

## "Guiding Principles"

Here are some of Klane's basics dealing with classroom challenges:

1. Put the learner first. Encourage a "learner-centered environment."
2. Put yourself in the learner's place.
3. Listen. Restate the question or issue to be clear of your understanding of it.
4. Never get defensive, no matter what, period.
5. Let the students answer, talk first. As trainer, you should hold back. Then, fill in what they don't mention or discuss.
6. Don't feel you need to be the only trainer in the room. The more you can get your students participating as co-teachers, the more learning takes place, and the easier the job becomes for you.
7. Don't think about "kicking back" during training. And don't allow your students to kick back and relax, either. Give your students all you have to offer.

## Dealing with redundancy (same old, same old topic)

What's a trainer to do when you've presented the same topic so many times you can't remember what you've said anymore?

Attendees at Klane's "Diving Deeper into Training" session offered these tips:

- Remember, this might be the first time some of your students have heard this material.
- Use the same facts - but new, different examples.
- Tap into your personal passion for safety for the energy needed to get through the dull, repetitive parts of your training job.
- Take the approach of an actor preparing for a role in a play that he or she will perform again and again and again. Be professional. Try out subtle changes in your delivery, pacing, how you position yourself in front of the class.
- Prepare multiple PowerPoint presentations on the same topic - using different art, images, humor, graphics.
- Try turning the training into a workshop give-and-take session rather than a classroom lecture.

## Dealing with bad news

What's a trainer to do when the company is going through tough times (layoffs, a plant closure, receiving OSHA citations after an inspection) but the training class must go on?

- Whatever the problem is, everyone in the class knows about, so for your own credibility as a trainer and the credibility of your presentation, you must acknowledge the "elephant in the corner of the room." Right at the start, before training begins, bring up the sore subject.
- Remind your students that this is a training class, and larger organizational issues are beyond the scope of the session, and beyond your ability as a trainer to do anything about it.
- Then "park" the issue and get on with your training. Be respectful of your students' possible grievances, but you've got a job to do and don't let training be sidetracked or derailed by grouching and grumbling.
- You might want to remind your audience that (if the organizational issue at hand is layoffs) training could be useful in finding future jobs. Don't pull punches. Be realistic. Look for opportunities to be positive.

## Dealing with "Mr. Negative"

How best to handle the student who derides everything that you say. "No, that won't work here. Nope, that won't work either."

- Use success stories demonstrating the benefits and efficacy of the training. Yes it does work.
- Empathize with Mr. Negative's complaints, if they have legitimacy. "Yes, PPE is hot, but here are the reasons it needs to be worn..."

- Tell Mr. Negative to give your training recommendation or procedures "a try." Then, if it doesn't work out, tell him you'll have a talk and brainstorm solutions with him.
- Challenge Mr. Negative: "Why do you say that? What experiences have you had to make you say that?"
- In a friendly tone, show Mr. Negative what's in it for him. Explain the personal benefits. Remember, don't get defensive.
- Be prepared. Identify Mr. Negative in advance of your class starting. Learn something about him, his likes, dislikes, that you can use to try to get through to him.

### **Dealing with "Mr. Blackberry"**

How to handle the guy in the back of the room reading "Golf" magazine or fiddling around with his Blackberry, obviously not paying attention.

- Stop the class and wait for him to realize all eyes are on him. Use the power of embarrassment.
- Ask Mr. I-don't-care for his views. Try to reel him in and engage him.
- Rearrange the seating so Mr. Blackberry is front and center, not hiding in the back.
- Make him the facilitator. Give him responsibilities in the class. Have him handle the flip chart.
- Be direct and to the point and ask him to put away the Blackberry or the magazine.
- If you have posted policy that no electronic devices or newspapers or magazines are permitted in the training session, and all students have been made aware of it, then ask the offender to leave the class.
- Be careful though - handling problems in a negative, threatening, or disciplinary way can turn off others in the class.
- In a light, joking manner, tell Mr. Blackberry you'll will dock him points on the next test if he doesn't listen up. Don't follow through on your threat, but see if you get his attention this way.
- List the ground rules for student behavior before training begins, review them with the class, and keep them posted for all to see.
- Issue minor fines (\$1 perhaps) for any cell phone that rings during a meeting. Again, tell students of the policy in advance so no one feels ambushed.
- Simply ignore Mr. Blackberry's behavior during class; slip him a note at the end of the session telling him you want to meet in private before the next class.