

Design Training So People Learn Easily, Quickly, and With High Retention!

by Carolyn B. Thompson

Learners will love you when they have an easy time learning and are able to retain what they learned! You design lots of types and/or mediums of training—self-study (paper based, video, audio, CBT/WBT) and/or facilitated (group, one-on-one coaching, OJT). Follow one simple, straight forward format for them all:

Training Systems, Inc. LEARNING FORMAT

For the fastest learning and greatest retention, learning goes in this order:

- FIRST:** Attention getting opening to get Learners' attention off what they were doing before and onto this training.
- 2 Learners tell or write what they already know (to build confidence)
 - 3 Facilitator tells or writes big objectives for this training
 - 4 Learners write, verbalize, & visualize specific individual objectives for this training as though already achieved. (Facilitator makes sure they're SMART & tells research on why objectives help learning)
 - 5 Facilitator tells all learning methods and times
 - 6 Facilitator & Learners work on all learning methods needed to meet objectives (repeat cycle below for each learning method needed to meet all objectives) - (this is the bulk of the training time.)
 - Objective (boxed)
 - Intro (labeled)
 - Facilitator instructions &/or text (labeled)
 - Processing (labeled)
 - 7 Facilitator reviews all that is learned
 - 8 Facilitator tells and shows resources to use for future
 - 9 Learners complete the Learning Action Plan
- LAST:** Call to action closing that matches opening

Overall you'll speed up learning with:

- Learning methods for all 4 learning styles (unless determined that training will not include all styles)
- Highly interactive learning, using the standard
 - Facilitator talks no more than 25% of time (including lecture, instructions, opening/closing, processing questions)
 - Learners doing 75% with Facilitator as expert in room
- Use Fun Meter buttons as part of the learning
 - Learning that allows for the cycle of learning to be achieved
 - 1st build community
 - 2nd build knowledge
 - 3rd build skill
 - 4th build possibilities
- Learning method in group training to get Learners involved with each other within the first 15 minutes
 - Include at least one method to help Learners *retain* what they learned
 - While learning imagine:
 - boss said they'd be giving a report on what they learned
 - have to do group training on what they learned
- have to write book from new view point
 - Take breaks frequently
 - Plan to review notes regularly after training 3-4 minutes each time—practice during training
 - Create multi-sensory memories of each thing to remember
 - Make visual images linked—especially if there's movement or humor
 - Play music to stimulate emotional part of brain—long term memory is situated there
 - Record what they want to learn and listen to it & music together
 - Organize material in related categories and label categories
 - Memory flashing - look at notes for a few minutes, then rewrite w/o looking at them, then compare the 2 sets. Keep doing this until both sets are the same.
 - Flash cards for review
 - Create mnemonic device - 3, 5 or 7 letters best
 - Let it sink in overnight after reviewing notes—brain uses sleep as time to file
 - Number the points
 - Whole learning - learn words, add

- sound, add movement
- Fluency-mastery - continue learning it after already know it
 - Compress information into chunks and label each chunk; then make a mnemonic for the chunk words

Start All Learning with an "Attention-Getting" Opening and End with a "Call to Action" Closing

People remember the first and last thing they see or hear. Since the Facilitator is always going to say or do something first and something last, you might as well plan it so it will be attention-getting and call the Learners to action. This is true in any type of training: 6 group, OJT, self-study manual, video, audio, and computer/web-based. In training where there's no Facilitator, the Attention-Getting Opening and Call to Action Closing are simply the first and last thing said/done by the coach or written in the booklet, or stated/done on the video or on the computer screen. To design effective openings and closings: Attention-Getting Opening and Call to Action Closing must fit the objective of the whole training. Choose the type of opening/closing to fit the learning's overall objective and the Learners. Designers who choose a joke or story that doesn't fit the Learners or the objective will always find they don't get anyone's attention. (see box **Learning Format: First, Last**)

- Design the Attention-Getting Opening and Call to Action Closing to match each other (if you start with a prop, end with a quote, if you start with a prop, end with a prop, etc.). This fits the learning into a neat package for the Learner. *Very Effective!*
- Examples include: question, statistic, video, story, music, role play, case study, funny visual, prop, joke. Notice that telling the Facilitator's name isn't in this list—unless the Facilitator is someone famous, have them tell who they are after the opening so they have the Learners' attention. Most of these examples work great in all types of training—choose which one works best based on the overall learning objective and the Learners.

