

Challenges, Tips, and Trends

Trainers and Facilitators learning really cool stuff from each other

Trainers and Facilitators PEG Session Highlight Notes NSA Annual Convention, July 18, 2015

By Craig Freshley and Kerri Sands, Good Group Decisions, Brunswick, Maine

Challenges

What parts of training or facilitating groups do you find most difficult?

What do you wish you could do better?

- Overwhelmed with too much information
- Set the stage for follow up action
- Grumpy bugs
 - People not interested in getting better
- Balancing giving information with opportunities for exercises
- Multiple locations with some remote participants
 - How to manage energy of a room when you can't feel it
- Need non-gimmicky physical interaction opportunities
- Need examples of written materials - handouts, etc.
- Unique team-building exercises to keep it fresh for long-time clients
 - Interactive, engaging, warm-up, outside the topic area
- "Our bosses won't let us"
 - Resistance from middle managers
- Offering one-on-one, customized support for participants
 - All participants want to work with you individually, but YOU can't scale up
- What to do when everyone in the room hates each other?!
 - High stress, high drama environment
- How to help a group when there are deep issues and not enough trust in the facilitator yet
- Quality exercises for webinars/virtual teams
- Participants have a culture of multi-tasking with phones/computers
- Encourage back-of-the-room sales of your materials
- Competitive participants who want to demonstrate they know more than the trainer

Tips

Techniques and resources for dealing with our most common challenges

- **Dealing with resistance**
 - Encourage client not to “authorize people to come to a meeting against their will”
 - Encourage participants to treat the session as a opportunity to experiment - you might learn one or two pointers
 - Ask participants “What results do YOU want?”
 - Distill the best thinking in a small group and collect ideas
 - This encourages ownership of results
 - Ask those most resistant about what would make it meaningful for them
 - Get to venue early and well-prepared, and engage with participants ahead of time to identify those who might be most resistant - then give them extra attention and empathy
 - For “know-it-alls,” sincerely acknowledge their intelligent comment or question
 - Recognize the prisoners, vacationers, teachers, and learners - we need them all in the session
 - Some people are naturally inclined to fight/challenge at first, then they come around
 - Throw candy to those who contribute meaningfully - often, even the prisoners get into it!
 - Recognize and celebrate all the experts in the room
 - Add up the total up years of experience present
 - Speak to participants in advance and convey that it is an opportunity for their voices to be heard - facilitator represents ideas to top management, anonymously
 - In mandatory trainings, watch body language and acknowledge those who don’t want to be there
 - Give permission for them to not actively participate, but make an agreement that they will not disrupt others
 - Work with tenured participants in advance
 - Let them know you’ll be calling on them and get them to buy in on the idea that things have changed
- **Team building and practice exercises (physical)**
 - Recommended books
 - Game Storming
 - Innovation Games
 - Games Trainers Play (goldmine series of books)
 - Training from the Back of the Room
 - YouTube Video: Duct Tape Team Building
 - Balance of delivering material and doing exercises: You have 10 minutes before you need to move on

- Depends on the objective
 - Be flexible with timing
 - If the learning outcome is huge, spend extra time
 - Tennis ball toss - add more and more balls being tossed in a circle
 - Generates lessons about communications and “heads up!”
 - Debrief techniques or questions
 - Always debrief even if YOU don’t know what the meaning is - ask how it applies to business - ask them what it meant to them
 - “The way we do anything is the way we do everything”
 - Ask: “What will you do with this?”
 - Encourage participants to write down the answer to this question (don’t even need to share it)
 - Most important ingredient: trust
 - Know yourself, and others, and how you are different
 - The Platinum Rule: Do unto others as they would like to be done unto
 - The Marshmallow Challenge – Google it and learn all about how to do it
 - Get to know each other via poster questions around the room
 - What pet do you have? Etc.
 - How you know that a team building exercise has worked
 - To encourage massive relevance, ask them what their goals are and how it can be meaningful to them
 - Opportunities for participants to get feedback from their peers - more meaningful coming from industry peers
 - Collect everyone’s expectations at the beginning - then review at the end to see if expectations were met
 - May require adjusting training on the spot to match the objectives
 - Demonstrate relevance of lessons not only in professional life but also with family and friends
- **Virtual meetings**
 - Jesse Fewell’s mini book
 - Tips about use of projectors and screen sharing
 - Tips about making the case for training-related travel
 - Ask event coordinator how to involve all the locations
 - For instance, ask every location every question?
 - Set some rules - clarify how you will interact
 - Virtual meetings or not, always be clear with your client on THEIR role in the session
 - Vary the platform tools as you go
 - Offer opportunities for people to talk, text, answer polls, etc.
 - Maintaining energy
 - Put a live view of yourself directly under the webcam and talk to that!
 - Have a real conversation with someone live, across the desk, as a barometer
 - Get out of your chair - stand up with a headset

- Walk around in your office as if you were addressing a live audience in the room - the energy will come through in your voice
 - Do your webinars naked!
 - Get participants working before the webinar starts
 - Ask them to type in their city and the weather
 - During small chat ahead of time
 - Number all your bullet points - allows participants to quickly indicate which one they are referring to
- **Distractions - people using mobile devices in our sessions**
 - They are going to use their device anyway, so why not engage the technology and build it in:
 - Use PollEverywhere.com - allows live anonymous results
 - Give them a hashtag so they Tweet about your event
 - Tweet your slide live as it appears on screen
 - Make it easy for your participants to Tweet - give participants the words and the tools - Twitter Bug
 - Pre-program your Tweets on HootSuite
 - Create a Facebook group to help build a sense of community
 - One page per group - if it's an ongoing group
 - Recognize that you don't know what participants are going through; why they are on their device
 - Perhaps they are translating to your language
 - Perhaps they have sick family members
 - Allow them to absorb material in their own way

Trends

What are some leading training and facilitating trends about which we should be aware?

- Client wants the same content in a lot less time
- Client wants us to bring performance management along with the training
- Blended learning
 - 2-day workshop in person
 - 4-5 follow-up webinars
 - Win-win situation for client and trainer
- Peerology - Peer to peer learning
- Concern about millennials participating in conferences
 - Will they even attend in person?
- Participant-centered education
- Distractions in our sessions – people using mobile devices

Thanks everyone. Enjoy the Convention!