee, etc. “Success” was a function of getting all of those diversified stakeholders in some semblance of synchronized harmony. Consider the similarities when it comes to implementing a “boost strategy” for successful training transfer.

What percentage of your time would you say is dedicated to “the care and feeding” of non-traditional stakeholders? We have known since the mid-1980s that training transfer is a function of culture (in general) and next-level-manager reinforcement (in particular). On the proverbial scale of 1-10, how effective is your training function at building the kind of community that is necessary to elevate your “turtles?”

By its very nature, training is a compartmentalized change initiative. “Trainees” with “a need to know” enter and are expected to emerge having demonstrated the potential “to do.” As such, providing training is but half the battle. The rest relies on your ability to develop and maintain a dedicated undercurrent of extended community.

Simple to understand, difficult to do! 🐢

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