

PART -8

SPICING UP DRY TRAINING

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LESSON 1

Here are some quick tips for spicing up “dry” training:

- 1) Use a find-a-word or crossword puzzle to engage people in the terminology and the content. I’ve included sample of each that we use in Creative Training Techniques in this article.
- 2) Have people line up at the beginning by their level of knowledge/experience in the subject. They must line up. They can do this through discussion with one another...or as a twist have them do it non-verbally. Then have them number off so that your class is divided into groups of 5-7. This will help ensure even distribution of the knowledge/experience throughout the class.
- 3) Gave the small groups divide up reference material so that each person in a group has a different part. Each person in a group scans or reads their part and notes the key points with colored dots. They then brief the other group members so that they can mark their reference materials accordingly.

Give them sample formats for true/false, multiple choice, and matching and gave them create questions on 3x5 cards with the questions on one side and the answers on the other. These can be used as review flash cards, rotated to other groups for review and answering, used in a quiz game, or used to construct a test. Each involvement with the cards reinforces the class content one more time.

LESSON # 2

The purpose of training is for people to leave impressed with themselves, not intimidated by the trainer. They should leave excited about what they can now do that they couldn’t do before; and with more confidence in themselves, their knowledge, and their skills.

All too often trainers seem to be in competition with their participants. Sometimes one will feel a need to “hold back” information, just so that there will be an “edge” over participants. Training is never meant to be a competition between trainers and participants, nor, for the most part, between participants. Rather, it is an opportunity for each person to become core than they are and know it!

Training is an opportunity to find out where I am right now in my knowledge, skills, and attitudes.. Compared to where I can be. It is also an opportunity for me to move forward in my development. It is a chance for me to become both more competent and more confident. Now that I’ve given you the “what”, here are some “hows”.

- 1) Whenever possible, subdivide your class into groups of 5-7 people. Using small groups allows for more interaction. Many people feel more comfortable voicing opinions to their small group than to a larger one. As they gain confidence in doing this, it becomes easier to share thoughts with larger groups.
- 2) Use group leaders in the small groups. By appointing group leaders, you give people an opportunity to lead for a short period of time. This helps them to get comfortable with a leadership role and also builds confidence.
- 3) Rotate the group leadership. By changing the group leadership after various activities, you help to ensure that every one has the opportunity to experience a leadership role.
- 4) Build in time for people to reflect and record what they learn. Periodically, give people a short period of time to think about what they experience in the class and think about possible applications after the class is finished. By taking the time to record these ideas, they reinforce the fact that they are learning.. and that what they are learning has a practical application.
- 5) Provide time for people to share what they learn in the small group. One way to do this is to have a group leader and a scribe ask each person in the group to share one idea they've learned and record it on a group master idea list. Each person shares only one idea until every person in the small group has had the opportunity. If time allows, the process can continue for even a second or a third round. Doing this provides two benefits: when people have something new to share, they feel good about contributing; when someone mentions something they have on their personal list, they feel reaffirmed.
- 6) Provide an opportunity for the small groups to share at least a part of their group master idea list with the larger group. This can be done using same process as described in number five, the only difference is that the group leader shares one idea from the small group with the larger group that is then placed on a class master idea list. This helps build the confidence of the group leader who simply has to report the group's ideas, not his or her own.
- 7) Encourage participants to provide each other with recognition. The instructor is not the only one who can show appreciation, participants can be supplied with small dots like the ones used to code file folders. Whenever someone makes a contribution to their learning they can recognize that contribution by placing a dot on the nametag or tent of the participant. As this is done, the person gives specific feedback as to what the person did or said that they found useful.
- 8) These seven 'how to ' are just the tip of the iceberg. For each of these, you can come up with many variations.

LESSON # 3

The more the training is participant-centered, the better the results will be. Each person has a "best" way to learn, whether they know it or not. It may be on their own, but often is with a small group they can trust. It may be highly

structured, or they may prefer to create their own structure. The more the training is focussed on how the participant learns best, the faster the training can be delivered, the retention will be higher, and the on-the-job application will be quicker.

All too often, we focus on all of the other areas that affect training: the location, the delivery system (i.e., distance, classroom, Internet, Intranet, etc.). And we overlook the component that is central to all training, the participant himself or herself.