After the Attention-Getting Opening, the Facilitator needs to help people learn their

name and possibly each other's names (if group training), amount of time for learning, learning objectives, how questions will be answered, and the methods used for learning. Within 15 minutes, get the Learners involved in an interactive learning method to get the Learners talking. (see box **Learning Format: 2-5**)

Before the Call to Action Closing, be sure to handle reaction evaluations, summary activities, or other review method, any testing of Skill/Knowledge/Attitude change, information about further resources, and their Learning Action Plan. Nothing should be said or done by the Facilitator, seen on the screen, heard, or read after the Closing, or the Call to Action momentum will be lost. (see box **Learning Format: 7-9**)

Designing the Learning Between the Opening and Closing

In a full day of group training you'll have at least 15 objectives, in a half day 7 objectives, in a video 3 or 4 objectives, in 15 minutes of OJT 1 objective, in a self-study manual few to lots. You'll need to plan the way you'll achieve each objective. Follow the steps below: (see box **Learning Format: 6**)

- 1 Write the learning objective of each method.
- 2 Write an example of a real situation that has to do with the objective.
- 3 Determine the best learning method to use by using 1 + 2 + your knowledge of the Learners. Choose from the list below:

4 Write the introduction to the method using the ideas in the Attention-Getting Openings section above (each intro to a learning method is a mini Opening). Be sure to make intros throughout the training attention-getting, so they'll be able to take their mind off the last thing they were working on and focus on the next one.

5 Write instructions for the Facilitator to use to conduct each method or instructions for the Learners in the self-study manual, computer/web-based training, etc. (if the method is lecture, obviously instead of instructions, this part is a combination of instructions and the actual words to say, or the content they read if a book/web/CD.

6 Write out the key processing question(s) or statement(s). This is designed to lead the Learners directly to the objective (ex.: if the objective is "Learners see that they can write a training opening and closing in 5 minutes", then the key processing questions are "How many of you are finished?"—assuming most raise their hands, then "Are you surprised?"—assuming many say yes—then, "Why could you do this in such a short time, what's different about today that allowed you to do it?"). For group training or OJT, always add potential answers for which the Facilitator should be listening.

7 Because we remember 80–90% of what we see and do and only 10–15% of what we hear, you'll need a variety of visuals (continued on page 21)

Participative Learning Methods

Application Projects	Field Trips	Roleplays
Articles & Books	Five Minute Fables	Self-Analysis, Reflection
Audio Tapes (Music and Speaking)	Games	Sharing Best Practices
Book Groups	Ice Breakers	Simulation
Brainstorming	Job Aids	Study Groups
Case Studies	Lecture in a Fishbowl	Synergistic Lecture
Chain Gang Lecture	Magic Tricks	Teach Back
Challenge Courses	Mentoring	Team Quiz Lecture
Charts, Graphs, Posters	Metaphors	TV & Video Tape
Computer/Web-Based Training	Newsletters	Visualization
Concept Interference Lecture	Participatory Lecture	Voice Mail, Email
Concert Reading	Planned Interruptive Lecture	
Confederate Lecture	Post-Work	
Continuing Learning	Prep-Work	
Demonstration	Press Conference Lecture	
Expert Call in Lecture	Programmed Instruction Lecture	
	Props	
	Real Time Video Tutorial Lectures	

Completing our example, let's say your **capability** is ... a *staff of engineers who are trained in designing effective safety programs for complex workers compensation accounts*. Your conversation with the customer might go something like this:

... "You said that lack of expertise in designing safety programs was an obstacle to closing more workers compensation accounts. Would it help in these situations if you were supported by a staff of our company engineers who are trained in designing safety programs for complex workers compensation accounts?"

If they say "yes", you have gained their agreement that this capability will eliminate their problem by effectively addressing the reason for the problem.

Everything presented so far has focused on how the "salesperson" should interact with customers to be more successful. This step-by-step interactive approach should also be part of every internet site where customer interaction is involved. There is no reason why internet sites cannot be designed to have "intelligent conversations" with prospective customers, instead of merely offering quotes and listing product features.

So is it really the particular distribution system a company chooses that determines success or failure? Hopefully, I have made an effective case that it is the way we approach the customer that matters. Whether you sell direct, through agents, over the internet, or all of the above... lasting differentiation can only be achieved through following a process that builds rapport and demonstrates competence. ■

Design Training

(Continued from page 18)

in addition to the Facilitator in group training or OJT, be sure you apply this to the graphic look of your self-study manual, CBT/Web, video).

- 8 Determine the room set-up, equipment and supplies needed.
- 9 Determine the number of people for which this will work best.
- 10 Determine how long the method will take.

Many Designers do 8, 9, and 10 first and thus limit what they can do to help the Learners learn quickly and effectively. Do these last and if you realize that what you've just created is impossible, make modifications. You'll have a better end product.

I know you can already see people exhibiting the skills and using the knowledge after learning in this way. Their co-workers, staff, and bosses are bursting with happiness for the time well spent. Other people in your company—as well as your clients—are asking you how you got so smart... Make it a reality! ■

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The author, Carolyn B. Thompson, is the President of Training Systems, Inc., a customized training and HR consulting company that helps small and medium

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