

Ten Ways To Make Your Training 'EnterTraining'

How many of us have attended a training program where the material was dryer than the Sahara Desert? Where the instructor droned on and on? Where you left feeling the life and energy was completely sucked out of you? Okay, it may not have been that bad but we've all been in programs that have been downright boring. And, as training professionals, we all know that the learning is significantly impacted during those types of programs.

As Trainers we know that we must keep our audience engaged and attentive for the program to have any chance of success, hence the concept of EnterTraining... a combination of entertainment and training. Now, some of you may be thinking the focus of training is not to entertain but to facilitate learning, disseminate information, etc. My premise, in today's environment, is that this is more difficult if the program is not also entertaining.

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Is Your Training Program Effective?

The Top 10 Methods For Maximizing Training ROI

For many companies, training is a financial black hole. Billions of dollars are spent each year in the U.S. alone. What is the payback? Here are some proven tips to improve the bang for your training buck!

1. **Make training fun!** Numerous studies support what we all know! Learning can be fun!
2. **Create opportunities for participants to immediately use new skills on the job and create opportunities for spaced repetition.** Practice makes perfect. Remember your multiplication tables? Bet you still know (7 X 8) off the top of your head.
3. **Encourage discussion.** The instructor doesn't know it all. The best answer or practice is usually in the room.
4. **Most learning occurs informally.** Recognize this and use mentoring and buddy systems whenever applicable. Integrate informal learning opportunities into all training programs.
5. **Training must be timely and relevant.** Sounds simple but often overlooked. Training value increases if participants feel their time is considered valuable!
6. **Quality of learning is greatly impacted by the environment.** Visible, top management support is critical.
7. **Relate the importance of training to achievement of individual and organizational goals.**

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In addition, they are not mutually exclusive concepts. Some of the most memorable and effective programs I've attended were very entertaining. Most Accelerated Learning principles incorporate this philosophy as well.

So, what can you do to make your training more entertaining and, in effect, enhance the effectiveness of the training? Consider the following ideas:

1. **Use stories to bring key points to life** – We all love a good story and one that incorporates a key point in the training can assist with application and retention.
2. **Facilitate vs. Teach** – There's a subtle distinction between facilitating and teaching. Consider yourself, as the trainer, a catalyst for learning. A facilitator can allow learning to come from many places...participants, prepared materials, experiences, other experts, etc. rather than just from the Teacher to the pupil.
3. **Involve the participants** – Most adults learn best when they are true participants in the learning so make sure you do just that...create opportunities for group or individual activities, sharing experiences and knowledge, etc.
4. **Conduct 'real life' role-plays** – The more the training applies to the participant's day-to-day activities the more interested they will be. In addition, adults tend to like to learn by doing. Allowing them the opportunity to practice new skills in a safe, learning environment will help with the transfer of the learning to the job.
5. **Conduct Demonstrations** – Adults also learn from watching others model the new skill. Following the demonstration, give the participants an opportunity to debrief what they saw.
6. **Use Humor** – Jokes, cartoons, funny stories, exaggerations, etc. all add to a more jovial and creative atmosphere, which can enhance learning. Even the driest of topics can have humor interjected.



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7. **Utilize Analogies & Metaphors** – Examples of key points stated in the form of a metaphor or analogy can often relate more closely to the participant and, like a story, give the training variety.
8. **Use pop culture** – Incorporate TV shows, movies or popular objects/toys, popular comics, etc. into the program, i.e. using a movie clip to demonstrate a leadership competency.
9. **Incorporate Games & Competition** – Utilizing games to review key program points or creating competition between individuals or teams can interject a lot of energy into program and a sense of fun.
10. **Music** – Add music into the program during breaks, during individual or group exercises, etc. Appropriate choices for the time will make it most effective.

Many of the concepts above are not necessarily new, and you may be incorporating many of the actions. What can you do to take your training to the next level of EnterTraining? Are there instances where lecture can be replaced with a group activity, a story could be told, or pop culture thrown in? Where an individual exercise could be turned into a game or competition? Where a related cartoon can be interjected into a series of PowerPoint slides to make the point and lighten the mood? What will you do to make your training more EnterTraining? ♦

~ Bill Burtch, SPHR, ACC, President, Harmony Coaching & Consulting.

Employee Learning Week

Employee Learning Week is an awareness campaign by the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) highlighting the important connection between learning and achieving organizational results.

ASTD is the world's largest association dedicated to workplace learning and development professionals. ASTD's members come from more than 100 countries and connect locally in more than 120 U.S. chapters and with more than 20 international partners.

