

■ Strategic Impact: The Next Generation of Corporate Universities

Business Perspectives on Managing World-Class Training

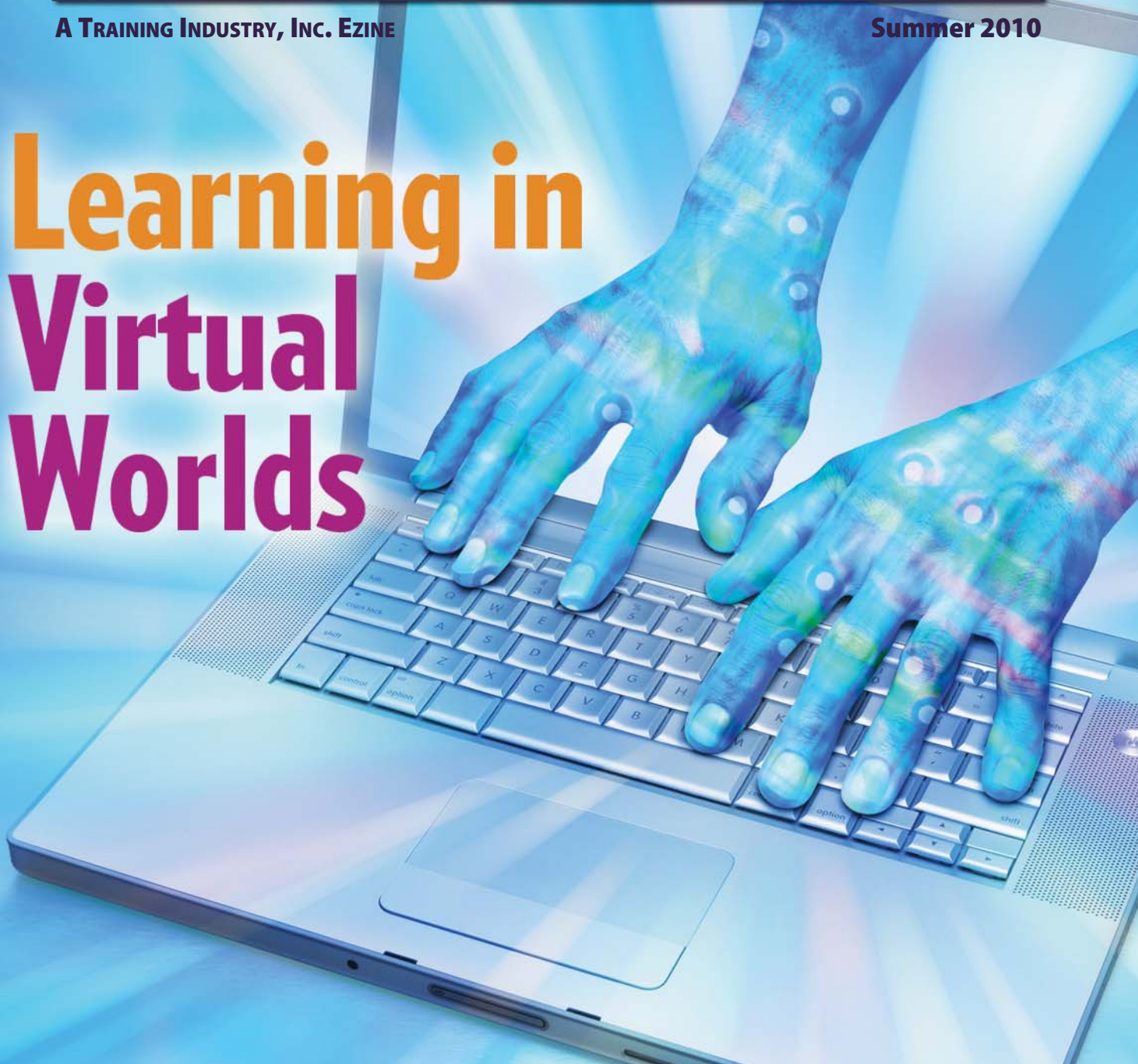
# Training Industry

Q U A R T E R L Y

A TRAINING INDUSTRY, INC. EZINE

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## Learning in Virtual Worlds

A pair of hands with a blue and green digital pattern, resembling a virtual or augmented reality interface, are shown typing on a laptop keyboard. The background is a bright blue with light rays emanating from behind the hands, creating a futuristic and high-tech atmosphere.

■ Moving Beyond Fast-Food Training

■ 10 Mentoring Mistakes (and How to Avoid Them)

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## OPTIMIZING OUR SUCCESS REQUIRES US TO ADJUST OUR ACTIONS

# CUSTOMER-SMART SELLING AND SERVICE

Increasing success through more customer-smart selling and service is a continuing, recession-proof business opportunity. Both research and experience indicate that most people demonstrate just 30 percent to 60 percent of those practices that produce successful results. Just last week while conducting a keynote for a large company's sales force, I heard the story of a high-energy competitor salesperson who had great chemistry with those with his same bubbly personality while missing out on sales opportunities to the other three types of personalities. So how can you be more successful?

It begins, of course, with simply practicing the "spirit" of the Golden Rule, stated simply as treating others with respect. However, this isn't adequate, in large part because people do business with us based on how effective we are at both communicating with them and influencing their buying decisions. To be successful we must "treat people the way *they* want to be treated." Since there are four different personality types, our focus with each must be on what motivates them to buy again and again.

Both the sales and service process involves our communications and actions before the customer decides, while deciding and after deciding. Since all sales and service people are naturally either more controlling or relating, optimizing our success requires us to adjust our actions by executing in a disciplined way:

- **Step 1: Focusing, Planning:** A controlling practice by those who naturally are clear about the customer's situation and direct their communications to address their desires or problems.
- **Step 2: Connecting:** A relating practice that results in the customer viewing you as a professional who appears to be genuinely concerned with meeting *their* expectations.
- **Step 3: Exploring, Interacting:** A controlling practice involving probing questions and actively listening in a problem-solving manner in search of solutions that may work best for this customer.
- **Step 4: Collaborating:** A relating practice that seeks mutual agreement on solutions and actions that satisfy the customer's expectations in ways that also work for the providing company.
- **Step 5: Gaining Commitment:** A directing practice of overcoming objections that may occur at this point (or earlier and stronger when the above practices are not executed) by focusing on solutions and non-defensive problem-solving.
- **Step 6: Reassurance, Follow-Through:** A relating practice where the customer's confidence, commitment and loyalty are strengthened by positive experiences, especially when problems occur and are resolved in ways that demonstrate they can trust you.

Follow these principles and practices and adjust your own attitudes and actions along the way. That way, you too will enjoy the benefits of winning through people.

*Dr. Michael O'Connor is a recognized thought leader, executive coach and founder of Life Associates, Inc. Michael is the co-author of "The Platinum Rule," "People Smart" and "Customer Smart Selling & Service." E-mail Michael at [droconnor@lifeassociatesinc.com](mailto:droconnor@lifeassociatesinc.com).*