WORKSHOP MASTERY *Secrets*

How To Run A Successful Training Workshop

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Foreword

Workshops are great for brainstorming, interactive learning, building relationships and problem solving. To reap the rewards from a workshop it is important that is well planned. Get the info here.

Workshop Mastery Secrets
How To Run A Successful Training Workshop

Chapter 1:

Synopsis

Before the workshop it is necessary that the organization have a clear goal – is the workshop being run as a team building exercise or a training activity? Decisions must then be made as to who will attend. Knowing exactly who will attend directly relates to the objective.

The Basics

To be successful the choice of the location for the workshop must be right. The size of the group attending will determine the type of facility to be looked for.

Thought needs to go to the logistics and practical details of the workshop such as the visibility of any visual aids and whether or not the location can support any technology that might have to be used.

Consideration needs to be given to organizing accommodation for people attending from afar, the catering facilities provided and if the venue has appropriate spaces available for breakout sessions.

Once the primary objective and attendees have been ascertained it will be necessary to develop outlines of how to achieve the workshop goal.

Thought has to be put into the main points to discuss and then each major point broken down into details and the visual aids listed that will be needed for each point.

Consideration then has to be given to which discussion points will be raised when and which activities will be held when and how much time will be allocated to each.

The only way to determine how successful the workshop was is to have a feedback plan. A questionnaire must be devised to give to all

participants and there needs to be time to share their opinions on how well it went.

Getting everyone involved is the key to success. Everyone needs to participate and keeping groups small will help people to be able to contribute better.

Careful planning and attention to detail will ensure workshop success.
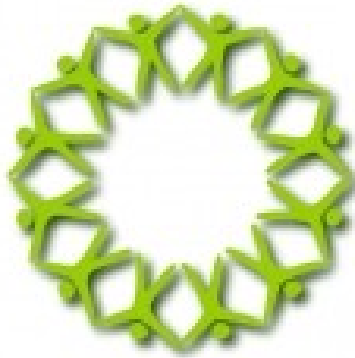
Chapter 2:

Define Goals

Synopsis

Workshops need to be valuable experiences for everyone who attends. Many workshops are a waste of time because there is no clear goal kept at the centre of discussion and attendees come away from the workshop wondering what it was all about or what its purpose was. Without this clear goal there is no real point in getting people together to attend a workshop.

What Do You Want To Accomplish

Every workshop must have a clearly defined goal. The goal is the desired result that the organization envisions, plans and commits to achieve. The reasons behind organizing a workshop may be many and various.

It may be that an organization wants to focus on its recruitment procedure. Other businesses may need to undertake some team building activities for newly formed teams. Another reason could be to teach better organizational skills to a section of the staff.

The workshop organizer has to define the workshop goals that represent the intended outcomes of the workshop and are aligned to the participant's needs and interests.

It is important to define at least two goals; one goal that focuses on the workshop content and one goal that focuses on taking actions. Coupled with this it is important to identify objectives for each session of the workshop, the objectives being the steps leading to achieving goals.

Thought must be given to what it is the organization wants the participants to know at the end of the session. Once that is known it is possible to form well constructed goals.

With well defined goals the presenter of the workshop can organize appropriate challenges for the participants, challenges that will direct and motivate their learning.

It is important to remember that the work shop goals are not the same as the workshop objectives. The objectives are the steps to achieving the workshop goals.

Each element of the workshop is an objective aimed at achieving the workshop goals. A workshop with clearly defined goals is on track to being successful.

Chapter 3:

Determine Attendees And Location

Synopsis

Once an organization has established that it needs to organize a workshop there has to be time allocated to establishing the exact reason why it is felt that a workshop is necessary.

The Plan

Thought has to be given to what needs to be developed within an organization or what needs to be addressed and improved. Once that has been ascertained it is possible to give consideration to which personnel ought to attend the workshop in order to benefit from it.

When the proposed number of workshop attendees has been established then the next item to be addressed is the location of the venue for the workshop.

Personnel should only attend workshops that are relevant to them and the work that they are doing. Nothing will be gained by issuing blanket attendance request to task specific or skill specific workshops.

Staff whose sphere of interest is not part of the proposed workshop parameters will only become bored and dissatisfied and not only that they have been removed from their work station and production will suffer by their absence from work to attend a meaningless workshop.

From time to time there will be certain workshops that are pertinent to all staff members but usually that is not the case.

Once the total number of attendees of a proposed workshop has been determined then it is possible to give consideration to finding a suitable venue.

Somewhere will have to be found that will accommodate all attendees in a satisfactory manner. The size of the venue is important for whilst too small a venue will obviously be unsuitable so till will be too large a space.

As most workshops incorporate sessions involving group work the proposed venue has to be able to have spaces where groups can adjourn to. Thought will have to be given to how suitable or otherwise a venue will be to supporting necessary technology for the workshop.

Consideration will have to be given to basic logistics such as accessibility to the venue and car parking, along with provision for such basics as food and beverages and sufficient bathroom facilities for the number of attendees.

Chapter 4:

Create Agenda And Follow Up Plan

Synopsis

Organizing a successful workshop takes a great deal of very careful planning and a considerable amount of time. Whilst all personnel are busy and it might seem that the workshop is detracting from productivity, nothing could be further from the truth.

Correct Planning

A successful workshop should lead to improved morale and production and the raising of skill and performance levels. Failure to plan for success will mean the loss of potential.

Having established the importance of there being a workshop and establishing its goal the workshop organizer has to give careful attention to the formulation of an agenda and a follow up plan.

Knowing the goal of the workshop the organizer needs to develop a list of discussion topics for the workshop. They should be sequenced in a logical way and ranked in importance. Points to come from the discussion topics can then be formulated.

