

How to Conduct an Effective Training Session



The time has finally come:
Training day is here.

Here are some specific tips and techniques to help you run an effective training session that accomplishes your goals in an enjoyable and engaging way for everyone involved.



14 proven techniques to conduct a successful training session

1 Introduce yourself at the start of the session.

Tell delegates a little bit about yourself. This helps to build relationships with the delegates and helps engagement.

2 Tell delegates what you're going to cover.

Introduce your session with a brief overview of the training subject's main points.

3 Tell them the information.

In the main portion of the session, explain key points, go over policies, demonstrate procedures, and relate any other information delegates need to know.

4 Tell them what you told them.

Conclude with a summary of your opening overview. Use repetition to help trainees grasp and retain information.

5 Always explain what delegates are going to see before you show a multimedia portion.

This practice creates a better learning environment by guiding delegates to know what to look for and what to remember. Explaining the purpose of the multimedia ensures an effective reception for its information.

6 Use as much hands-on training as possible.

The most effective training uses all the senses to affect learning. Demonstrate and apply teaching points to create greater understanding and knowledge of the subject.

7 Test frequently.

Tests are most effective when students know they will be quizzed, because they'll pay close attention to the material. Testing is an objective way to determine whether training achieved its goals.

8 Involve delegates.

For example, ask participants to share their experiences with the training topic. Some delegates are experienced personnel who have valuable information to contribute. All delegates will get more out of sessions by hearing about their peer's experiences with the subject—and not just the trainer's lecture points. Hearing different voices also keeps sessions varied and interesting. Structure interaction time into all your sessions.

9 Repeat questions before answering them.

This practice ensures that all participants know what the question is so they can make sense of the answer.

10 Analyze the session as you go.

Always be on the lookout for what works best. When you discover a new technique or method that clicks with the group, note it on your training materials so it can be incorporated into the training outline to be used in future sessions.

11 Keep your session on track.

Start on time and finish on time. Don't hold up class waiting for late arrivers or explain to the other delegates why you are delaying the training. Ideally run the class according to the schedule and don't get too far off course. Opening up discussion among delegates may lead to some pertinent tangents, but don't let side issues take over. Ask if there's enough interest to pursue a separate session on that topic, but get this class back to the lesson plan.

12 Put yourself in their shoes – or seats.

Give frequent breaks, especially for half-day or all-day sessions.

13 Solicit feedback on the training session.

Critiques work best when they are written and anonymous, unless a trainee volunteers to discuss his or her thoughts in person. Trainee input is vital for making the next sessions – and the overall training programs – more effective.

14 Knowing your audience.

PowerPoint presentations are likely to be inaccessible to audience with visual impairments. It can be helpful to those people, and to lip-readers, to see any slides in print in advance. Providing handouts in advance in a clear format can often also help people with SpLD (Specific Learning Difficulties) with their note taking, as it can show them new words and concepts and importantly, allow them to focus on listening.

These 14 steps are the basic foundation for a solid training session that runs efficiently and that conveys the necessary information for meeting the session's goals. They also incorporate ways to begin improving training on the fly. In other words, you can't go wrong by following these steps in every training session you run.

It is possible, however, to get a little more creatives – and memorable – by using some of the following innovative techniques.

Tell delegates what you're going to cover. Introduce your session with a brief overview of the training subject's main points.

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Make Training Memorable

Here are some softer training methods that are not necessarily essential to conveying information, but that can make receiving data or instructions a much more enjoyable experience, which will keep trainees involved and help them retain more information.

Make learning fun.

Why? Delegates will not be enthusiastic if training sessions are dry and dull. Few delegates respond to or remember complicated concepts or theories; they want to learn practical information about what they can do to get better results today. If they don't find the message entertaining, they won't retain it. Since variety is the spice of life, use several different training methods to engage trainees in a variety of ways. Also work to alternate the pace of each session to keep trainees' interest level high.

Use humour.

Humour helps keep enthusiasm at peak levels. Trainers can make a point more effectively by using humour than by drowning trainees in statistics or theories. Avoid telling jokes, however, because humour is so subjective that someone in your audience may be offended and lose track of training for the rest of the session. Personal, self-deprecating humour is the safest way to go.

Encourage participation.

Make the session lively by engaging delegates in the learning process. In fact, try to spend close to 50 percent of training time on group participation. Encourage everyone in the training session to speak freely and candidly, because learning occurs most readily when feelings are involved.

Build self-esteem.

Delegates understandably want to know what's in it for them. Create a win-win environment by using the training program to build the participants' self-worth and self-esteem.

