



TRAINING FOR SUCCESS

A Guide for Novice Trainers

GtoG, s.r.o.

Ivana Miklovič

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To my husband

I thank him for the initial idea and the impulse for writing this book as well as for providing me with the necessary time and space for its creation.

To my parents

I express deep gratitude for everything they have done for me and for everything they armed me with for life.

I am grateful to the trainers who showed nothing but patience with me and who led me through the ins and outs of a trainer's work. To the companies I had the opportunity to be an asset for. To the participants who helped me grow. To my business mentor who armed me with my entrepreneurial thinking. And lastly, to all those who stood by me during my personal and professional development.



PRAISE FOR

Training for Success

- “Ivana has written a treasure trove of practical ideas, hints and tips, and best practice – coming from her substantial hands-on experience as a trainer over many years. Any novice trainer would benefit a great deal from reading and applying the lessons here.”

Kimberley Hare, Founder and Managing Director **Kaizen Training**

- “A good cooking book alone will not turn you into a good chef. But the kind of book Ivana presents here can everybody willing to follow the steps by step description enable to produce a decent menu in the field of training”.

Thomas Diener, Trainer, Coach, Owner **FairWork GmbH**

- “I regard working with Ivana positively from various angles – foremost, there was a complete understanding of our needs. Tied to that was the flawlessly prepared content of the training covering exactly the sensitive areas of development required for experienced salespeople. Lastly, is the fact that my colleagues actually use the acquired skills in their work. I thank Ivana for her approach, professionalism, and an unbelievable desire to continuously push our people to progress”.

Dominika Miklášová, HR Director **Edenred**

- „Working with Ivana was great from the very beginning – from defining the objectives of the workshop through to its actual execution. We thoroughly appreciate Ivana’s pro-customer attitude, her dynamics, and the way she introduced new trends, which Ivana follows continuously. Ivana is very professional and she is an expert in the area in which she is conducting the training. The participants’ feedback was wonderful; they considered the workshop to have been one the best they had ever attended. I cannot recommend working with Ivana strongly enough. We, in Dell, will look forward to other future specialty workshops“.

Silvia Jelenikova, Lead & HR Director **Dell Bratislava**

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INTRODUCTION

Do you know the story of Christopher Columbus? The following situation supposedly took place in Spain, shortly after Columbus's return from his exploratory travels. Some were questioning the importance of Columbus's role in his discoveries, taunting him with the words: "Anyone could have done that with just a little thought."



How did Columbus react? As a reply to their remarks, he asked one of the envious doubters to stand an egg on its tip without it falling. No one could do it. Everyone claimed that it simply wasn't possible. Columbus then took the egg, tapped it gently and stood it on its tip with no problems. He looked at the onlookers proudly and said: "Once a person acquires the know-how, a task becomes truly easy."

The same applies to leading a training session.

Have you ever been in the situation of observing someone at work thinking to yourself that you could manage their work just as easily? Or, after crossing a bridge, you suddenly feel that it wasn't as easy as it had initially seemed?

When something appears easy, it is very probable that the person doing the task has gone through a thorough and in-depth preparation. Everything went smoothly thanks to the prior steps that the person had taken.

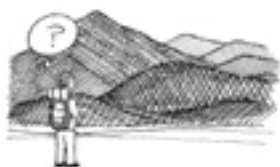
Why was this book written?

I have participated in many training sessions, led by both Slovaks and foreigners. Initially everything amazed me because almost everything was new for me. However, as time passed, I came across more and more moments when, instead of bringing away a large amount of information from these events, I would only absorb a few nuggets. There is nothing wrong with this but I started to feel that if those who were leading the training sessions had made a few slight changes regarding their methodology they would have achieved far greater results.

I am thus sharing with you what I have learnt on my way to mastering the art of lecturing, what I have learnt from my mistakes, constant improvements regarding training, and my continuous experimentation with new techniques ... truly the best from what I know.

What is this book about?

The book offers a glimpse behind the curtains of working as a trainer. It will reveal to you the methodological principles of a trainer's work. It analyses the different phases of a training session as well as providing a step-by-step guide on what to do in each one. Additionally, it is filled with countless tips that can be used in practice.



**First you have to know the rules.
Only later can you break them.**

Although this book mostly uses the term *training* (or rather, the broader term *educational event*), the information contained here can be used while preparing workshops, seminars, courses or any other educational event.

The organization of the book more or less mirrors the systematic approach to education as such: from the analysis of educational needs, through objective setting and design of the educational event, to the final evaluation.

1 EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

Let's start with a short exercise. Try to answer the following question as fast as you can:

What comes to mind when someone asks you to create a training session on the topic of "Communication"?

How do you answer?

Do you immediately start planning the content of the training knowing exactly what you are going to train the participants in?

Or does your mind suddenly become flooded with a stream of questions aimed at figuring out what exactly the person who asked you to create the training needs from you?

If you answered yes to the second question, congratulations.

If you answered yes to the first question then I have several additional questions for you: *How do you know what is supposed to change as a result of the training? How do you know what is exactly meant by "communication"? How do you know what the participants are supposed to do differently after the training?*

... you might have already guessed what we are going to deal with in the following section.

What is the educational needs analysis useful for?



