

Knowing and Doing II

Few would argue that in learning to do something new, input – knowledge of what to do - is extremely important. But what importance should we place on output – practice, and the realisations that arise through that - and where should output ideally take place?

Imagine you are learning to disarm an attacker. Here is the relevant input.

Assume he will shoot you sooner or later, even if your attacker is hesitant. He has pulled a gun on you and must be desperate. If he tells you to move, do so. If he can see that you are scared and carrying out his instructions without hesitation, he may relax and get close enough to allow you to disarm him.

As soon as opportunity arises, quickly hit, grab and gouge his wrist, turning slightly to your side so that if he shoots, there is less of a target to hit. Use your free hand to grasp the gun and turn it away from you. Twist the aggressor's hand to force him to release his grip. Further distract him by kneeling his groin and head-butting him as he bends forward. As soon as you have the gun, aim and fire it. Do not hesitate, even if he pretends to surrender. You would not have been able to disarm him if he had just shot you immediately. Do not risk him disarming you!

You now know how to disarm your assailant. What is your ability to do so? Of course, it is likely to be low. You have not practised performing these movements, nor have you experienced the pressure of a situation of this kind. In this case output is at least as important as input: your ability to do this will be forged through doing it.

Fortunately, most management situations are not as pressured as the one described above! Nevertheless, management is something which is done, not simply known – it is an activity, not a quiz. It would be as difficult to motivate the workforce by simply knowing how to do it as it would to disarm an attacker by reading a manual. To build management skills input and output must work together.

Mitchell Phoenix' programmes are structured to balance input and output. Delegates attend a single, day long seminar per month for six months. In between the seminars they return to work and put the input they have received in the seminars into practice, creating output as they work on the live issues facing them in their job in their workplace. This ensures that Mitchell Phoenix alumni not

only “know” how to manage their staff, they also develop their ability to manage their people and create optimum results for their businesses.

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