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Qualities of Effective Trainers

While some of these qualities are obviously necessary for anyone in a teaching position, others may not seem as necessary, such as being patient or open-minded. All of these attributes, however, contribute to making top-notch trainers. All the best trainers are:

- Good communicators. They speak well, express their thoughts clearly, and have an engaging presentation style.
- Knowledgeable. They know their topic cold. They understand all the concepts and know all the details. They can answer questions thoroughly and at a level that delegates understand. If they ever can't answer a question, they know exactly where to go to get that answer and they promise to do so as soon as possible.
- Experienced. They know what they're talking about. They've been in the field doing what they teach in training.
- Good with people. Their personality styles may vary, but they enjoy working with people. They can engage groups of people and work with them to meet training goals.
- Interested in learning. They recognize the value of learning in their own lives and want to help others learn. They find satisfaction in sharing with others the skills and knowledge they have acquired through hard work and persistence.
- Patient. They understand that people learn in different ways and at different paces. They take the time to make sure each trainee understands what's going on and leaves training sessions with the skills and knowledge he or she came to acquire.
- Open-minded. They respect other people's points of view and know that there are often many ways to achieve the same objectives. They don't assume they know everything, but instead are willing to listen to and learn from trainees.
- Creative. They bring ingenuity and their own natural curiosity to the task of training. They create an environment in their training sessions that encourages learning and inspires trainees to reach beyond what they already know to explore new ideas and methods.
- Well-prepared. They know their material, their objectives, and their plan of presentation. They've checked to see that any equipment they expect to use in training is in place and operational. They've made sure that all supplies and supporting materials are available in the right quantities.
- Flexible. They are able to adjust their training plan to accommodate their audience and still meet all training objectives.
- Well-organized. Good trainers can handle several tasks at once. They know how to manage their time and their work.

Training Day Checklist

Here's a handy last-minute checklist to make sure everything is ready for your training session:

- ☐ Dress appropriately. Smart business dress, ties are a lesser requirement, don't forget that delegates want to be in a comfortable safe environment.
- ☐ Arrive early. Give yourself time to check last-minute arrangements and get yourself mentally geared up for the session, find out if there are any fire alarms, where are the toilets and if there are any catering arrangements to be sorted.
- ☐ Check seating arrangements. Make sure the set-up is ideal for the training style you want to use and have some extra chairs for any last-minute trainees.
- ☐ Check room temperature. Adjust it appropriately for the number of people who will be in the room and the size of the space you will all be occupying.
- ☐ Check audiovisual hardware. Conduct one last run-through to make sure everything is still running smoothly, carry a spare if possible.
- ☐ Check electrical outlets. Make sure all your connections are safe. Don't trail cords across floors or overload sockets.
- ☐ Check light switches. Know which switches work which lights so you can achieve the ideal lighting for audiovisual materials and note-taking.
- ☐ Check window-darkening equipment. Make sure blinds or shades are working properly.
- ☐ Check arrangements. Make sure you have everything you need – including the training space for the entire time you need it.
- ☐ Lay out classroom supplies. If you will be demonstrating tools or equipment, make sure you have everything you need.
- ☐ Lay out course materials. Decide whether to put handouts on a table for delegates to pick up on the way in or to lay them at every seat.

These are all effective techniques for running a successful session, but what kind of person does it take to do the training? The best trainers have several qualities that make them good at what they do. Check the list opposite to see which qualities you already possess – and to determine which areas you could improve.

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Ensure you promote positive Equality

The legislation relating to Equality and Diversity issues makes it clear that it is about promoting positive equality and good relations. It is essential therefore that when designing training and the delivery ensures that all content, including examples used and case studies are free from bias, stereotypes and prejudice and are inclusive. All content should value and celebrate diversity. Some examples of this would be:

- Use examples of different work patterns and a mixture of external caring commitments in any time management training.
- If discussing personal relationships use non-gender specific names for partners in case studies.
- Harassment and bullying cases where religion/race/sexuality is part of the issue.
- Ensuring that any electronic information is available in alternative formats.
- In customer care training, use examples where the customer does not have English as their first language.
- Be aware of gender used in examples. Use a mix of male and female examples. Use examples with women and underrepresented groups in management roles.
- Be aware of the age regulations, do not use age as a criteria, e.g. for potential or talent selection.
- Be careful of the language used, do not refer to someone's age or experience.
- Assume that some participants will not be Christian.

How to manage disruptive delegate in your training

Should you encounter an individual that is being disruptive to the session, at the first available opportunity take them to one side, well away from the rest of the group and explain to them how their behaviour is impacting on the rest of the group and try to establish if there is an underlying issue. Many will not be aware that their behaviour is inappropriate and will immediately change. However, should this not have any impact then at the next opportunity, take them away from the rest of the group politely ask them to leave the session.

