

# THE EFFECTIVE *Trainer*



**A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO  
PLANNING, DELIVERING, AND  
EVALUATING SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOPS**



Venture Team Building

# The Effective Trainer

---

**A Step-By-Step Guide to Planning, Delivering,  
and Evaluating Successful Workshops**



**[www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk](http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk)**

Produced for: Venture Team Building

Email: [web@ventureteambuilding.co.uk](mailto:web@ventureteambuilding.co.uk)  
Website: [www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk](http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk)

First Edition: June 2016

© 2016 by Venture Team Building

The materials that appear in this book may be reproduced for educational and training activities. There is no requirement to obtain special permission for such uses. This permission statement is limited to reproduction of materials for educational or training events.

Any reproduction or distribution – or inclusion of items in publications for sale or available to the public through the internet – may only be carried out with prior written permission of the author.

SAMPLE

# Contents

SO YOU WANT TO BE AN EFFECTIVE TRAINER? .....	2
THE BASICS .....	3
HOW TO PLAN A TRAINING SESSION.....	7
HOW TO DELIVER A TRAINING SESSION.....	14
HOW TO CONDUCT POST-TRAINING REVIEW .....	21
HOW TO PLAN A TEAM BUILDING RETREAT .....	35
HOW TO FACILITATE.....	43
HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR TRAINING SESSIONS .....	54
YOU CAN DO IT! .....	57

# Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail!

A large part of being an effective trainer is putting in the work *before* delivering the training session. Preparing for something can often be a boring or tedious prospect, but it is absolutely essential.

A lot of behind-the-scenes work goes into making a training session successful. It can be daunting to think about all the moving pieces that goes into planning a training session, so we've broken down the preparation work into two broad categories:

- Objectives & Outcomes
- Logistics

Planning and designing a training plan will help alleviate any nervousness you may feel about the training session. Having a plan means that you are prepared for the flow of activity during the session and will be better able to adapt to any changes you may have to make on the day itself.

Having a training plan also ensures that the session is not a waste of time or effort, but that the activities and discussions are tailored to meet the training objectives.

## Planning: Objectives & Outcomes

It is crucial to know your subject and understand your training objectives!

The overall objectives of the training workshop should state what you expect the programme to achieve in terms of the final outcomes. The objectives can be broken down into smaller chunks, and relevant activities and training exercises should be selected to help achieve these objectives.

The first step is working out the learning aims for the workshop that are both specific and measurable. Decide what content you want to cover and what your learners should know by the end of the training workshop.

When deciding your objectives, be as precise as possible.

Here's an example from a recent workshop:

- Delegates will be made aware of the company's health and safety policy. They will be able to analyse risk in the workplace and write a simple risk assessment.

The more you understand the training objectives, the easier it will be for you to facilitate learning. Workshop objectives will also provide a sense of direction and help keep both you and your learners on track. By reviewing your objectives during your workshop, you will be able to tell whether something is working or not, and whether you need to adapt your plan.

Once you know what you're hoping to achieve, write a training plan consisting of activities to help you achieve those objectives.

Activities may consist of presentations, practical activities, role-plays, case studies and group discussions. Choose what works best for your group and plan accordingly. Plan your timings, resources required and be sure to add regular breaks to your plan.

You should also decide on the list of participants. Unless the topic or training objective is specific to employees at a certain level, we recommend adding employees of all levels in one group. This allows for them to get to know colleagues whom they may not otherwise interact with in the course of their work. It also provides them with the chance to learn about the work done by different departments or divisions within the organisation.

We'll cover more details on how to write a training plan later in the chapter.

## **Planning: Logistics**

### **Venue and Facilities Selection**

When selecting a suitable venue for your training workshop, it's essential that it is easily accessible for delegates and large enough to run your activities. The venue should also have all the resources that you require such as comfortable tables and chairs, natural light from windows, ventilation and temperature control.

When selecting an appropriate venue make sure that the following criteria is met:

- The venue is accessible to everyone and within easy travelling distance.
- You have adequate resources made available to you such as chairs and tables. You might also want to request extra training resources from the venue, such as flip charts, pens, paper, projector, interactive whiteboard etc.
- The venue is large enough for your workshop, clean and well-ventilated with natural light. You might also want to consider working outside on a sunny day.
- There are clean toilets available and suitable areas for rest breaks.

It is important that after the selection of a training venue you make the necessary arrangements and get confirmation of your booking. It is no good organising a training workshop but then to turn up and not have access to your training room!

Book your venue in advance, confirm this a couple of days before your workshop and be there at least thirty minutes before the start of your training workshop to prepare and setup. Remember, first impressions last!

### **The Learning Environment**

The setup of your training room (or learning environment) can have a huge impact on your group and their level of concentration and ability to retain information.

Here are some suggestions on how to optimize your learning environment:

- When laying out the classroom, organise chairs in a circle or horseshoe, as this allows learners to see each other and easily interact.
- Use visual aids that link to the theme of the workshop. This could be posters, quotes or flipchart work completed by the group during the workshop. Also create a question board and ask the group to write on post-it notes anything they want answered by the end of the training session.

