

Providing Customized Training Programs, Entelechy, Inc. is helping Companies across Diverse Industries Unlock and Unleash the Potential of their Managers and Employees

Business Services Training

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Terence Traut
President & COO

BIO:

Terry is Entelechy's President and COO. He is responsible for overall program design, development, and quality assurance. Terry brings over 25 years of training and management experience to Entelechy.

Before joining Entelechy, he worked for 9 years at Digital Equipment Corporation and Wang Laboratories as sales training designer and manager. He also instructed for Boston University throughout Europe.

Terry has designed, developed, and delivered hundreds of training courses in the areas of leadership, strategic management, sales, and customer service. He has developed training in a variety of media including instructor-led classroom training, web and computer-based-training, and self-paced instruction.

Terry holds a B.S. in Education from St. Cloud (Minnesota) University and an M.S. in Human Services Administration from Boston University. He has also completed all coursework for an Ed.D., in Human Resource Education from Boston University.

About Entelechy, Inc.:

Since 1992, Entelechy has been helping hundreds of companies across diverse industries unlock the potential of their managers and employees through our unique approach to training and performance — an approach that offers the advantages of customized training at public seminar prices.

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Traut, your tagline is "Unlocking Potential." Would you tell us about Entelechy?

Mr. Traut: Our company designs and develops customized training. We focus on leadership and management development, but we also create customer service training programs and sales training programs to meet specific clients' needs.

CEOCFO: What is special about your approach?

Mr. Traut: Before starting Entelechy 21 years ago, I was a training manager at a large corporation. We used to get vendors like Entelechy coming in and selling us a training program that they claimed was the latest and greatest. The models were good and the activities were okay for a generic program, but it really was all about making the program our own. We needed these programs to give us the ability to add our own examples and

imbed our own terminology to make the program relevant to our organization. The need to make each training program a perfect fit for our company was the impetus for me starting my own company. It became the philosophy of Entelechy and the tagline of the company. It is our belief that organizations have the wherewithal, the capability, and the potential, if you will, to excel. They need training programs that are custom-built for their needs, their expectations. Good training companies will go into an organization, find out what their specific needs are, then offer them an off-the-shelf program that best fits those needs. At Entelechy, we take the needs assessment one step further and build a program based off of those needs. What we bring to the table are 20 years of tried and true best practices, a clear understanding of what works, and simple models. For example, we use models that managers can learn quickly and apply very easily to unleash the potential of their people. A common need of managers today is something as simple as the ability to analyze performance. How do you know why somebody is not performing the way they should? What can you do about it? We have programs that specifically target the need for analyzing performance. Our models are practical, easy to learn, and most importantly, easy to embed within your own organization. Our goal is to make it so that the training programs we create are the organizations training programs. That is what we have been doing for 20 years; developing training programs that truly belong to the organizations they are built for. Our programs are so powerful that other

training companies call us and ask us to build their training programs.

CEO CFO: What is an example of something you see as easy, but companies tend to be stumped on how to do?

Mr. Traut: One of the seemingly easiest – yet most difficult – things is developing managers into coaches. In order for an organization to reach its potential, it is critical that managers be able to coach their employees; to develop the talent within them. Managers need to engage their employees and help them succeed at their jobs. Coaching is a very simple thing to do, yet managers find it hard to do because they are called on to do so many other things. Developing their people often takes a low priority – if they find the time to do it at all – even though we all realize how important it actually is. What companies – and by extension managers - tend to do is look at coaching as an involved, lengthy, and time consuming process, when it really does not have to be. I think that when most companies are faced with a need to develop a coaching model or a coaching program to teach managers how to coach, they go overboard. Instead of sticking with simple, they make it complex. In the complexity, what ends up happening is that managers do not use it or they use it ineffectively. In over 20 years what we have seen is that coaching is critical to success - the success of the manager, and the success of the organization. Frankly, coaching was one of the first things that we built into our training programs. For example, when we create a sales training program we want the managers to be able to reinforce the skills we teach their people in the sales training. In order for the training to stick, we needed the managers to coach their employees around the sales skills they learned. This intense focus on coaching led us to almost immediately develop a module on coaching. Coaching was like the second module we created 20 years ago. We have been honing and refining the coaching model and program ever since. What we have seen

is organizations struggle with trying to over-complicate coaching; something that is, or should be, relatively simple and straightforward.

CEO CFO: Do you find that most employees embrace training today?

Mr. Traut: It depends and it varies. Good training recognizes that there is going to be a variety of motivation driving each individual that shows up for training. Most of the training that we create is mandatory training. It is not typically an elective, or training that individuals would “sign up” for. Our clients buy the program that we create for them and everybody has to go through it. I think what is important from a training design perspective is

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- Terence Traut

recognizing who is attending the training. There needs to be a rationale and a reason why a participant, who may be reluctantly sitting in the class, would pay attention. You have to remember that the participants are constantly asking themselves, “What’s in it for me?” Great training takes them from, “What’s in it for me?” to, “This is exactly what I need!” A good training design makes all the models, all of the activities, and all of the training extremely relevant. It is about what is going to make that manager succeed, what is going to make that customer service agent succeed. It has to be practical and something that they can go out and use tomorrow. You are always going to get a few folks who will sit in the back of the room with their arms crossed and a “show me” attitude. A good training design will

show them by building in activities that help them overcome that mental block or “this training is not going to be worth my time” attitude. We have to make it worth their time.

CEO CFO: How do you reach potential clients?

