

TOP 10 TECHNIQUES

For Audience Engagement



1. ASK EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS

Use inclusive framing by asking effective questions of the audience during the presentation. Ask your questions in such a way that most audience members would be able to respond. Inclusive questions are great for building a shared identity among the crowd.

2. ALLOW TIME FOR RESPONSE

Listen to answers. In the words of Ernest Hemingway, “When people talk, listen completely.” Just by listening, you will stand out with your training. Whether you are communicating one-on-one, in a small group, or with a large audience, look for opportunities to hear from people... and then truly listen to the meaning of what they say.



3. LEAD THEM IN A GAME

Need to keep your attendees focused? Tap into their competitive sides. Puzzles or riddles, crosswords, memory games, ordering tasks—all are great ways to keep your attendees engaged and on task. If you can teach or reinforce a concept through a game or activity, more people will comprehend it and remember it.

4. GROUP ACTIVITIES

Encouraging your audience to actively participate in a group activity is one effective way to ensure that your message is getting through. Set up a demonstration that audience members participate in. Ask for volunteers to write on a flip chart, track the time, or record action items. Engage them physically by asking them to stand, raise their hands, clap, etc. Create a “Round Robin” discussion to hear from everyone, especially when brainstorming or seeking opinions.



5. POLLS AND QUIZZES

You can do a paper or online survey prior to meeting to engage your audience in thinking before they even arrive. Conduct a poll. Take your question further by making it multiple choice or True/False and count up the answers. Quiz them. As school kids, most of us were afraid of pop quizzes. But adults love a quiz when it’s just for fun. Nothing engages an audience like a little friendly competition!

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6. TELL STORIES OR USE METAPHORS

Try to make your material relatable to everyday life by using real examples, case studies, and creative metaphors. Metaphors and stories are central to the way the memory operates. A great story will linger in the minds of your attendees much longer than a chart.

7. REMEMBER THE KISS YOUR AUDIENCE RULE (*“keep it simple, sweetie”*)

Summarize your idea with a short sentence or slogan. Use a numbered list or a countdown. Channel your inner David Letterman and organize your communication in a way that lets people count the progression. Use an acrostic. It may seem silly or overly simplified, but this technique supports the way the brain functions.



8. PROVIDE RECOGNITION AND REWARD

Attendees will be more motivated to successfully complete the course if their efforts are recognized and if they have something to show for it at the end. Let attendees know they will receive personalized certificates to mark their participation. You could also consider extra incentives such as a competition or small prizes for the best students. Again, tap into those competitive streaks!

9. PLAN THE SET UP

Change the room layout. Training rooms are always laid out in the same way—rows of tables and chairs. Challenge convention and surprise your attendees by perhaps providing beanbags instead of chairs, standing podiums, or tables with just a few chairs to encourage small groups. Consider playing music to set the mood and get attendees energized before your session and during breaks.



10. USE PROPS

Props can make your teaching even more engaging. These could be practical items that metaphorically represent your subject matter (think scales, an abacus, or a mannequin) or they could be ridiculous (try a rubber chicken or a magic wand). Props liven up your session, and will help people remember what they learned.