

How to Present Training Workshops that Educate and Inspire

Use these tips to be sure your workshop is successful.

By Vi Huynh



As a nonprofit professional—whether you're an executive director, service provider, or project manager—you're likely to be asked to provide a training workshop. Conducting a workshop can be nerve-racking, especially if it's not part of your regular job responsibilities. Here are five keys to success:

Tip 1: Arrive a day ahead of time.

Spend part of a day learning about the local community. That's a great way to get to know your audience and put your training into context. If you're training on fundraising, visit a local foundation or talk to an area nonprofit about raising money. Also take time to visit a museum or a community landmark. Understanding the local culture communicates your desire to relate to your audience and meet their needs.

Check on the training location. Familiarize yourself with the room size, acoustics, location of restrooms, and so on. Being comfortable with the environment is just as important as knowing the content.

Tip 2: If it starts at 9:00, get there at 7:45.

Give yourself enough time to address any logistical issues that arise before the training. Even if you're there the night before, it's important to arrive at least an hour and 15 minutes before the training starts. Whether you're conducting training for 15 or 150 people, something may need to be addressed at the last second. *Are you still scheduled in*

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the same training room? Does all the audio and visual equipment work? Do you have enough materials?

Take time to get organized and feel comfortable in the room. When the audience arrives, they should see you prepared and relaxed.

Talk to participants before the training. Such conversations will help you develop rapport with them.

Tip 3: Draw from your experience.

Identify experiences of your own that will enhance the material. Quality trainers weave in stories that complement the training content. If you're training on board development, for example, share your experience as a board member. Such personal narratives engage the audience, establish your credibility, and move abstract content into the practical realm.

Tip 4: Leverage the experience of participants.

Participants have a wealth of knowledge that can be useful during the training. Informal conversations before the workshop can help you identify participants whose perspectives may come in handy later on.

During the training, redirect people's questions to the audience. Asking the audience to help answer questions keeps people interested,

communicates respect, and promotes knowledge sharing.

Tip 5: Be organized and deliberate but also flexible.

By the time you conduct the training, everything has been planned and organized. Your session outlines, objectives, and group exercises are set. Having a good design and agenda is essential. However, it's just as important to be flexible and willing to change direction. Such flexibility shows participants that you're in tune with them.

Many things can influence participants' ability to learn. Make sure you can expand or decrease your content to take advantage of unexpected learning opportunities.

Take a break when necessary. You needn't wait till breaks are scheduled. Adding a break when you sense people need it reduces the chance that they'll tune out due to fatigue or content overload. ■

Vi Huynh (vbh@daremightythings.com, 703-752-4331) is a training consultant for Dare Mighty Things, Inc, in Arlington, Virginia. He has designed trainings for numerous audiences, including board members and nonprofit staff. His focus is working with community-based organizations to improve organizational capacity and community partnerships.

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