How does a person learn? Do all people learn alike? To answer these questions for yourself, ask ten people around you to name a favourite activity they engage in. The activity could be a sport or a hobby, anything that they are actively involved in. Then ask them what it took to learn how to do the activity they do. Did someone teach them, or did they learn as part of a group? Did they have a role model? Did someone mentor them or coach them? Did they learn from a book or tape---all by themselves? What you will quickly discover is that the answers will vary, and sometimes vary widely. Now ask them this question: if you were to start today to learn this skill or activity, how would you go about it? If it helps, they can assume that the same resources, plus any new resources not available originally, are available to them. To corroborate what you're being told, ask what steps they would recommend for someone new to the skill to learn it.

An instrument that successful trainers use often to help people look at how they learn is the "Personal Learning Insights Profile" (PLIP). The profile helps people to identify what their learning preferences are. Responding to the instrument allows people to learn three things:

- 1) The extent to which they like to learn individually, as opposed to being a part of a group.
- 2) The extent to which they like to have very specific structure for what and how the learning takes place as opposed to a general structure with the how left to them.
- 3) The extent to which they want what they're learning to have specific, practical use, as opposed to being general information that they may or may not have immediate use for.

This information has broad implications not only for training, but for coaching and other applications as well. It suggests to managers and co-workers what kinds of communication are most effective to help people work with. It helps them to understand how they might request learning opportunities be structured for them so they don't find themselves with learning resources which might be fine for others, but which actually hamper their learning, because they are not in synch with how the trainer learn best.

What one has learned, through, is that one size does not fit all. Having multiple ways to master the same skills or acquire the same knowledge may

actually be more cost effective because it can reduce the overall time any one person needs to gain mastery.

Do your own inventory. As you look at your own work place what are critical skills people need to acquire? How many different acquisitions options are actually available to them? Are there enough? Should there be more? Even within training programs are there options given so people can learn, using their best skill and knowledge acquisition modes as much as possible? Paying attention to people's learning preferences can increase retention, reduce delivery time, increase on the job application, and increase satisfaction. Add this element to your trainers toolkit today.

LESSON # 4

Review and reinforcement is a key to every training process. If people are exposed to an idea one time they retain less than 10% at the end of thirty days. Yet, if they are exposed to the same idea, with interval reinforcement, six times over thirty days, retention is greater than 90%. We need to create opportunities for review and reinforcement of key content at least six times over thirty days. You can't apply it, if you can't remember it.

This means that content must be reviewed, revisited, and reinforced six times for it to anchor in our long-term memory. Another important piece to this, however, is that there must be an interval in between each review/reinforcement. You may also change the method, technique, and processes for doing the review and reinforcement. Each of these changes provides participants with additional valuable memory hooks to help them really lock the information in.

One great example of this is embedded in a creative training techniques course. The first morning, the trainer teaches participants the 9 steps to doing the Heimlich Maneuver using a visual technique called Window panning. During the process he covers the steps a number of ways:

- 1) The participants see the trainer draw an icon.
- 2) They draw the icon.
- 3) The trainer says a key phrase for each step they say a phrase for each step
- 4) They say a phrase for each step
- 5) The trainer adds the phrase to the windowpane under the icon.
- 6) They write the phrase in their windowpane under the icon.

Later in the day, the trainer repeats the steps in order using the windowpane with the icons. Still later, he/she repeats the steps in order, using a blank windowpane. Still later, the trainer makes them identify several of the icons by pointing to one of the panes and asking, "what's this?". Afterwards, they identify the panes the trainer did not ask for. By now you get the point. We also incorporate a game and practical demonstration and skill practice. By now you get the point. We also incorporate the game and practical

demonstration and skill practice. By the end of a day and a half, the participants will not take more than 21 minutes.

In every course, there are major contents pieces that must be mastered. Use these principles to help your participants anchor them.

LESSON # 5

Remember to reward performance using the principle of RIVR (Random, Intermittent, And Variable Reinforcement). Random says that we recognise, praise, appreciate, and encourage on an unpredictable timetable. Intermittent says that we do not reinforce every time the appropriate skills or knowledge are demonstrated. Variable says that reward or reinforcement is not always the same. It may be a thank you one time, a small prize another, a symbol like a sticker, star, or dot to put on a nametag or nameplate another.

