

Eight Ideas to Improve Your Training

Plan ahead about how much you can cover. One major idea every 5-8 minutes is reasonable. Think about these ideas in terms of what the learners will leave knowing or being able to do.

Add visual support to your training. People learn much better if they can see as well as hear ideas. Remember, “Telling isn’t training.” Visuals can be PowerPoint® slides, but could also be software demonstrations (SIMPLE ones only), physical models, brief videos, show-and-tell, samples, or even just putting key ideas on a flip chart or white board. Remember, if you use PowerPoint®, test them before trainees arrive to make sure they show properly in the training room setup.

Get learners involved in the program. People learn even better when they’re active, not passive. At a minimum, encourage them to take notes. Try to plan something you can get them to do which makes them actively move or manipulate things – for example, fill out a form, sketch a marketing piece based on what you’ve just taught, make a list of some kind they can use back at the office.

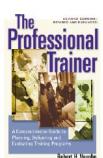
Ask them questions as well as giving them a chance to ask you questions. Just asking, “Do you understand?” or “Are there any questions?” isn’t enough. Check, instead, to see if they have heard, understood, accepted and can apply what you’ve just taught them. Do this by asking, “How would you...?” “Which is the best...?” “What if this happens?”

Consider using small groups. Even in a two hour session, you can have several “turn to your neighbor and discuss” moments. If you have some experienced and other inexperienced people, try to match them. Adults learn well from each other, not just from the trainer.

Create a couple useful handouts and take-aways for participants. Handouts serve two basic purposes: (1) They help guide the learners though the session and (2) they provide a reference for any detailed information that’s difficult to write down during training. **Ideas of what to include:** an outline or agenda; any information which is complex; steps for actions which must be done in a certain way; references for books, articles, agencies, websites, or people who can be contacted; professional associations; key words which may be new to your learners; etc.

Start out right. Be there ahead of time with everything you need. Greet people as they arrive. Find out what level of knowledge or experience they have with your topic. Establish your credibility early.

Finish up right. Summarize what you’ve covered. Strive to finish on time. Try to have something meaningful for them to do near the end. Ask them questions to insure they’ve learned something (see above). Let them ask any final questions.



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