

## Evaluation of NASA's Astronaut Training Program Case Study



NASA conducted a detailed search for, and evaluation of, training organizations outside aerospace and military aviation that prepared personnel to perform under extreme stress. These organizations included federal, state and local law enforcement; military special operations and military basic training from all services; and government security and intelligence agencies.

An Other Government Agency (involved with intelligence and security) recommended that NASA evaluate Accentus-Ludus CEO Marcus Wynne's pioneering work in accelerated learning and stress inoculation. NASA's evaluation included a site visit to observe an accelerated learning/stress inoculation training, a comprehensive review of previous trainings and a survey of Wynne's methods.

NASA awarded Wynne a sole-source contract to conduct an evaluation of NASA's two-year long Astronaut Training. The goal was to determine if sufficient psychological hardening was installed during the training flow, and to recommend changes to accelerate training, minimize training time, provide superior psychological hardening, and improve astronaut performance while deployed on space missions.

The consultation involved:

- A detailed paper review of the two-year training flow with a focus on those elements believed to install psychological hardening.
- On-site observation of the initial selection and assessment of Astronaut Candidates before entering the training flow.
- Observation of training elements believed to install psychological hardening and stress management.
- Interviews with potential astronaut trainees; astronaut trainees currently within the two-year training flow; senior astronauts including mission

commanders and mission specialists; first line training staff and training administrators; key psychologists, psychiatrists and psychological support staff.

- Generating a detailed written review and recommendations for change.



The report generated was classified Sensitive and details will not be released due to contractual non-disclosure agreements. Portions of it were incorporated in a NASA Technical Document – the first time in NASA history that a non-Ph.D./non-academic’s work was included in an academic review.

Considerations for potential clients considering adopting accelerated learning embedded within stress inoculation training designs:

1. Is the organization’s culture prepared to accept significant change to the way they do training?
2. Are they prepared to accept a higher level of attrition in selection and assessment?
3. Are they prepared to restructure budget and staffing due to a greatly reduced demand on training infrastructure and staff built over the company’s previous history?

Culture is key to success. The organization’s culture, in which the training takes place, must be considered as a design element if successful integration of an accelerated training program is to be implemented. The adopting organization must decide if it is ready or capable of a significant paradigm shift. It cannot be done by the outside contractor. If an organization is unable or unwilling to accept dramatic change to the currently established training methods, it’s best to defer or pass on the investment in accelerated learning and stress inoculation.

When you are ready to have your team perform **Better, Faster, and Cheaper** than your competitors or opponents, Accentus-Ludus has the training protocol and approach that will help you leap forward.