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- Put your money where your mouth is. Leverage rewards, incentives and recognition programs to support learning initiatives.
8. **Make it real.** Cutting edge training organizations spend most of their resources creating “live” learning opportunities.
 9. **Clarify expectations and ground rules at first session.** Make sure process goes both ways so instructor hits the mark and participants take it seriously.
 10. **Encourage feedback.** Getting everyone involved in this process will increase organizational support, visibility and commitment. ♦

~ Submitted by Cam Sorenson, B. Comm, cams@corp-strategies.com, www.corp-strategies.com Copyright by Coach U, all rights reserved.

Identifying Employees To Promote

As much as you may enjoy promoting deserving employees into positions of management, proceed with care. Some stellar worker bees won't make good supervisors. What's more, they may prefer to remain in their current roles.

Look for these five characteristics in those you want to promote:

- **Motivation.** Ideally, you want to assemble a team of self-directed managers who are driven to succeed. If they express a desire to embrace new challenges—such as managing people—that's a positive sign. And if they're eager to excel, they probably can inspire a team to excel, too.
- **Conflict management.** Promote those who demonstrate leadership in the face of conflict. The best managers grapple with conflicts without flinching. They realize that their success depends on doing what's right, not just making friends with their staffs.
- **Independence.** You want outspoken leaders who are willing to buck conventional wisdom and challenge "the way things are always done around here." A spineless "yes" person who marches in lock-step with the top brass will make a poor leader.
- **Ability.** Managers need to master a toolbox full of skills such as time management, interpersonal communication and delegation. Promote those who show they already possess these strengths.
- **Respect.** Managers must command their teams' respect. Do other workers look up to this person? If not, set your sights on someone else. ♦

~ Adapted from: Emory Mulling, writing in *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, American City Business Journals Inc., 1801 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30309.



One Minute Ideas

Tips For Conducting Better Training Meetings

As a team leader conducting a productive training is challenging.

Your training meeting must be informative, relevant, open for participation, fun, and motivating.

Here are some suggestions for making your meetings more effective:

Treat all of your team members as knowledgeable.

Appreciate their experiences and their opinions.

Do not lecture.

How boring! Make the meeting a participatory experience for everyone. Ask questions and allow them to participate in the discussion.

Don't just read what's in the training manual.

Team members can read it themselves. Your job is to expand on the subject and provide clarity of the information as well as to explain how it applies in your company.

Be prepared for the training meeting.

You should know ten times more about the subject than your participants. Give yourself plenty of time to research and validate the information.

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Turn Training Into An Employee Benefit

In this day and age, workers are eager to learn new skills that will help them advance in their careers. This means that training can be an employee benefit if you approach it correctly--a benefit that pays off for everyone. Best of all, it doesn't have to cost huge amounts of money. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

1. **Set a budget.** A few hundred dollars can buy useful training. Create a budget so everyone understands the limits. Check with your accountant to see if any of your training expenses are tax deductible.
2. **Do some legwork.** Give one employee the job of collecting information from community colleges and finding out what kinds of workshops and seminars are available from other organizations. Make the information available to all employees.
3. **Draft a policy.** Specify the positions that qualify for training, what kind of training your organization is willing to pay for, and how long an employee needs to be on the payroll before becoming eligible.
4. **Share the skills.** Make sure employees share what they've learned from classes and conferences with other employees. Written reports are one option; a presentation or mini-seminar by the employee may be another helpful possibility.
5. **Team up.** Make friends with people in other businesses in your office building or community, and team up to share training costs for specific skills that will benefit both of you.
6. **Take some courses yourself.** You'll learn new skills that could help you and your organization, and you'll serve as a role model for your employees. ♦



~ Adapted from "Training is a popular perk," by Jane Applegate

Schedule of Public Courses

The following courses are being offered to the public by Harmony Coaching & Consulting. Click on the associated link for more information on the program or to register.

Course Title	Date(s)	Time	For More Information/Registration
SHRM Learning System® is the preparation course for the HR Certification Exam <i>(Every other Saturday)</i>	Every Other Saturday 2/23 – 5/4, 2013	8:30AM – 4:30PM	www.cbu.edu/shrm
The Coaching Clinic® is a two-day workshop for executives, managers and leaders to experience and learn coaching skills and competencies.	January 7 & 8, 2013	8:30AM – 5:00PM	www.harmonycc.net/coaching-clinic.php
Leading at the Speed of Trust™ is a two-day workshop for anyone interested in increasing revenues, decreasing costs, enhancing/repairing relationships, or improving their credibility with employees or customers.	TBD	TBD	Email: info@harmonycc.net

