

Training Roll-Out Guide



For Crucial Conversations® Training and Crucial Confrontations™ Training

Our efforts began as a journey into organizational change with one goal in mind: to make companies more successful. Conducting three parallel research efforts (over the past twenty-five years), spending more than ten thousand hours examining influence masters, and carefully studying hundreds of top influencers, we have confirmed our hypothesis: Enhance individual skills around crucial conversations and crucial confrontations, then spread these skills across organizations, and everything gets better.

Has this nontraditional strategy held up? Does focusing on crucial skills rather than strategies or systems actually make a difference? Absolutely. To date, more than 300,000 people have benefited from our training.

High-Leverage Skills

Through repeated observations we learned that top performers possess two unique skill sets.

First they're masters of crucial conversations. That is, they know how to speak and be heard and encourage others to do the same. Through their efforts at making it safe to talk no matter how different, touchy, or controversial an idea, people surface the best ideas, make informed decisions, and then act on them with unity and commitment. Equally important, top performers are able to create a learning atmosphere even when those involved are from different backgrounds, cultures, or departments. Consequently, masters of crucial conversations routinely turn diversity into synergy and synergy into results.

The second skill set that separates the best from the rest is demonstrated once crucial conversations have been completed. Once ideas have been surfaced and expectations set, top performers are gifted at holding others accountable. When others break promises, violate expectations, or simply behave badly, a company's most valued employees possess both the motive and ability to address these deviations. Top performers are skilled at what we have come to call crucial confrontations. That is, top performers not only solve the problem at hand, they also do so in a way that enhances their working relationship. This capacity to speak face-to-face and in-the-moment in a firm, respectful, and direct

way—early on before small problems grow into organizational stumbling blocks—links directly to corporate success.

Powerful Techniques

Once we identified these two high-leverage skill sets, we then taught them to thousands of people in hundreds of organizations. As we conducted the training we systematically studied both our training methods and our roll-out options in order to learn what leads to significant and lasting changes in behavior. We also conducted extensive studies to determine what changes in behavior have the most significant impact on organizational performance.

Our research has repeatedly confirmed two conclusions about why change efforts typically fail to produce real results.

1. Most efforts fail to influence real behavior change because the focus is on delivering training rather than producing change. At the end of training, participants answer questions about what they liked and what they learned, but are rarely measured to see if they actually change their behavior. At VitalSmarts, we measure behavior change. Nothing holds your training to a higher standard than demanding that people actually enact high-leverage skills once they return to work.

2. Most efforts fail to measurably improve business performance because they inaccurately assume that huge investments in personal and professional development will produce organizational development. Personal growth can lead to organizational improvements, but you have to choose behaviors you know for a certainty will affect corporate outcomes.

Roll-Out Methods

Here are some guidelines for leaders who are interested in using either Crucial Conversations training or Crucial Confrontations training to influence significant and lasting change:

1. Decide whether your objective is professional development or organizational development.
2. Use the matrix on the following page to identify the level of intervention you need in order to achieve the results you're after. Our experience is that the critical success factors that we list in the matrix are the predictors of results.
3. If your goal is organizational development, identify the business performance metrics you want to see measurably improved at the end of the effort.

| Level | Intervention Type | Objective | Critical Success Factors | Benefits |
|-------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | Individual Development | Self-directed learning | 1. Skilled certified facilitator | Self-motivated learners will gain powerful new skills. When participants are taught high-leverage skills that increase their abilities to influence others—and thus resolve many of the problems they face every day—they will implement the skills once they return to work, thus enhancing their effectiveness. |
| 2 | Professional Development | Measurable improvement in all skill areas by a majority of participants | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre/post 360° profile and “Acid Test” self-evaluation 2. Spaced learning—minimum of four lessons over two months 3. Contract cards—completed and reported at each session 4. Peer coaching—one contact between each session 5. Recognition program—points and reward for completion of key activities | By enhancing self-awareness and increasing both skill mastery and motivation, a majority of participants will make measurable progress. Even those entering the process with significant blind spots will gain mastery in areas that were previously significant career impediments. With spaced learning and enhanced recognition, participants eagerly gain far greater mastery of the skills—greatly increasing their value to the company. |
| 3 | Organizational Development | Significant improvement in business outcomes such as productivity, quality, cycle time, costs, turnover, etc. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leader-led assessment to identify the most strategic “crucial conversations and confrontations” 2. Crucial Skills Executive Team Process 3. Process for measuring behavior change and organizational performance improvement 4. Organizational improvement goal 5. Leader-led training 6. Opinion Leader Coaching Support | By identifying the specific conversations and confrontations that directly link to an organization’s current problems, this advanced intervention technique not only enhances skills, but greatly improves the organization’s key performance indicators. Since both behavior changes and performance indicators are measured, you can actually measure the intervention’s ROI. Crucial skills become a sustainable competitive advantage that drives continuous improvement in every measure of performance. |