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## Learn Like a Fighter Pilot

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As you review your calendar you notice there's a training class scheduled for next week. What's your initial reaction? Your reaction is likely flavored by how you define training based on your experience. Is it a sterile room, with a boring facilitator who has little business experience, facilitating meaningless and embarrassing games? Or is it an experience in which your thinking, your career, and your business are propelled forward?

We're not suggesting that any training session should have the characteristics described in the first scenario above. However, there is little doubt that the higher the student resides in the organizational structure the less professional development should look like traditional training.

Comprehensive blended learning is necessary to properly engage the executive learner. Blended learning, using multiple adult education techniques, should stem from a single purpose or underlying focus that serves as the foundation for development.

Executive education should also meet the multi-faceted needs of the learner. Rather, then simply teaching a single skill, the process should develop a number of goals simultaneously such as a sense of cooperation and collaboration, new ways of thinking, avenues for innovation, and most importantly, provide solutions to current problems.

Process training vs. event training is necessary. There is a critical difference between "process training" and "event training." Event training is when you learn a new technique that is not integrated into your processes and therefore the learning cannot sustain itself. Event training produces results for a time, but then you sink right back into the quagmire of the status quo.

Process training is how fighter pilots, doctors, and military specialists are expertly trained. It is refocusing over and over again at a progressively deeper and deeper level of heightened understanding and proficiency on a critical competency until you become masterful at it. Often it is done in the context of the "normal" routine rather than at some remote location.

Process isn't just for the accounting department. Executive teams have a process as well. Integrating professional development into this process is critical for success. Practical is the name of the game. Scenario based work that increases preparedness, focusing on real life business situations so that education occurs while tangible business results are achieved moves your professional development to the top of the class.

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