WHITE PAPER 01 · INTELLIGENT L&D

The RFQ Nobody Asked Why

What one scrapped training plan teaches Malaysian L&D about asking before buying

Industry Services group, 3,000+ employees **Function** HR and L&D

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AT A GLANCE

INDUSTRY

Malaysian services group, 3,000+ staff

PROBLEM

An RFQ for 200 classroom groups, written without asking why

FRAMEWORK

Five Whys, full cost count, delivery choice

CHANGE

RFQ scrapped, both programmes moved to a video learning platform

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A training decision is never only a training decision, it is a payroll decision, a productivity decision and a performance

decision, and when L&D designs the wrong programme the whole organisation pays for it in lost hours, lost output and lost confidence in learning. This paper walks through a services group where weeks of L&D planning were set aside after one lunch meeting, and sets out the questions every L&D team must ask before an RFQ leaves the building.

3,000+
employees in scope

200
classroom groups planned

20
questions sent, none answered

1
lunch to redesign the plan

An RFQ without a why is a cost, not a plan.

INDUSTRY AND PROBLEM OBSERVED

The problem

A long-standing client, who had grown with me from HR manager to HR director, joined a large Malaysian services group as head of HR. Three weeks into the role he found an RFQ written by his L&D department to skill up 3,000 plus employees, from top to bottom, on Balanced Scorecard and Core Values, with 100 groups planned for each topic.

The intention was sound, the organisation wanted to bring performance back into focus and align everyone to the right artefacts of performance, and yet nobody had asked why this method, why this scale and why this cost.

What we observed

- The RFQ was built around what training providers sell, not around the business problem
- No framework linked the topic to a performance measure
- The cost counted the provider fee and ignored the 200 groups of people taken off the job

THE FRAMEWORK PROCESS

The Intelligent RFQ Check

1

Ask the five whys

Why this topic, why now, why everyone, why a classroom, why this way

2

Count the full cost

Provider fee, working hours lost, hotel, food and travel

3

Choose the delivery

Classroom, video platform or blended, chosen for the business

4

Write the measure

How performance will change and how we will know

HOW IT WAS SOLVED

The solution

Before we met I read the RFQ and sent the team about 20 questions, which they printed and did not answer. Over lunch the head of HR brought his L&D team, let them share their intention and let me keep asking, and by the end of that lunch the RFQ was scrapped. The new plan runs both programmes on a video learning platform, where the trainer the organisation selects presents the content, the slides and the interaction on video, built into the platform so every level of the organisation hears the same message without leaving the job.

BEFORE

- 200 classroom groups
- Staff off the job, plus hotel, food and travel
- Provider-led content

AFTER

- One video learning platform
- Staff learn without leaving the floor
- One chosen trainer, one consistent message

WHAT L&D LEADERS SHOULD DO

Your checklist

- Answer the five whys before any RFQ is sent
- Count working hours lost, not only the invoice

- Choose the delivery method for the business, not out of habit
- Answer every question a training partner sends, because unanswered questions are the gaps in the design
- Write the performance measure into the first line of the RFQ

The intelligence of an organisation's learning starts with the intelligence of its L&D department.

ABOUT THE LEARNING MATCHMAKER

The Learning MatchMaker has been a trusted advisor to HR and L&D leaders since 2010, matching organisations with the right learning design, the right delivery method and the right trainers for their business problem. Clients in this paper are named by sector and function only.

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REFERENCES AND DATA NOTES

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