

3 Tips for Selecting Great Trainers

Skills, Attributes and Behaviors of Great Trainers



By Leigh-Ann Zaharevich

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Skills, attributes and behaviors of great trainers

It takes more than being a SME (subject matter expert) to be a great trainer. Having information down cold is an important attribute of a good trainer, but it's just the beginning. Trainers with “*the edge*” are continuously reading the room, engaging participants, managing time, and checking for knowledge transfer. When choosing an internal trainer, consider their skills, attributes and behaviors.

► Skills of great trainers

Great trainers are...

- **Learner-focused.** The trainer who is focused on themselves is likely to ‘present’ more than train. The most effective trainers don’t try to be the smartest person in the room. Great trainers pull ideas, questions, and conversation out of participants.
- **Manage time.** It takes practice and experience to balance content with time allotted for training. Tangents are the greatest culprit of derailing training, and skilled facilitators learn how to manage various types of such derailments.
- **Manage their energy.** There’s a lot going on inside the head of a facilitator. At any given moment they are delivering a message, reading the room, planning the next engaging activity, and checking the time. It can be exhausting for even the most seasoned trainer. Maintaining high energy over an entire session, whether it’s 2 hours or 2 full days, takes a conscious effort. It may require new habits, like keeping high energy snacks on hand, or trading in that afternoon coffee for a glass of water.
- **Practice.** Practicing helps people who don’t love public speaking to get over the jitters that show up in the first 5 minutes. Practicing also helps the trainer work out examples and stories that will help make their point more clearly. Great trainers practice presenting complex ideas in an easy to understand manner.
- **Test knowledge.** Great trainers know when, how often and how to check in with participants to see if they ‘getting it’. They’re able to adapt to the needs of the group to transfer knowledge.





► Attributes of great trainers

Obviously, the trainer needs to know the content cold. However, as we say in the training business, you only need to be a few steps ahead of the learner. At the same time, training is not about being the smartest person in the room. Training, or 'facilitating learning' is about engaging people and making the content memorable.

Training is not about being the smartest person in the room.

Who make the best trainers? It may be tempting to assume that people who don't enjoy the spotlight will not make great trainers. While it's true that being comfortable in front of a group is important, great trainers come in all personality types.

What attributes make a great trainer? Here's a quick **checklist**:

- Has good rapport with others
- Is respected by coworkers and peers
- Is credible/knowledgeable in their field
- Has a positive attitude
- Truly wants to help others shine
- Is eager to continuously improve their skills as a facilitator of training



► Behaviors of great trainers

For many people who have been asked to train in their company, training is not their primary role. They are subject matter experts who know something and need to pass it on to others. What does it take to be successful? Great trainers show these behaviors.

- **Train rather than present.** Presentation skills come in handy for trainers but presenting and training are actually quite different. Presenters deliver information, where trainers engage participants in discussion and facilitate an experience.
- **Handle challenging situations with tact and respect.** Challenges will inevitably arise when planning, developing and delivering training. Great trainers know how to respond to tricky circumstances like difficult participants, complex or dense content, unreasonable requests, and awkward learning environments.
- **Communicate clearly.** Clear communication is not only required while training, but also during the process from planning to reporting results.
- **Use visuals wisely.** PowerPoint is not the only visual that can, or should, be used for training. When people understand how adults learn, they use a wide array of options.

In “The Trainer’s Edge” workshop we help SME’s elevate their training ability by building these skills, attributes and behaviors. We’ve built in plenty time for practice with meaningful feedback to support people in their growth.

Bring the Trainer’s Edge to You

About the Author | Leigh-Ann has been a learning & organizational development practitioner for over two decades. In that time, she has served a variety of industries, like manufacturing, financial services and construction. Her passion and expertise shine when helping clients design and deliver impactful, meaningful programs.



303.981.9088
laz@AlignedPerformance.com
www.AlignedPerformance.com