

TRAINING SKILLS

Training is a highly technical skill. A trainer should possess many important skills. All trainers do not possess these skills. In order to conduct a good training course, one should develop and build the following training skills:

- Communication skills
- Questioning skills
- Dealing with difficult situations
- Motivation skills

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. Trainer's appearance: a trainer should look very pleasant and presentable in terms of subject matter and physical appearance. One should get ready with required tools as well as simple and appealing dressing according to the type of instructions to be given and to whom it is going to be given.
2. Example: when training a group of rural women one should be simple in terms of dress, visual aids and subject matter.
3. Choosing the right place to stand: Ideal place for a trainer is to stand in front of the trainees when initiating the session and moving the trainees occasionally. Too still or too mobile may result in less attention.
4. Maintaining two way communication: The trainer should always remember that the group sitting in front of him/ her has past experience and knowledge. One way communication may not provide them opportunity to express themselves which ultimately leads to a gap between the trainer and the trainees. Further the purpose of the training may not be achieved.
5. Holding the attention of the trainees: Adding humour, anecdotes, jokes, stories and ice breaking games may be used occasionally to gain the trainee's attention. However, the trainer must be certain that it is effective and appropriate.
6. Sustaining interest: In training the trainee should be provided with direct, purposeful and contrived experiences to sustain the interest of the trainees. Hence the training methods and audio visuals should be carefully chosen.
7. Good habits: To gain professional respect from the trainees the following habits should be inculcated
 - ✓ Before moving on to a new area in the session, clean the white board off old material and remove any other distractions such as samples or other training aids.

- ✓ Clean up the classroom before leaving.
- ✓ A good trainer should also start and finish on time.
- ✓ Thoroughly prepare. This means having the appropriate training method selected, having a session plan and training aids prepared, and knowing where the spares are if anything burns out.

QUESTIONING SKILLS

- ✓ Purpose of asking questions

There are many reasons for trainers asking questions in a training situation.

- To find out if there is a training need
- To find the entry level of participants
- To check participant's recalling capacity
- To find facts
- To create over learning
- To involve the participants
- To create active learning
- To gain feedback
- To solve problems
- To check understanding
- To clarify relationships
- To use as a revision
- To create discussion
- To keep participants interested
- To stimulate thought
- To re-direct discussion

Trainers who don't use questions are missing out on lots of information and assistance and it may lead to failure from the very beginning.

Types of questions

Types of questions can be grouped into separate categories

1. **Direct Questions:** Direct questions are questions that are posed to a certain person in the group. Such questions may be used to check an individual's understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, they may be used to re-direct the group if the discussion becomes sidetracked or to get a daydreamer involved in the learning process.
2. **Overhead Questions:** Overhead questions are questions that we pose to the whole group, without directing the question at anyone in particular.
3. **Closed Questions:** Closed questions usually require a yes/no answer or a single word response. They're quick, but do not give much accuracy if the trainer wants to check knowledge.
4. **Leading Questions:** Generally a full description of the situation is given, followed by a question on the subject matter. This question can also include a clue to the answer.

5. **Rhetorical Questions:** Rhetorical questions are the questions that do not require answers and are normally used to get the trainee's into thinking. It is common for trainers to begin their session by posing a rhetorical question to the group.
Ex : It is up to you to decide whether to wear security clothing while spraying or not!
6. **Open-ended Questions:** Open-ended questions requests more information of the trainee and they normally require more time to answer. The answers to open-ended questions may show that the trainer needs to jump in quickly to re-direct the response to the required area of thinking. Sometimes open-ended questions can be asked to start a group discussion.
7. **Effective Questions:** A good question should be designed with the following in mind:
 - ✓ It should be short.
 - ✓ It should have only one idea.
 - ✓ It should be relevant to the topic.
 - ✓ It should create interest.
 - ✓ It should use language that everyone can understand.
 - ✓ It should require more than a guess to answer.
 - ✓ It should be used to emphasize key points.
 - ✓ It should relate to previous knowledge.
 - ✓ It should be a check of knowledge or understanding.

Dealing with difficult situations

Many times trainers get difficult participants or situations in their sessions. Such situations are explained here with solutions.

1. **The group remains silent:** It means that they may have a good reason. Perhaps the covering material is already presented or don't understand what's being presented, or perhaps the presentation method needs to be revised. Change accordingly.
2. **Things are moving too fast:** Sometimes the group becomes suddenly enthusiastic. In such situations the trainer can ask for greater clarification of response, ask other participants to comment on the response or simply pose more difficult questions to the individuals or the group.
3. **Things are moving too slowly:** It's possible that the group isn't motivated to listen to the presentation. There are other reasons as well, but the same solutions apply. Ask for participant's comments by nominating people to reply.
4. **A talkative participant:** One or two talkative participants can distract the rest of the group, then the trainer need to step in. Before that, try to use their peers to quiet them down. If that fails, one can cut the speaker off and summarize what they have said and then move straight on. If nothing else works, talk to them during a break, thank them for their input, but ask them to slow down a bit so that others may participate.
5. **A silent participant:** Ask them some direct questions. Step cautiously to start with, by asking questions that can be answered fairly easily.