William James, the Harvard psychologist, said that the greatest need of every human being is the need for appreciation. However, if we always reinforce everything our participants do, we connect the activity with the reward or reinforcement, when they leave the training and go back to the "real world," it is very unlikely that the same kind and amount of reinforcement will be waiting for them. So, remove the reward, remove the behaviour may be the principle that becomes operative. This is why the RIVR principle is so important.

Beyond the random, meaning unpredictable, times of reinforcement and the intermittent, meaning not all the time, is the variable part of the principle. For me this translates not only into the size or significance of the reward or reinforcement, but also who provides it. In every seminar that good trainers conduct, whether it's Creative Training Techniques, Training For Impact, or a seminar they have designed for managers or salespeople of a client, you'll see that reward and reinforcement is variable in a number of ways.

- ◆ **First**, the reinforcement or reward varies in type-it may be a dot placed on a nametag along with specific feedback for why the dot is being given. In other words, what did the person do or say that made a positive contribution to either the individual awarding the dot, or the class? It might be a Rs 1 lottery ticket, a playing card that will be combined with others to get a favourable hand that can be traded for various prizes, an overhead transparency that can be used in a future presentation, a 3x5 card with a poem or a quote, a bonus handout, a star, a simple, verbal "thank you". The list is limitless.
- ◆ **Second**, the reward varies by both giver and receiver. Good trainers quickly get participants recognising other participants for their contributions. Recognition does not come from the instructor only. Back on the job, it is not just the manager that can encourage people on the team. Anyone can, if they pay attention and provide feedback when somebody does something right or something that goes above and beyond what's expected. Individuals can be recognised and so can pairs, small groups, and entire teams or classes.

Most of the rewards that the food trainers structure for classes, and in the workplace, are based around standards, gets the reward or recognition. This creates a win-win environment rather than creation an environment that says that first or best or fastest gets all the rewards or recognition.

LESSON # 6

Evaluate early and often. Regardless of the platform used to deliver the training (classroom, Intranet, distance learning, self-paced, etc.) provide an evaluation form early so that participants know what they are being asked for feedback on. Find a variety of ways to solicit feedback early in the delivery process so that if the intervention (in this case probably training of some type) is missing the mark, it can be adjusted to meet the needs without wasting too much time.

Here are some quick tips:

- 1) In multiple-day classes, do a start/stop/continue 3x5 card. Ask participants to write down something they'd like to start that would help their learning; something they'd like stopped and something they'd like continued. Collecting and reviewing these cards can tip you off to some adjustments that will really help.
- 2) Provide participants with the evaluation form early. In a two-day class, I distribute it the morning of the first day. This makes them aware of what they're being asked for feedback on and allows them to complete it when they choose. For example, by noon the first day they've probably made up their minds about the facility being used.
- 3) Give peoples a chance to evaluate everything that impacts the training. We use four items at least: the instructor, the content, the environment, and the participants. Each of these four can have a big impact on whether or not learning takes place. The instructors attitude, availability, and knowledge are important, but so is the temperature of the meeting room, equipment that works, adequate breaks etc. Content delivered at the right level is important, but so is their practical use on the job. Participation and co-operation in the learning process by each individual and their co-participants can also play a major part in the effectiveness of the training delivered of the training delivered.

Applying these techniques to your evaluation processes can make evaluation a tool that improves the results that you deliver, both in the classroom and on the job.

LESSON # 7

Evaluate more than the trainer and the content. These are key, of course, but so are the way individuals participate in the training and the environment in which the training is delivered.

So now we're looking at four things to evaluate at the end of training:

- The instructor, who could include things like openness to questions, availability, knowledge of the subject, interest in participants, etc.
- The content, which could include things like relevance, the level at which it is delivered, applicability to the job, opportunity for skill practice, the amount of time spent on each content piece, the pace at which each content piece was covered, etc.
- The environment, including things like the amount of space in the meeting room, seating arrangement, temperature control, sleeping rooms, food, breaks, etc.
- The participants, including things like the evaluator's participation, other participants' participation, self and others' commitment to developing and implementing an action plan, etc.

All of these things will give you a much clearer picture of the effectiveness of the delivery phase of your program.

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