

# Train the Trainer

## Tips for creating, organizing, and delivering end-user training

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### Three components to effective, end-user training

- **How-to's** – Minimum skill set required to get started with new hardware or software; a review of new features for hardware or software updates.
- **Future help** – This is the single-most important content area for end users. Details of how end users can get their questions answered, through additional training courses, Web-based training, self-help channels and help desk. Similarly, make user-level diagnostics and problem solving part of the core curriculum.
- **Policies** – Often left out of the curriculum, clear explanations of corporate policies regarding the use of IT assets. These can reduce total cost of ownership (TCO) by presenting best practices to employees.
  - Business justification
  - Security
  - Compliance
  - Maintenance

*Gartner: Untrained Users Cost More to Support than Trained users. Published 14, March 2006 – Analysts: Leslie Fiering, Bill Kirwin.*

### Adequate preparation

There is not a magic answer on how much preparation is adequate preparation. This will vary by person. The key is to use what works for you. Preparation helps with:

- Covering what needs to be covered
- Presentation time management
- Minimizing anxiety for the trainer

### Use Cases

In addition to How-To material, use cases can be valuable in training also. This is especially true when you are introducing something new to your audience.

### Planning and organizing your content

#### Outline

An outline is how I typically start developing my training content. These notes started off using the outline technique.

1. I start listing the topics I wish to cover.
2. Then I reorganize them for a better flow or logical order.
3. Build out content for the items.

### Creating content

#### Room/Resources available

Conditions and equipment available in the location you will be training is an important factor to keep in mind when you are preparing your training session content.

If you have prepared your content in a particular way that the room does not accommodate it could make for a less than successful training session. Things to check on for your training session location:

- Does it have a display or projection system? You would not be able to show digital content (such as a PowerPoint) to the room if the room has no way to do so.
  - What connections does the A/V system have? This is important to know if you are bringing a laptop to present from. Do you or the room have the necessary cables to connect the laptop to the A/V system?
- Does the room have a computer?
  - Does the computer have the software that you need for your session?
- If the room is large does it have a microphone system?
  - If you need to use a microphone are you familiar with how to operate it?
- Does the room have a clock that you will be able to see as the presenter?
- Does the room have a dry erase board, markers, and erasers (if you need them)?

### PowerPoint

Is PowerPoint dead? Some say yes some say no. I feel it is a useful tool and it is also a known standard presenting tool. There are PowerPoint pitfalls to avoid though:

- A slide that has large blocks of text are not effective and can cause your audience to turn off on you.
- Be mindful of the size of text you are using. If it is too small this can also alienate your audience.
- In addition to text size be mindful of the text and background colors. You want to go for high contrast for better visibility.
- Avoid the bells, whistles, and special effects. Just because PowerPoint can do these things, does not mean you should. They can often be distracting to your audience.

## Demonstration

Sometimes demonstrating tasks is more useful for your audience than telling them about them in more of a lecture style section. Like PowerPoints, demonstration style sessions have some things to think about:

- The room and equipment prechecks are more important. You'll need to make sure you have the software and equipment you need to carry out a demonstration.
- Demonstrations do not lend themselves to note taking as well as lecture/PowerPoint sessions. So, if you are demonstrating a lot of things in the session or they are very complex you should augment your session with quick reference handouts and/or directing the audience to where they can find instructions for the tasks.
- One thing to be cautious of in demonstrations is if the item you are demonstrating has sensitive information in it. If there is sensitive information that your audience should not be exposed to you may opt to use a screenshot that has the sensitive information pixelized instead of doing a live demo for that part.

## Face to Face vs. video conference

With advances in video conference technology video sessions can be almost the same experience as being in the room. Some best practices are:

- At the beginning of your session check in with your remote audience to insure they are hearing you ok.
- Have your camera turned on when you are speaking.
- If you are showing something onscreen, make sure that you have shared your screen with the remote audience.
- If you have things like paper handouts in the room prepare a way to share those items with your virtual audience.
- Make sure to pause and ask your virtual audience if they have questions or comments periodically.
- When a question or comment is made in the room. Repeat the question or comment before addressing it.

## Public Speaking

- Keep Language Simple
- Prepare a conversation not a speech {or script}
- Make eye contact
- Ignore mistakes and keep going
- Stop worrying about worst case scenarios

*A Novice's Guide to Speaking in Public: 10 Steps to Help You Succeed in Your Next Presentation... Without Years of Training.*  
Published Oct. 2015 – Michael Lawrence Faulkner

## Public Speaking Additional Tips

- If you are training on a topic that uses jargon: do not use jargon in your training if you can avoid it. If you cannot then:
- Define the jargon term before using it.
- At the beginning of the session provide a handout that has jargon terms and their definitions for your audience to refer to for reference.
- Do not use words that are difficult for you to pronounce if you can avoid it.
- Do not get overly dependent on your notes and/or slides. Speak to your audience, don't just read to them.
- Speak loudly and clearly, this can be aided by use of a microphone.
- Do not have gum or candy in your mouth.
- Avoid repetitive word patterns.
- Have a bottle of water with you.

## Dealing with Fear

- The more experience you have the less anxiety you will typically have. While this is a true statement it does not offer much comfort to someone starting out.
- Practice your session. Find a person or people you are comfortable with and run through your session with them. Also ask them for constructive criticism on how to improve your session.
- Preparation. Preparation goes a long way to helping with anxiety.
- What if they ask a question that I do not know the answer to? That is OK. Tell them you do not have an answer at that time and collect their name, contact information, and the question at the end of the session. After the session determine the answer and contact them with it.

## The stuff no one tells you

- If your training session is coming after mealtime, be aware of what you eat and drink for the meal.
- The long car trip rule. Do your best to use the restroom before you go to your session.
- Remember the water bottle from the public speaking tips? Stick with water or at least something non-carbonated for use during your session.

## Handouts/Quick Guides

Handouts can be a low-cost way to enhance your training sessions. They can aid your participants with recalling or finding information they need after the session has concluded. However, handouts are not perfect they can be thrown away or misplaced by your participants. Additionally, someone may hold on to one long enough the information becomes out of date.



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