Questions to ask

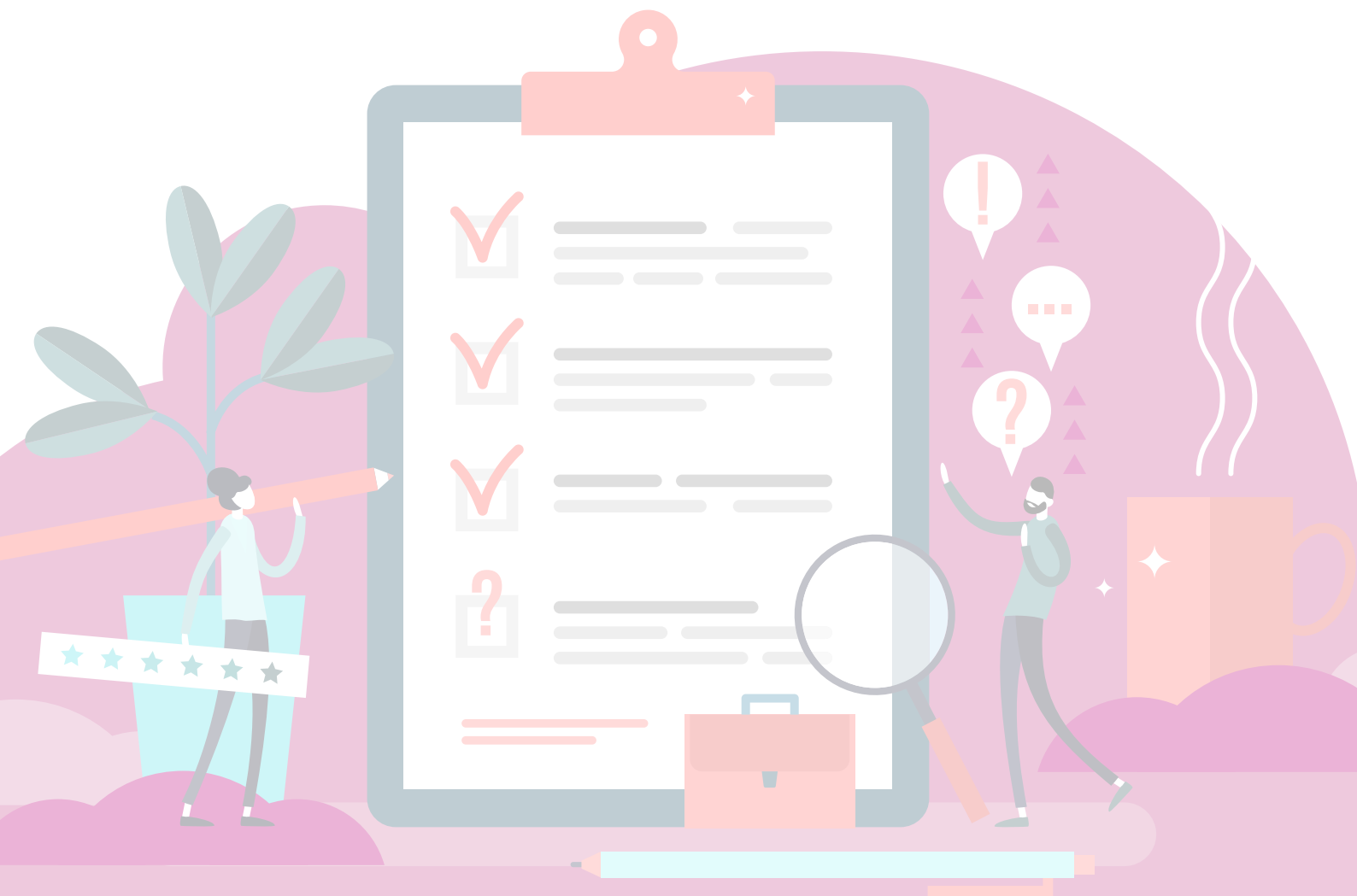
- You seem to be a little agitated/upset/under pressure/frustrated/angry. Is everything okay?
- Is there anything I can do to help?
- What would you like to happen? How?
- What support do you think might help?
- Have you spoken to your GP or looked for help anywhere else?

Questions to avoid

- You're clearly struggling. What's up?
- Why can't you just get your act together?
- What do you expect me to do about it?
- Everyone else is in the same boat and they're okay. Why aren't you?
- Who do you expect to pick up all the work that you can't manage?

It is important to act on a disruptive delegate, as the rest of the group will feel that you have let them down and will mark you down as a poor trainer. However this needs to be undertaken in a compassionate manner in case there are any underlying issue, so act early be assertive and control / understand the disruption for the benefit of everyone.

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The NHS Skills Development Network operates across NHS organisations in England. Its remit is to provide the infrastructure for improving leadership and professional development skills, raising standards and sharing best practice through economy-wide learning.

The Skills Development Network uses a dedicated website, **www.skillsdevelopmentnetwork.com**, to publicise and support its work. The website is the primary source of information for all staff in providing resources for personal and organisational development.

Skills Development activities include but are not limited to:

- Professional Education and Qualifications
- Lifelong Learning and Continuing Professional Development
- Talent Management
- Career Development
- Widening and Improving Technical Skills
- Achieving Excellence
- Partnership Working
- Sharing Best Practice
- Networking
- Accreditation

Other Top Tips available include:

- Stress Management
- Communicating Financial Information Effectively
- Team Building
- Relationship Building
- Influencing
- Increasing Productivity
- Dealing with Change
- Negotiation in Healthcare
- Managing Personal Resilience
- Data Visualisation
- Writing a Business Case

For more information visit **www.skillsdevelopmentnetwork.com**

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