

Interview of Patricia Locke

Place of Work

Owns a small company and serves as a consultant doing work for various customers mainly consisting state agencies in the public sector and a few private sector companies.

What kind of assignments do you do at work?

Completes a variety of assignments and no two days are the same. Some of assignments include delivering classroom training, designing e-learning modules, developing electronic performance support tools.

- Believes in the 10-20-70 rule for developing employees. (10% classroom, 20% integrating what you learned from classroom to job. 70% on job)
- Types of Classroom Training- Team building, software training, and training for construction people who work in the field- better documentation.
- Types of E-learning- Materials certification, materials recertification, software tutorials. Many of the e-learning modules also contain a job aid that can be referenced later or printed out and used as a reference for completing tasks on the job.
- Electronic performance support- training portals using share point that helps direct employees to necessary relevant information, job aid, training that is being offered.

What skills have you learned that have helped you in your job?

- Writing- Need good writing skills for scripts for audio, sending emails, creating job aids or various other tasks. The fields of technical writing and training are combining. Studies have shown that people learn tasks better from written procedures. Classroom training is more expensive if you have good technical writing skills it will save money.
- Interview and Working with SME- to help users get technical information and then put it in a way that the learners can understand to help them do their job.
- Technical skills - HTML, FLASH
- Software- Articulate, Captivate, SharePoint
- Instructional design- more important than ever because there is so many different media to choose from it is important to use each different media to the best of its ability. Mainly uses ADDIE model.

When developing training do you do any task analysis to make sure what you are developing is reaching the objective?

Yes,

Needs assessment to get the people what they need and org goals-Training matrix – goal, how you are going to measure, and set objective. Knowing exactly what you want to achieve help decide what tools and how you are going to do it. Depends on what you are training.

Job task analysis- Lots of ways to do it and a lot depends on what the job is. Identify key performers then do job shadowing. Software- no users yet, look at all the features then prioritize to see how it is actually done.

Do you evaluate what you have developed? If so how?

Always evaluate to make sure you have achieved the goals you are trying to do. If you set objectives at the beginning it helps you to evaluate because you can see if the learners actually reached the goal. Uses Kirkpatrick's 4 levels as a module to help evaluate training courses.

What skills would be beneficial to have for individuals interested in going into this field?

- Writing skills
- Instructional design
- Graphic skills
- Technology skills
- Informational interviewing skills,
- Information mapping (how do you structure e-learning or job aids so people can click on it and quickly find the information that they need).
- People skills

What advice would you give to a college student interested in pursuing a career in training and development?

- It is and excellent career choice for interested in learning all kinds of different things. If you are given an assignment and you do not know how to do it find good examples then try to study it to see what makes that good and use that as a template to help you.

What do you like best about your job?

- Learn new things all the time in a variety of different areas
- Help people do their job
- Don't do the same thing every day
- What do you like least.
- Software training they are still developing the software at the same time you are trying to prepare for the training.

How do you see the field evolving in the future?

- More and more organizations are going to shift toward just in time training instead of just in case training.
- Shifting towards smaller training modules.
- A lot of organizations are pulling back on instructor led training and more virtual training because it reduces training and can have smaller sessions.
- Moving toward more of assembly line approach.
- Everyone is leveraging technology to make training more efficient.
- People who know how to learn will come out ahead of the people who know a lot because everything is changing so fast the people who cannot learn and change will be left in the dust.
- Time to competency- Companies who are forced to do more with less will need to speed up the learning curve so employees can start producing more sooner.

My Reflection

I am having a difficult time writing this reflection. Since I interviewed my mom noting from the interview was something new that I have not already heard so nothing struck me as new or revolutionary. I think this is similar to the metaphor you can't see the forest through the trees. So it might have been beneficial if I had interviewed someone that I did not know as well.

I think the two most interesting sections are How do you see the field evolving and what skills have helped you on the job. I think these two sections are important because it shows what is important now and a prediction of what will be important in the future. I think as a college student it will be important to not only show the skills you have to help them now but also how you can be beneficial in the future.

Here is what I thought were the most important things my mom said about skills she has learned on in her job that have helped her out. I thought one of the most important skills were writing and the ability to conduct an informational interview with a SME. Many subject matter experts are too technical and a normal person cannot understand them or the expert does not have enough time to deliver the training. This is why it is beneficial for trainers/ adult educators to interview the subject matter experts so they can get the critical information and convey the information in a way that helps people understand the information. I think writing and communication skills are very important. As an undergrad I majored in

Writing Rhetoric and Technical Communication. I thought building my writing and technical skills would be very bifacial for the workplace. Based on the information from the interview showed that writing skills were important.

