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Sent: Wed 12/17/2008 6:20 AM
To: wsj.ltrs@wsj.com
Subject: RE: Lessons Learned - Motivation & Commitment

To the Editor:

Harry J. Martin's article "Lessons Learned" (WSJ, 12/15/08) hits the nail on the head in naming five key elements to ensuring that training is effective. However, Martin misses an important element of training when he suggests that a "big chunk" of training investments are "going down the drain".

Training investments have a function beyond skills, knowledge, and performance enhancements. Most companies understand that **motivation** is improved through training, as is **commitment** and loyalty to the company. Research bears this out. For example, in a study of the relationship between training and organizational commitment in the health care field by Kenneth R. Bartlett of the University of Minnesota, the researcher found that perceived access to training, social support for training, motivation to learn, and perceived benefits of training are positively related to organizational commitment. According to a Business Week article (March 1, 1999), Interim Services and Louis Harris and Associates conducted a survey that measured the cost of not providing training or providing poor training on turnover. The article stated: "Among employees who say their company offers poor training, 41% plan to leave within a year, vs. only 12% of those who rate opportunities excellent. High turnover isn't cheap. The survey pegs the cost of losing a typical worker at \$50,000." Other fields demonstrate the same factors. A 1998 national survey used to examine the effects of professional support on teachers' commitment to the teaching profession demonstrated that the largest direct effect on teachers' professional commitment was from *professional development opportunities and peer support*.

In this day and age where competition for the best and the brightest is fierce and keeping good employees is an imperative, investing in professional development training is essential. We in the nonprofit sector, needing to go beyond financial rewards, have learned this lesson well. Many of the most effective nonprofit and philanthropic organizations – Feeding America, City Year, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, for example - invest significant time and money in professional development activities, nurturing the motivation and commitment of professionals to their core missions.

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