

10 tips for creating instructor-led training materials

1. Have an objective

Determine up front what the desired outcome of your training session should be. This objective will then drive all of your content development. Announce the objective(s) at the beginning of your session. Let the participants know what they can expect.

2. Limit the number of slides

Plan to spend an average of two minutes per slide. A 30 minute section should only have around 15 slides. If you are struggling with too much content, refer back to your session's objective and ruthlessly examine whether or not each piece of information is contributing to that objective.

3. Use varying media

If you have video or audio that effectively fits with your content and objective, use it. Try to avoid using only the standard PowerPoint delivery.

4. Get their attention at the beginning

In your session opening, illustrate to the participants why this session is important to them. Get them excited to be there.

5. Stay within 5 – 9 bullet points per slide

Limit the amount of text on each slide. As a standard, you should use between five and nine bullet points on a slide.

6. Use images on your slides

Include graphics on your slides if they contribute to the text. An illustration or chart can be very effective for getting your point across.

7. Include engaging activities

Audience participation is vital for effective training. At a minimum, include places for discussion and short exercises. Ideally, the participants will perform an activity that mirrors your desired outcome (the learning objective). Make your training actionable and memorable.

8. Have possible discussion starters on hand

Some classes won't open up at first. Have a few open-ended questions on hand to get them talking. You'll have a much better training outcome once your participants get involved.

9. Provide takeaways

Consider developing job aids that will help your participants use the information later. Many people also request copies of your presentations or would like to take notes. Consider printing the slides in a participant guide or handing them out on a disc at the end of the session.

10. Stage a practice session

Before finalizing your materials, conduct a walkthrough with a few carefully-chosen participants. See what works and what doesn't in a real training environment.