



Privacy, Civil Rights & Civil Liberties

Adapted for use in Fusion Center Training.

Last revised April 2010.

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Subject Matter Experts as Trainers

Tips for
Privacy/Civil Liberties Officials

Pocket Guide Training Series Brochure #1

1 Training vs. Teaching

Training for adults, particularly job-related training, should use a different approach than the familiar models of teaching which you may be familiar with from childhood. In deciding what information to present and how to present it, consider the following:

- **Relevance** – Tell the group why this is important to them: “Even the most experienced analysts often miss this issue.”
- **Practicality** – Tell the group how to use the information in their work: “All issues should be screened for ...”
- **Applicability** – What your audience wants most is actionable information. Your presentation’s key points should be useful *now*. If necessary, explain why: “This will help you to ...” If it is not relevant *now*, consider deleting it, deemphasizing it, or presenting it later.

2 Be an SME on Your Audience, Too

Strategize *how* to convey the information as well as *what* you wish to convey. To be truly effective, you will need to be a “SME”, or Subject Matter Expert, on your audience in addition to the privacy and civil liberties issues. Visualize the entire training as you prepare. Answer the basics:

- Who are you training? (job function, experience level)
- What do they need to know?
- What do they want to know?
- What do they know already?
- Why do they think they are attending?

Final Thoughts: Why Train?

Training sharpens your analytic ability

- You need a thorough and organized command of the subject to train well. Preparing a session forces you to look at the larger picture, investigate related topics, and organize the material into a coherent whole.

Training enriches your knowledge base

- Nothing helps solidify your own mastery of an area like teaching it to others. The preparation helps you to fill in knowledge gaps, look at the issue from a different perspective, and ask provocative questions.

Training polishes your public speaking skills

- Training requires you to practice speaking clearly and in an organized fashion. Presentation skills acquired in training are easily transferred to other complex professional and social environments.

Training provides a change of pace

- Training refreshes you and makes you think differently about the work you do. You have a chance to interact with colleagues in a different capacity and to work more closely with others with whom you rarely interact.

Training offers you recognition

- Your role as a privacy/civil liberties official may not be as visible as some of your other duties. Conducting training offers you a degree of recognition for your expertise.

8 Don't Try to Cover Too Much

What is the most common training error experts make? *Trying to cover too much information.* If it took you six years to acquire the expertise, you can't convey it all in an hour. Training should not be like drinking from a fire hose. It is easy to ask one question (or to offer one fact) too many. Your goal is to help the audience learn *and remember*. Focus on a few central elements. Elaborate upon and discuss these.

9 Keep Your Audience Interested

Modern media trains audiences with 2-5 second visuals and sound bites. For example, television often uses several message channels at once: a newscaster speaks, messages scroll across the bottom of the screen, and visuals pop up to illustrate points. To keep participants alert:

- Use engaging visuals and verbal imagery;
- Employ several delivery methods, such as lecture, discussion, problem solving, and case histories;
- Vary your delivery style several times per hour;
- Work with a co-trainer who complements your style.

10 Use Materials Effectively

A written outline allows participants to keep pace with you. The best outlines include white space for easy note-taking and include resources and citations. Ideally, handouts will be brief and easy to scan quickly.

- Mention all materials. Ask participants to use them at least once.
- Never read to the group.
- Refer to dense materials briefly and distribute at the end of the session.
- Participants can't read and listen at the same time. Don't lecture when passing out materials.

3 Involve Your Audience

*I Hear, and I Forget
I See, and I Remember
I Do, and I Understand*

Participants take an active role in training only when you create the proper conditions. Here is how:

- Tell the group what to expect. Say something like: "I'll be covering the topic and will ask for questions when we walk through the case studies at the end," or "Raise questions anytime."
- Pose a problem to the group in the opening and explore possible solutions as you speak.
- Prepare open-ended questions to gauge audience knowledge or enhance retention by providing opportunities for participants to speak.
- Involve the group early in the presentation. Ask for a show of hands or ask a few specific questions to gauge the participants' knowledge and expertise.
- Ask group members to share their expertise on key points. You could say, "Has anyone experienced a similar problem?" or "Is this an approach your jurisdiction has tried?"
- Use small problems throughout.
- Identify subtopics or develop lists of pros and cons, solutions, or issues with the group. Don't make up the list yourself. Let the group do it.
- Plan your training to incorporate participatory training styles (discussion, case study, brainstorming, role-play, small groups, etc.). Even an hour workshop benefits from a mix of techniques.
- Use self-tests or games to review learning.

Remember

Keep presentation segments short, about 20 minutes. This meets most audiences' estimated optimum attention span.

4 Leverage Group Expertise

Participants often complain that they did not have the opportunity to discuss issues and strategies with other participants. Training adults with a wide range of experience (professional and personal) offers the opportunity to draw upon the group's expertise. Even if the group is inexperienced in your topic area, they have expertise in related or similar areas. Take advantage of their experience.

- Use discussion.
- Pose questions/problems.
- Provide opportunities to network during breaks or lunch.
- Conduct an "issues" roundtable.
- Ask for real-life solutions, issues, and approaches throughout the session.

5 (Make the Point)³

*Forecast what you are going to say ...
Tell them ...
Then summarize what you told them.*

The key to effective presentations is to structure information so that participants will *remember* it. Don't throw away your most important points in passing. It takes effort for participants to integrate new information. Reinforce your message by repeating key points at least 3 times. Be creative.

Your effectiveness as a trainer is measured not by how much you *say* but by what the group *remembers*.

- Summarize the key points at the start of a lecture.
- Illustrate the key points through an exercise.
- Refer to the key points again by linking them to your next topic.
- Use self-tests or case studies to apply information.

6 Beginnings and Endings Matter

The first and the last five minutes of your presentation are the most important. Studies show that this is when participants pay the most attention. Plan to take full advantage of those two opportunities.

- Answer the participants' unspoken and pressing question: "Why should I pay attention?"
- Use the opening to "hook" their attention and establish your credibility.
- Prepare your closing in advance. Use it to stress important points or to inspire action.
- Even if you run short of time, use the last few minutes for your prepared closing.

7 Mixed Experience Audiences

You will rarely work with a group whose members have exactly the same level and type of experience. Help members to self-select for your presentation as much as possible. Plan to address the needs of a wide range of participants.

- Your advance notice should identify the target audience by type and length of experience.
- Identify who *should* attend.
- If you don't know the group, ask about their experience in the area as you begin.
- Lay a foundation through a brief orientation to the general topic then launch into the specific issues. This helps less experienced group members.
- Pose hypothetical situations. This deemphasizes the gap between the most and least experienced by presenting the entire group with a new situation.
- Always explain jargon and acronyms, especially the first few times they are used. Note definitions on a flipchart or in the outline.