Training, Get You Some of That

Stop for a moment and reflect on how far you have come to this point. You wanted to become a DBA, you found your opportunity, you have built up relationships with colleagues, and you are effectively running the ship at this point. Along the way you have noticed that certain aspects of your environment tend to shift over time. One shift is, of course, new releases of SQL Server. Even applying a hotfix to SQL Server could provide you with an unexpected learning opportunity.

Many people simply do not consider training an important part of their life as a DBA. If you want to survive as a DBA, then you need to be able to quickly adapt to changing circumstances. You need to be aware of ideas and concepts that are on the horizon. In short, you need training, and that training is an ongoing function that never stops.

**TIP:** Training is the point at which education and motivation meet.

When times get tough, training budgets are one of the first things to get their funding cut. This can make it difficult for you to convince your management to send you away for a day or two in order to keep your skills sharp. You must find a way to present a business case that is rock-solid; get them to understand that there will be a substantial return on their investment.

Training is more than just sitting in a classroom for three to five days and listening to an instructor offer up information from a study guide prepared by someone else. Effective training is much more than that; it is something that becomes a part of your everyday routine. You may be good at what you do right now, but you are far from perfect (trust me), and if you do not spend some of your time following the latest industry trends, then you will be left behind like a dinosaur trapped in a tar pit.
In this chapter, we will discuss the following:

1. Reasons for training
2. Training resources
3. Building your case

**Reasons for Training**

Think of a high school basketball program. You would have a varsity team, a junior varsity (JV) team, and a freshman team. Each team would have practices, and the natural progression of a player would be from the freshman team to the JV team and then on to varsity. But who decides when a player is ready to move upward? The varsity coach, of course, who is managing the entire program and constantly evaluating the players daily, would be the one responsible for that decision.

At the start of the season, the coach will put in the base set of offensive and defensive plays that the team will use for the season. These plays will be based upon the individual players’ strengths; however, during the course of the season, new plays will be put into the system in order to make certain the team remains competitive, which makes their fans happy.

**TIP:** Keeping fans happy is *always* a priority, no matter if you are coaching a high school basketball team or administering the database servers for a large corporation.

Now compare that to an IT department. You have a person that serves as the head of IT (your varsity coach) and is responsible for evaluating the employees as part of an overall professional development program. Depending upon the performance of an employee, it could be desirable to have them placed into a new role. Or it could be that a new system is being brought in house and certain employees will be shifted over to be dedicated to working with the new system. At the end of the day, the head of IT is going to make the moves that she feels will provide the business with the highest level of satisfaction.

With regard to training, the two scenarios are the same. In each case you have people changing roles or positions, you have new systems being put into place, you have people evaluating the employees and players, and you want your customers to be happy. We could therefore say that there are four good reasons for companies to offer training: for professional development, for when people change roles, for new systems, and for customer satisfaction. Each of those reasons will result in benefits for the employee as well as for the business.