The next consideration is working out the time allocation for each point. This is critical so that any supporting visual aid material can be sought and researched to ensure that it can fit into the allocated time slot.

Thought will have to be given to allowing time at the beginning for ice breakers and time given at the end to receive feedback from the attendees.

Bearing all those points in mind an agenda covering all areas for development should then be drawn up ensuring that the workshop can fit into its allocated time slot.

It is not possible to assess how successful or otherwise any workshop has been unless there has been feedback from the workshop

attendees. Bearing that point in mind the workshop organizer has to formulate a follow up plan.

This normally consists of a questionnaire to determine the value of the workshop to the attendees. Time needs to be allowed so that attendees can voice their opinions about the workshop and how effective or otherwise it might have been.

Assessments of staff performance later will also indicate how valuable the workshop had been.
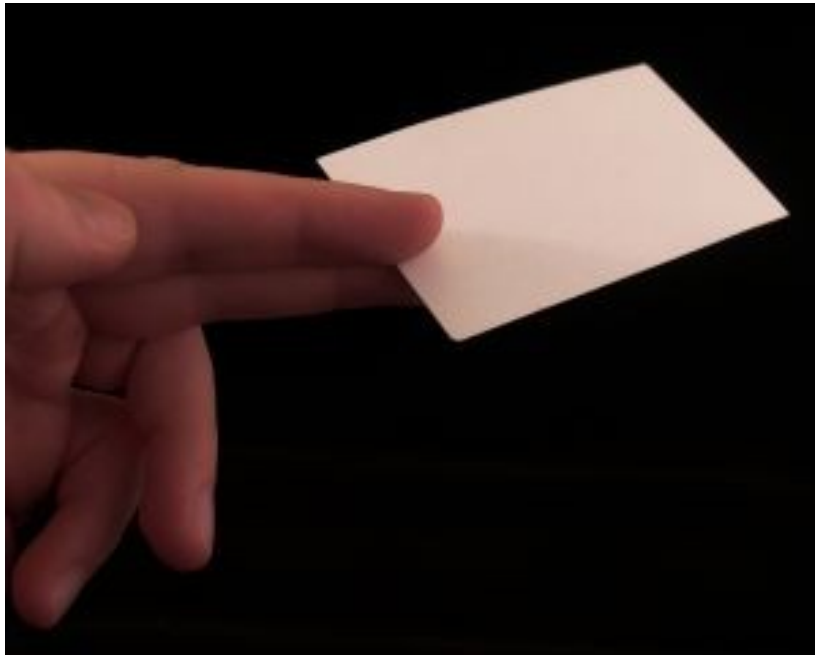
Chapter 5:

Get People Involved During The Workshop

Synopsis

In order for a workshop to be successful there has to have been opportunity for the all attendees to have participated in an interactive way. If this does not happen then there has not been a workshop organized at all and the attendees have been at a lecture.

Include People

Whilst some staff might gain from being in a lecture situation there is a very good chance that other individuals will day dream, doodle, text or in other ways fail to be alert and receptive to the goal of the workshop.

So the underlying task for all workshop organizers is to plan for them to be interactive. Because unless all attendees gain from the workshop then the workshop has been a disservice to the organization as valuable production and service time will have been lost.

Some staff will attend and participate in workshops willingly whilst others are intimidated and uncomfortable in workshop settings. It is the role of the workshop organizer to come up with ideas and ways to put this latter group at ease so that they can participate well.

One very common technique that works well to put people at ease with one another is the employment of icebreakers at the beginning of the session. The funny and non challenging activities generally manage to get staff to relax and to feel more comfortable being with each other.

It is a good idea to ensure that all group work is organized into small groups. Large groups can be threatening to certain staff members and some will not contribute well in such settings. Making the groups smaller encourages the shy members to participate.

Another way of ensuring that people remain involved and are actively participating in the workshop is to allocate specific tasks to each group member.

Such tasks might include recorder, time keeper, reporter etc. The organizer should arrange to ensure that all groups get a chance to report to the entire workshop. The organizer should also indicate that they value receiving the ideas and thoughts of the attendees.

Chapter 6:

Let Your Creativity Shine

Synopsis

Nowhere is it stipulated that workshops have to be conducted in a specific way although many often are. Workshops are an extremely flexible and effective method for training, learning, developing, changing methodology, tem building, problem solving and virtually any organizational challenges.

Let It Show

It is possible for an organizer to run a workshop anyway they want. The options are as wide as the organizer's imagination. The incorporation of different activities, materials and challenges can help to add variety and to maintain interest and involvement.

Attendees can be more readily engaged if the organizer contacts the attendees before the workshop to assess what their needs are.

Organizers and presenters should try to tailor the content and structure of the workshop for the particular situation and not just use the shelf formats.

Unless there is a good reason for using laptops and projectors delegates should use flip chart paper and colored maker pens and hang the sheets around the walls. This enables the attendees to be more dynamic and creative than modern technology media does.

Organizers should encourage people to use creative methods that are appropriate for their personal style and their learning style. Visual, spatial, creative people enjoy working with flip charts, colors and post it notes etc.

People centered individuals and teams enjoy human interaction involving role plays, discussions, and mutual interviews. Logical,

numerate and process oriented people are happier working with more structured planning tools and computers.

Considering the needs of the attendees and being creative will greatly assist workshop success.

Wrapping Up

Workshop organizers will be faced with having to deal with attendees who have participated in workshops before. Indeed some seasoned staff members will no doubt have had to attend numerous workshops and might even be quite negative attending a workshop.

Staff attitudes are known and it is up to the workshop organizer and presenter to come up challenges and to ring he changes to ensure that all attendees have a positive experience at the workshop and gain from it and that as such the workshop is successful.