6. Sessions getting sidetracked: Sometimes a discussion starts in right direction but finishes up in the wrong place. The trainer must get it back on line and ask the group if this is relevant to the topic.
7. Personality Problems
 - Between participants: Personality problems can distract everyone. If arguments start between participants, they must be quickly stopped by asking others comments on the issue. Try to keep the personalities separated. If necessary speak to them during break and if the problem continues, ask them to keep their comments to themselves, or ask both of them to leave.
 - Trainer and participant: Occasionally, the trainer will find personality clash with participants. The professional trainer must ignore this and continue treating that participant in a normal manner. Avoid letting the group see the problem.
 - The rambler: Some participants just ramble on, and on, and on. When they pause, it's possible to ask them which point their comments are referring to, particularly if they have an outline of the session.
 - The arguer: The participant who argues might also have to be placed in a blind spot. Most of the times the group will ask the arguer to keep quiet, so that the session can move on.

MOTIVATION SKILLS

Motivation is the urge in the individual to have a need fulfilled. The need or urge becomes more powerful when it's not being satisfied. The more motivated the participants are, the easier it is for the trainer to train them effectively. If the participants are not motivated to listen or learn they are almost certainly wasting their time and yours.

- ✓ Call trainees by names
- ✓ Appreciate the changed behaviour
- ✓ Assign responsibility
- ✓ Give recognition to achievements
- ✓ Encourage participation
- ✓ Pay individual attention
- ✓ Recognize the talents

FACILITATION SKILLS IN TRAINING

Facilitation is the process to make it possible or easier for something to happen. While training is to improve the job performance by imparting effective skills, trainer is the one who makes that process possible. A good trainer is a good facilitator too.

Facilitator meaning and definition

Facilitator is one who helps participants learn from an activity. The literal meaning of facilitator is “one who makes things easy.” Explain that a facilitator may also be called a trainer.

An individual who enables groups and organizations to work more effectively; to collaborate and achieve synergy is facilitator. She or he is a 'content neutral' party who by not taking sides or expressing or advocating a point of view during the meeting, can advocate for fair, open and inclusive procedures to accomplish the group's work"

"One who contributes structure and process to interactions so groups are able to function effectively and make high-quality decisions. A helper and an enabler whose goal is to support others as they achieve exceptional performance"

"The facilitator's job is to support everyone to do their best thinking and practice. To do this, the facilitator encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding and cultivates shared responsibility. By supporting everyone to do their best thinking, a facilitator enables group members to search for inclusive solutions and build sustainable agreements"

Facilitation role of trainer

The facilitation role of the trainer includes:

1. Knowing more and more about peoples learning styles.
2. Training line managers how to train.
3. Guiding executives in establishing strategic directions for the organization.
4. Facilitating process improvement and/or teaching line managers how to do it.
5. Constantly being in touch with employees and work processes and be aware of their skill needs.
6. Acquiring in-depth knowledge of the organization and its mission/goals.
7. Knowing information technology and explore the use of electronic training opportunities, including development of multi-media training programs (where feasible and appropriate).
8. Entrench training as an integral activity in the organization.
9. Facilitate problem-solving teams.
10. Help managers to think through performance and solve them either through training or otherwise.
11. Help trainees to think over their jobs.

The new role of the trainer calls for new skills which include:

- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Negotiating
- ✓ Coaching
- ✓ Facilitating small group interaction
- ✓ Awareness of different learning styles.
- ✓ Measuring and evaluating
- ✓ Strategic planning
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Facilitating organizational change and
- ✓ Communication Skills

Factors to be considered in performing these activities

The trainer has to consider four basic factors namely:

- Subject matter expertise
- Andragogical knowledge and skills
- Communication skills
- Personal traits and qualities

Subject matter expertise

- An instructor/trainer needs to possess the technical knowledge of the subject which is referred to as Job Knowledge.
- Apart from this the trainer needs to possess a broad knowledge of the organization, the general rules, regulations and policies. Job skills which include the ability to operate various equipments and tools where relevant, should also be present in a trainer.
- The ability to select between variety of instructional methods, skills to guide trainees and counsel them - all form a part of this skill.

Andragogical knowledge and Skills

This includes some formal qualification coupled with an understanding of the principles of adult learning and motivation.

Communication Skills

- A good communicator (both in oral and written) is an asset to any trainer.
- Questioning, explaining, listening, illustrating and preparing training material demand very high communication skills.