



## How to deliver a great first time training session

Tips on how to make your first ever experience as a trainer a success.

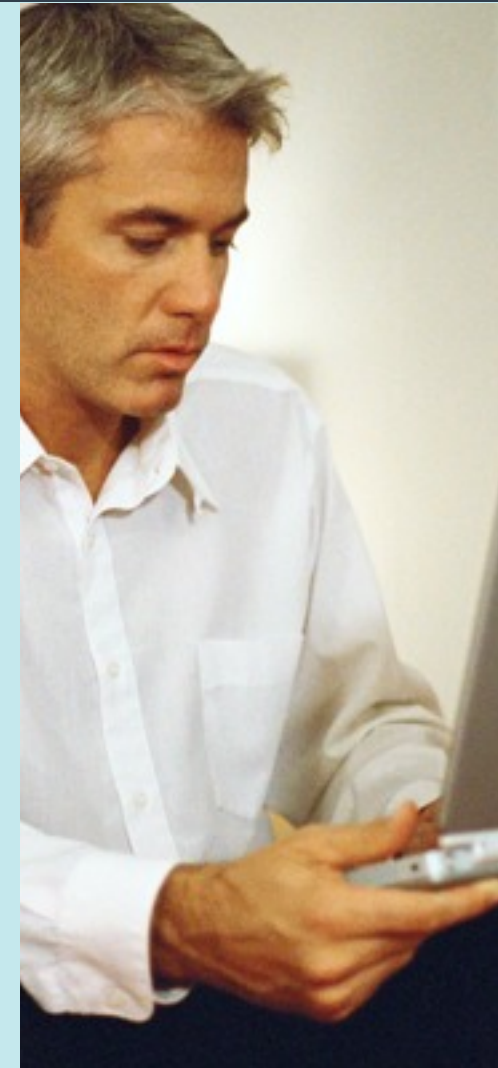
Often employers ask good people to deliver a training session for them. You may be a subject expert, you may be willing, but you've not got experience in being the trainer. Here are a bunch of top tips to get you off to a flying start.

- 1 Technology will always let you down.** Get there early enough to find out how everything works, sort any bugs, and get the technology up and running before anyone else arrives. Workbooks and stuff can easily be handed out even after delegates have arrived, no one will hardly notice. However, if they arrive and you are struggling with a technological problem, they may quickly assume you don't know what you're doing! Plan a backup approach in case it just will not work.
- 2 Establish some session rules up front.** Set yourself up to be able to facilitate powerfully by establishing some session ground rules at the beginning. Put your favorites up, and get the group to add to them. We like to use; No question is wrong, No side conversations, No rabbit holes (Going wildly off at a tangent), Mobiles / PC's off, Have fun.
- 3 Put delegates at ease.** As far as possible put delegates at ease by telling there's no roleplay (assuming there isn't!), they will not be put in difficult situations, etc. The more comfortable they are the more they will be willing to learn.
- 4 Take the time for the introductions.** It's not just about getting to know everyone, you are building rapport and helping the group to warm up to future contribution and input. Make sure you tell everyone when the breaks will take place, it will help them plan to be there.



- 5 Use some music.** Think about using some music during breakouts. It appeals to the creative mind, and has a significant influence on the mood. Soft and gentle makes people reflect, want a buzzing session, but on something more rocky etc.
- 6 Get a signal mechanism.** Whistles, hooters, buzzers and other noisy things are great for signaling the end of a breakout. Alternatively use the music, when it stops so does the breakout.
- 7 Handouts.** Double check you've got all the handouts with you, and that they are correct!
- 8 Getting them back from breaks.** Use team trivia quizzes to get the delegates back from breaks on time. Make it competitive over an event, with a small prize at the end. Start the quiz precisely when you announced the break would end, those who aren't back on time will soon be told by their team members that they were letting them down. Apart from that, it's just good fun. Be sure to prepare your questions in advance of the break - keep it slick and quick.
- 9 Have delegates keep a learning log.** Throughout the event stop at appropriate points and ask delegates to add to their personal learning logs. In final session-review have them articulate what they are going to commit to do as a result of the learning they've undertaken.
- 10 Take control of slides.** Arrange the equipment so that you personally control the slides if used. It's much neater when you move things forward, rather than having to keep telling another person to do it, or worse asking them to flick back to the last slide because they've gone before you are ready.

