

What's Art got to do With it?

Have you heard of *Arts-Based Learning*? Most people I ask say “No, what is it?” In the business context, Arts-Based Learning is taking the experience of art and applying it to development of key global business skills such as communication, innovation, and critical thinking. Many Fortune 500 companies have already embraced Arts-Based Learning, and more are contemplating the exploration of this topic to gain an edge on competition. The arts allow us to revisit our creative, right-brained, imaginative side, vs. the logical, left-brained linear thought processes which we are so well trained to use in the analytical business world.



Take Northwestern University Medical School for example; they are using Arts-Based Learning concepts in the teaching of our future doctors in the field of Pathology, the study of diseases, cell tissues, and cellular structure. They use the arts to sharpen their visual interpretative skills and further understand what they are seeing without jumping to conclusions. Learning, developing and practicing observational and creative thinking skills is imperative to seeing beyond what others see to help gain fresh perspectives in not only disease diagnosis, but most all organizational applications.

In business, we are always looking for a “leg up,” something “out-of-the-box” and exciting that doesn’t always manifest itself in traditional ways of organizational training methodology. Visual Art is an invitation to reflect. Thoughtful reflection can initiate deeper, more meaningful discussions in order to further explore business issues essential for creating workplace breakthrough ideas.



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