Mr. Traut: For over 20 years it has been mainly word of mouth. We build strong relationships with the client and work closely with those responsible for the training within the company. We are proud that these relationships go beyond the walls of the organization. Often, if the person we have been working with goes to another company they bring us with them to their new company. They like the approach that we take. We look out for their best interest, and if that means that Entelechy might not be the best provider of what they are looking for we will link them up to a better provider. We always put our clients’ best interest first, even if it means we end up not taking the business because we are not the best fit. Take off-the-shelf programs or e-learning solutions for example. We will customize, but if a true off-the-shelf program is what somebody is looking for, then we are not the company. It is that kind of approach that has resulted in clients recommending us and taking us into new companies when they move. We recently made a shift into a more packaged program that we call *Unleash Your Leadership Potential*. We are actually going out and using marketing techniques to promote and sell this program to reach as many possible organizations as possible. We just presented at the Training 2013 conference in Orlando. We also had an exhibit booth at the expo. That was a first for us; we have never done anything like that. It was fun and interesting. We got to meet a lot of great people and spread the word about our exciting new program. Our unique and innovative booth created quite a buzz about our leadership program. In addition to attending the training conference, we developed a mobile app to support the program and we are giving it away for free. It is another

way of getting our name out there. We also have a great newsletter which we encourage people to sign-up to receive. We are going after more of a traditional marketing strategy than ever before.

CEOCFO: Why are you doing that now?

Mr. Traut: It is because of our new program, *Unleash Your Leadership Potential*. The program is basically a baby that took 20 years to gestate. Over the past 20 years we have created leadership and management programs for scores of clients. Each time we customize and develop a new program we learn what works, and we also learn what does not work. After 20 years, we put together a program that we feel represents the best models, the best activities, and the best structure and process to make the training stick. It is applicable, and leaders want to use what they learn. The approach that we are taking is to sell it to companies so that they can then internalize and modify it and use it as they will. It is a different animal for us — something we have not done before. Before *Unleash Your Leadership Potential*, everything was customized. Now we are offering this program so we have to use a different marketing strategy to reach a wider audience that is interested in something that is a little more packaged. It is exciting for us to take this step.

CEOCFO: Do companies understand the value of training?

Mr. Traut: I have been in the training industry for 27 years; so you get to see, based on budgets and economics, how important training is to an organization. In economically lean times the training budget shrinks and everybody interprets that as training is not valuable. I do not believe that. I think organizations always have appreciated effective training. With what is happening right now, as the economy starts to recover after three years of tight training budgets, I think more organizations are looking at beefing up their training budgets. We need to increase the skills of our workers, and we need to engage the top talent because these folks are going to leave if we do not keep them interested, in-

involved, and growing within the company. To do this, we need to increase our training effectiveness. Especially now, organizations are seeing the value of good training for a number of reasons. One reason is skill development — getting people to do their job better and faster. Another reason is innovation — moving into increasingly global areas that require new skills and new ways of working. The third reason is engagement; as the economy continues recovering we are going to see some of the top talent start searching for other opportunities unless we engage them and give them a reason to choose to stay.

CEOCFO: What is the plan for the next year?

Mr. Traut: The big plan for us is to feature our *Unleash Your Leadership Potential* program as much as possible. We are looking for clients of all sizes. We have a pricing structure that allows for an easy, low-cost entry for smaller organizations, and scalability with quantity discounts if you are a larger organization. We have focused over the past 20 years on the larger organizations simply because customized training takes a great amount of time and money. What we have done is packaged the models and the processes into a great program that we have made affordable for clients of all different sizes. Our big emphasis is on *Unleash Your Leadership Potential* and our big push is to try to get this out to as many organizations as possible because it is good stuff. We have seen over and over again how valuable a program like this can be within an organization in terms of organizational effectiveness and bottom line impact.

CEOCFO: Will you be scaling back on the customization or will your new program be an addition?

Mr. Traut: It is going to be in addition. We are hoping to expand our organization. We are treating it almost like a second line of business. Customization is our bread and butter, but more importantly, it is our philosophy. Even with this new program, clients who do not have either the capacity or the capability can use Entelechy to customize the program. We are encour-

aging organizations to take the program and make it their own; add their own examples, change the terminology to fit their culture, and create their own videos. If they do not have the capacity or capability, then we are available to help them. We have so many clients now that continue turning to us for customized solutions and training support, we are definitely not going to give that up. It is what we do and it is what has allowed us to create *Unleash Your Leadership Potential*. If we did not have 20 years of customization experience behind us. I do not think that program would be near as great as it is.

CEOCFO: What surprised you most as the business has developed and grown?

Mr. Traut: I am energized by the people in this industry. I was in Mexico a couple of years ago with my college buddy and we were talking about things we would do if money were no object. Randy said he would fix up old cars. He asked me what I would do, and I told him I would be doing exactly what I am doing. Maybe not as many hours as I currently put in, but I love what we do and I think most trainers in this industry love what they do — the impact they have on individuals, the impact they have on the organization combining the science of adult learning with the creativity of any technology or activity that you want to build into training. It is a fun place to be, and after 27 years I still love it.

CEOCFO: Why should the business and investment community pay attention to Entelechy?

Mr. Traut: We provide a strong return on investment. Any time you look at investing resources, whether it is dollars — an organization's budget — or people, you have to consider how to maximize that return. Like any sort of investment that you make it has to be watched, carefully analyzed, and continually measured. I think organizations tend not to put that same emphasis in their most valuable resource, which is their people. People are an organization's most expensive resource. We spend more money on employees than we spend on any-

thing else, and yet we do not take the time to maintain those skills or find out how to make them more effective, productive, and engaged. A company

like Entelechy not only provides the training piece of the solution but all the upfront stuff that helps the organization truly analyze the most cost-

effective solutions for addressing their most valuable resource — people.



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