

Creating Exemplary Learning Experiences

The following nine suggestions come from the experiences of veteran team building facilitators :

1. **Plan ahead.** Let your team know ahead of time just when, where, and why you will be gathering them together. Excite them by stating a common problem or dilemma in the memo that you believe the session will help them solve.
2. **Set expectations.** Let everyone know that you will be guiding them throughout the activity. Arrange for use of a training room, or schedule a location that is not used for staff meetings and other functions.
3. **Organize your material.** Capture the participants' attention in the very beginning. Involve everyone in the topic by posing a leading question or telling a brief story. Plan the content. Divide the information you want to share into four or five main points (fewer or more, depending on the time). Since we know that people learn differently, each of these points will need to be illustrated with facts and figures.
4. **Use visuals.** Many people learn best when there are colourful posters, flipcharts, handouts, or props that add interest and impact to their learning.
5. **Plan for breaks.** Educators have found that adult learners need frequent breaks about every 50 minutes. The break doesn't have to be more than 7-10 minutes to be effective.
6. **Review the main concepts.** Give participants a little quiz or an activity so they can use the material right away.
7. **Make an impact at the end.** Let people know how they can apply this new skill to their workplace. Hold individuals accountable for using this new skill as soon as possible. To reinforce the learning, check in from time to time to see how the skill is being used.
8. **Provide snacks.** It is always a nice gesture to have healthy beverages and some healthy snack available for the breaks. It renews energy and keeps people concentrating on the content.
9. **Have fun!** In this kind of exercise, you are demonstrating the importance of ongoing workplace learning. Encourage others to share what they learn and what they can do.