Another thing that I think that I found interesting about the interview was the predictions of how the field will change. I think that this is important to build skills to be ready for the changing work environments.

Overall I thought the interview assignment was good and I learned some things. I think it was interesting to talk with a person in the field and see what they thought of their job. I also think it was very beneficial to see how the information we are learning in class is applied in the workplace.

Interview of Meade Craun

Staunton District Training Manager at VDOT

What kind of assignments do you do at work?

Assignments are divided into several categories:

- Delivering training that is considered essential or mandatory
- Delivering training and performance interventions locally
- Coaching- leadership, performance improvement, team building
- Engineering scholar program
- Budget management – approving and denying funding
- Problem solving- Building trust with managers through coaching and some come back to get help with solving business problems.

What do you like best about your job?

Learn something new every day. New content to deliver training on, problem solving to fix a dysfunctional process or procedure.

Get to work on a variety of things with a variety of different people.

What do you like least about your job?

Bureaucracy of state government. Not being able to meet the needs of employees because of the red tape and policies.

What skills have you learned that have helped you in your job?

Organization- Because the job is the equivalent of three to four full time positions. Planning and prioritizing are essential.

Interpersonal Intuition- Ability to read customers and communicate with them so they feel comfortable exposing weaknesses so you can truly help them.

Wear a lot of different hats to communicate with the diverse clientele, from people in the field who are not or barely literate to executives.

How do you decide what types of training is needed?

Some are mandatory/ compliance training that has to be done.

Getting to know your customers and their business to identify their gaps. When working with leaders one of the things she tries to pull out is what is their ideal state is, and what would that look like. Then she does an assessment of how people are doing currently to figure out what is causing the gap. Skills, ability, resources, tools, or motivation. Then figure out the root causes of the gap then go from there. A lot of the problems are that managers have a problem and they think they know what the problem is and automatically want to throw training at it. Try to avoid disciplinary training, or training as a form of punishment.

What advice would you give to a college student interested in pursuing a career in training and development?

Manage expectations. College receives instruction on the ideal. Professors set expectations in an ideal state which is not possible. Many times things do not happen in an ideal state and most of the time the resources are not available to deliver it to practitioners.

Get in to the field to get your foot in the door. That way you can see what sections you would like to go into. Do you want to specialize or be a generalist? Getting your foot in the door will help you gain experience and learn as much as you can.

My Reflection

Since the first interview I did was with my mom I wanted to get another perspective. The second person I interviewed was Meade Craun. Meade is the training manager for the Staunton district. The Staunton district covers eleven counties stretching from Frederick County in the north to Allegany County in the south following the I-81 corridor. I serve as her assistant and help out wherever possible. The interview with Meade took about an hour and we delved into several topics that were sensitive to VDOT and were not recorded.

One of the biggest things that Meade stressed is that while school is important, experience is essential to truly understanding and doing well in the field. She said that she has sat in on interview panels where people with PhD's and no experience were turned down for individuals with less education and more experience because the PhD candidate insisted on doing things that were not feasible. School is good for learning theoretically what you should do but often times situations and resources do not always permit doing every task perfectly. In addition to going to school, learning as much as you can from others on the job is essential. Everyone has something that they can teach you, some serve as excellent role models while others may be examples of what not to do.

Another thing that Mead really stressed in the interview was to know your audience and what they do every day. By going out and talking to the people you can build trust and it helps you to understand them and their needs. She said managers often think they know what the problem is and request training that is sometimes not necessary. She is currently working with a manager who has requested training. While meeting with the manager, Meade realized that the problem is motivation or behavioral and not that the employees lack of knowing how to do the task. In this case training will not help the employees better perform the task because they already know how to do the task.

By doing two interviews I was able to see two different perspectives on the same field. Meade does more generalized and conducts a variety of different training and my mom is more specialized with the majority of what she does revolving around technology. In both interviews interpersonal or people skills were mentioned as necessary skills in the field.

I think this assignment was really interesting and I really enjoyed getting multiple perspectives from the same field. I think that in the future students should be required to interview more than one person and compare and contrast the two different interviews.