Easy Ways to Keep Participants Engaged

Too many times we “spoon feed” participants and do not allow them to think. The training session should not be an “information dump” where participants sit and watch a Power Point presentation. Encourage participants to reflect and apply the information to their current situation. Try engaging participants by using some of the techniques below.

Ask participants to:

- Place a check mark next to items that apply to them.
- Fill in the blanks in a handout.
- Circle, underline, * asterisk or highlight (or all four!) an important point.
- Make a list of how they will use the information.
- Place little sticky dots on their favorites tips provided in the handout or to indicate pages they want to find easily.
- Rank order a process.
- Rate themselves on their current level of knowledge.
- Give them a calculator and have them do the math.
- Ask them to score themselves or another team.
- Evaluate one process against the other.
- Compare the current product to the new product and list the differences.
- Reflect on how they would apply the information in various settings.
- Get them to analyze a problem and share a solution.
- Have them locate the answer to a issue or situation from a list of techniques.
- Use the CSI television as a theme and have them serve as detectives to determine the root cause of a problem.
- Hold a debate to discuss two ways to handle the same issue.
- Give them markers and let them illustrate the features and benefits of a product, process or procedure.
- Have them do a demonstration with each sub-topic before you ask them to do a skill practice.
- Post questions on a “parking lot”.

- Post their areas of expertise or successes and contact information on a sharing board. Send these out to all participants the day after the class as a follow-up.
- Have the "draw" the process or a "mind map" of the elements of a project on a flip chart.
- Story board a process or presentation with sticky notes.
- Encourage them to write out an Action Plan of the steps they will use back on the job.
- Have them turn to their neighbor and give them a personal example of how you can use this information.
- Ask participants to write on an index card one problem or challenge they have had that relates to the course topic. To avoid lecturing about the content, provide detailed tips and information in the handout. Trade "challenge" index cards around the room. Form groups to solve the answer by researching the handout. Share answers and discuss in more detail.
- Assign each table a number. Have a list of problems, challenges or questions and roll dice to decide which table will answer questions #1, #2, etc.
- Give each person a playing card. Form different groups throughout the session by asking participants to form groups by suits, by color, by number, etc. to keep variety in the groups.
- Ask participants to write one task they can do on an index card that will help them start toward their goal. Tell them to include their name and phone # and exchange cards with another participant. One week later they are to call the person whose card they have to find out if they were successful.
- Midway through the class (before lunch/break) ask each person to write on a flip chart the "best idea" they have so far. After the break, ask them to review the list.
- Ask them to add or subtract numbers to come up with the total instead of giving the information.
- Ask them to give an example of how the information is beneficial to the client.
- Have flip charts posted with different questions or topics. Form small groups and ask each to move to a flip chart and brainstorm on the topic for 2 minutes. Then, have them rotate to another flipchart and add their 2¢.

- Line up in the order of a process or have pieces of paper with the steps and have them put them in the correct order.

- Design cards with words that are essential to success of the topics. Example: Leadership traits, customer services actions, quality assurance actions. Give small group a stack of cards. Ask them to put them in priority order. Discuss why they chose the order.

- Have participants create a “mind-map”.

- **Speed-sharing** – all participants form one large circle. Count of 1, 2, 1, 2. Ask all the twos to form a smaller inner circle. The inner circle turns to face the outer circle, pairing with one another. Each person shares an idea for 1 minute each and then rotates; the outer circle moves clockwise and the inner circle moves counter-clock wise. Share again until they are back to the original partner.

- **Flip chart relay**…have a topic on a flip chart. Divide the group into 4 teams….red, blue, green, purple. Ask each team to assign a runner and a scribe for their team. Give team a marker that correspond with their team color and a pad of sticky notes. Tell them they will have 90 second to write ideas on the post-it and place them on the flip chart. The scribe writes and the runner places the post-it in the team’s square on the flip chart.

Red Team	**Blue Team**
Purple Team	**Green Team**

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