- When teaching a workshop, it is important that your learning space should be comfortable, with plenty of natural light and air circulation and the room temperature is set at a comfortable level.
- The workshop space should be set up to encourage participation. If possible, consider clearing all tables away as this creates less of a boardroom or classroom atmosphere. It is also more practical for breaking your group into smaller learning groups for group discussion and brainstorming.
- Background Music: Use background music during group discussions or reflective moments as this creates a more relaxed learning environment and changes the mood and tone of the room. Use music based on the mood you are trying to convey. For example: the Rocky theme gets learners excited while soft piano relaxes.
- Pictures and Posters: Find pictures and posters that have relevancy to the subject you are teaching. These are powerful memory aids and will prompt learners to think about the subject. Place them around your learning space.

### **Scheduling the Session**

When scheduling your workshop, add breaks for your learners. We suggest aiming for a 20-minute break every 90 minutes. Also do ensure they have tea and coffee available. During the workshop, have water or juice available for your group – this prevents dehydration, which can affect learner's focus and mood.

The most difficult time for teaching is usually the session straight after the lunch break. Plan such that the first half is fun, practical and reinforces your learning outcomes. Take the learning outside the classroom and maybe try some team challenges to break up the training and re-engage the group.

### **Using Different Learning Methods Effectively**

We learn best when we are challenged, comfortable in our surroundings and having fun. Try to make your workshops as practical as possible and engage your learners. Stay away from 'chalk and talk' and 'death by PowerPoint' methods of teaching.

Use questions to engage your group and try to draw learning points from them through group discussions, group work and debates. Try to facilitate knowledge-based learning through self-discovery and experiential activities.

If you are going to be using PowerPoint, use it to recap key learning points only and then move on. Try to keep the information on the slides to a minimum. The slideshow is there to prompt the trainer and not to teach the group (you are!). Stick to three to four bits of information (enough for our short term memory) and try to use images instead of words.

Try varying your teaching methods to include: brainstorming, group discussion, reflection, note taking, reading, presentations, role plays, debates, subject-specific exercises etc. The more teaching methods you use, the more engaging your workshop will be and you'll be able to connect to different types of learners.

## **Other Tips to Make Your Session Great**

### *Introduce group work*

Research shows that over 90% of the information that enters our brain is visual. Our eyes can register 36,000 visual messages per hour. Provide flipchart paper when doing any group work (brainstorms, group discussions) and ask them to note down what they come up with. Once they have finished, stick the finished work to the wall to reaffirm learning and help your group remember the learning journey.

### *Use colours*

Research shows that when information is presented using different colour codes, it is more likely to be remembered.

### *Provide question boards*

Provide an area where learners can put post-it notes with any questions, ideas, worries they have at the start of the workshop or during breaks. We suggest you frame your workshop by asking learners one thing they want to learn about the subject and sticking these to the question board. Then at the end of the workshop, recap the questions and ensure they've been answered (normally the questions are covered during the actual training workshop).

### *Have a reflection board*

This is similar to the question board, but learners use post-it notes to identify what they've learnt from the session instead. This gives them thinking time to reflect on the subject and what has been covered during the workshop.

## **How To Design A Training Plan**

Once you have nailed down the details of your training objectives & outcomes as well as the logistics, it's time to write a training plan.

By preparing a training plan before your workshop, you can make sure that you are covering a realistic amount in the available time, and that you only include activities that will help learners get the most from the experience and link to your training content.

When designing your programme, you should include the following:

- Workshop/Training objectives
- Venue and facilities selection
- Duration (both for individual activities and complete programme)
- Activities and learning strategies
- Any resources/materials needed

### **Workshop/Training Objectives**

By this point, you should already have the training objectives for your workshop clearly outlined. Take the opportunity to look through them and revise them, if necessary.



## **Venue & Facilities Selection**

You should also have decided on a suitable venue for the training session. If you have any special requirements for any particular activity, we advise checking with the venue to ensure that they are able to accommodate.

## **Duration**

As a trainer, time is not your friend. Often, trainers struggle with getting the timings for the various activities and segments of the workshop right.

Our advice: try and be realistic about how much you can cover in the time you have available to you. It is always a good thing to over-plan but be aware that the majority of the time, any activities planned generally take longer than expected.

When identifying timings for each activity, remember to allow extra time as a precaution. For example, the activity might be a group discussion for fifteen minutes, but you probably need to add an extra five minutes to introduce the exercise and organise participants into discussion groups (not to forget a wider group discussion and review).

Try to be flexible in approach, and be prepared to change your timings and maybe even cut out an activity if necessary. Before you begin, work out which activities are less important, or which ones cover the same content and are easiest to skip if you run out of time. You should also plan for some extra activities as backup in case you speed through the content or you have a problem with your resources (better to be safe than sorry).

## **Activities and Learning Strategies**

Next you need to either select the right activities or develop your own exercises to help you achieve your learning aims. When deciding on activities, try to think about the flow and pacing of your workshop, and how each activity works together to create a whole.

Ensure that each activity has a purpose (so delegates understand the 'why') and links to the content. If an activity doesn't fit your aims, scrap it and save it for another time.

Think of your workshop like a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. Each activity should help the group identify a key learning outcome that moves them on to the next activity and towards the main objective of the workshop.

The beginning is where you introduce the workshop, discuss the structure of the day, identify learning objectives and discuss previous experiences. Try to make this as fun and interactive as possible – use questions and team activities to engage your group, relax them, break down barriers to learning and mentally prepare them for the workshop.

At this point, we suggest using ice breakers to help your learners feel as comfortable as possible in the learning environment. Using an ice breaker will get participants talking and breaking down barriers from the get go. It can be quite intimidating meeting people for the first time and many learners refrain from giving their opinion or asking questions out of fear of judgement – strive to eliminate this fear from the start.