- 11** **Switch off your screensaver.** Nothing more frustrating than the screensaver popping up periodically through group discussions. If you are using your PC to present, turn off the screensaver, or at least set it at 2 hours.
- 12** **Keep changing the make up of breakout groups.** By always changing the group dynamic each breakout, you ensure everyone put's in a great effort, rather than become dominant, or assume an unhelpful role over the sessions. Come up with a load of ways in which you can split the group; hair colour, size, month of birth, whether they cook on gas or electricity. The list is unending, and if you run out, just ask everyone to come up with some more ideas.
- 13** **Stand up and sit down.** Start the session by standing, be bold and make a strong impression. Then use standing or sitting as a tool. Want group discussion and dialogue - sit down and let the conversation flow. Want to take control back, or move things on - stand up and lead the group. Good trainers are up and down all day long!
- 14** **Working in pairs with a co-trainer?** Before the session, determine who's leading which piece. Far better than saying in front of the group "Are you doing this bit or me". It also allows you to be thinking about your bit, whilst the other is leading.
- 15** **Always be one step ahead.** You cannot remember the whole event in detail, neither do you need to. Just know what's coming next. Always on step ahead in everything, but only ever one step ahead.
- 16** **Take control of slides by using "B".** OK, so no one wants some training that feels like death by powerpoint. Use this great facility that works in presentation mode, press the b key, and the screen will go black. Use this to take control again, show them the slide, press b, and the room is again yours to facilitate.



- 17 Present to the group, not the screen.** If using a projector, avoid presenting to the screen. Even when pointing out things on the screen, turn your body so that it's facing the group, and make sure they get most of the eye contact. Have your laptop / monitor in line-sight between you and the group, use that, not the screen behind you as your prompt.
- 18 Keep one conversation running, never two.** When the group are in plenary make sure there is only ever one conversation taking place. Have it as a ground rule for the day, and as the facilitator gently enforce it. Show each other the courtesy of listening to one person at a time.
- 19 Involve, don't dictate.** If dictated to we naturally resist, we engage once we have been involved. So, you may have something to tell the group, but instead of jumping in, use questioning to draw out existing knowledge from the group. Having done that, you can correct or add with your own input - they will be much more receptive to your contribution and expertise having first contributed themselves.
- 20 Thank groups and individuals when they contribute.** We all appreciate being valued. So when a group or even individual provides input and insight, thank them before moving on. It all adds to the feeling of being appreciated, valued, which adds to our learning enjoyment.
- 21 Point at the projected screen, not the monitor you are using.** If something needs pointing out on a slide, get up and point to the screen, pointing at the monitor you're looking at will help no one :-)
- 22 Become more animated.** You are up the front, and like an actor on a stage you can ham it up a bit. Use more frequent, and slightly larger body movements than you would if sitting in a meeting. You can go a long way before it will look too much, and it will give a much livelier impression to the delegates.

**23 Behavior breeds behaviour.** Remember that your attitude will bounce off the group very quickly. If you are upbeat, interested and alive, so will they be. If you arrive with a hangover, are flat, act bored or static, guess what... So with they be.

**24 Leave enough time to do a thorough end of session debrief.** This will take longer than you think. It is so important though! Leave enough time to do some active recap (ask them what we've covered and let them tell the group), think about their personal learnings, and articulate to the group what they will do different as a result of the training.

**25 Make personal change contracts.** Have delegates write out lists of what they will differently when they leave the session. Refer to it as a personal contract, encourage them to talk to others about it.



**Practice will make perfect, but have these tips in mind and you will be off to a great start. Make sure you get some personal feedback after the first event, really listen to it, write it down and think about how you could do better. It's always a little scary, so don't even entertain thoughts of defeat. The delegates are there to learn, and you have something to teach them. Enjoy it, you'll probably sleep really well that night.**