It is very similar to the work of a doctor. If a doctor is to propose a treatment that will truly help a patient, they need to first find out what the trouble is and come up with a correct diagnosis. The same can be applied to a training session. If you imagine that a given educational event is supposed to act as a treatment for a current condition, then what first needs to be figured out is what precisely should be different after the training.

At the beginning there is always a certain desire to achieve different results, a need to change something. On the other hand, there is dissatisfaction with the current situation. The needs analysis is the process that investigates specifically what should be changed.

An educational needs analysis is a series of activities aimed at identifying the difference between the current and the desired state, and determining the most appropriate educational activity. In layman's terms we could say that an educational needs analysis is about figuring out

- what the current problem is
- how the situation should look after the problem has been solved
- the most appropriate method for solving the problem



When carrying out the educational needs analysis we are essentially mirroring what happens in the doctors office. If you went to the doctor and all they asked for was some basic preliminary information (e.g. a knee pain), after which you were prescribed a simple ointment, it is quite possible that they would not be treating the real cause of the problem and the prescribed ointment would probably be of no help. If a doctor is really going to help you they need to find out your complete medical history through a series of questions, and then based on all the available information they can design an effective treatment.

Is the educational needs analysis necessary?

While the educational needs analysis is important, when it comes to designing the training session often it is not done thoroughly enough. Why not? In most cases the reason is because its importance and benefits are underestimated.

Real life examples.

First example:

I get a phone call: “Iva we have an interesting client. His people have already had all sorts of training sessions, but he is willing to invest more in their education.”

I ask: “Great, and what kind of problem do they need to solve?”

The answer: “They didn’t tell me that. We are supposed to come up with a proposal that will pique the client’s curiosity.”

Second example:

In my work, I am often met with a refusal when I ask people involved in preparing an educational event to, for example, send out a questionnaire identifying the future participants’ needs. The most common arguments being a lack of time, that their superior wouldn’t agree to it, that they cannot burden the future participants with such stuff..

Nonsense? Unfortunately, this is an everyday reality.

The more accurate the educational needs analysis, the more precise the “gun shot”. If accuracy is lacking then there is a likelihood that the participants are going to receive training they do not necessarily need, while, furthermore, a key side of their personal development will remain “untreated.” They might undergo training when another form of personal development support would have been more appropriate; for the organization this means wasting money on training that is superfluous to their aims and goals. The trainer might discover this only during the actual training session, in which case it depends on their flexibility regarding redesigning the prepared session to please all the interested parties ...

A well-done educational needs analysis is a smart investment from the organization’s side, saving both time and money, while working to solve a real problem.

**If training is the answer,
then what is the question?**

Which areas to look at?

Let's talk about how the educational needs analysis should look. The process of such an analysis is based on the gradual **collection of information from different angles and viewpoints**. As the organization's results depend ultimately on the performance of both the individuals within various departments and the departments themselves, the needs of the training and the organization are closely interrelated.



Fig. 1 – Areas of needs identification

It does not matter if a client comes to you with a concrete request (e.g. we want training focused on sales skills) or a general one (e.g. we want to train our people); you should always develop the identification of the needs through all three above mentioned sections.

Do not forget that it is always about trying to figure out *where the participants are now* (as a company, a department...) *and where they are supposed to be in the future* in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes ... *The conclusion of the whole analysis should be a clear view of the objective of the training and what should be different afterwards.*

- **Department/Job position**

The needs analysis often starts with a certain organizational unit or department (e.g. the sales department), or more precisely, with a specific job position (salespeople, assistants, etc.).

For example: “We want to re-train our salespeople.”

One of the first things is to clarify what the participants of the planned training truly need. It is best, at this point, to assume the role of a detective. Do not accept what the client initially tells you at face value, for example: “we need better sales skills”; dig a little deeper and investigate for yourself where the barriers and obstacles in the organization are and what the participants need to do in order to overcome them.

Here are several questions which can help you figure out the particular needs which require developing. This list is not systematic, it is merely meant to serve as database of possible questions.

- *What was the impetus for the training request?*
- *What makes you conclude that the participants need training in a given area (e.g. communication skills)?*
- *What kind of training sessions have the participants already completed?*
- *What have they already achieved?*
- *What are their biggest shortcomings?*
- *Was there a situation in which it became apparent that a particular training session was required? If so, can you describe that situation? (Ask for a detailed description of a situation)*
- *How will you recognize that the participants learnt what they were supposed to/that they changed their attitudes?*
- *What would the situation look like if the training didn't take place?*
- *What areas will the participants improve in after the training?*
- *What are they supposed to know upon returning to work?*
- *If the training is successful, what will you see, hear, or feel in a week, a month, six months...? Think about the results, not objectives, of the training.*
- *How will you judge whether or not the training was a success? How will the behavior of the participants be different?*
- *What is the added value of the training? (Again, ask for a very detailed description.)*
- *What will follow the training?*



If the client is interested in some training, but does not have a concrete idea:

- *What are the goals of the department/people in a given position for the near future (a year, five years)?*
- *What level is their knowledge and skills in these areas (interconnection to the goals)?*

Lastly, it is important to think about the evaluation of the training – it is appropriate to agree with the client at the beginning on what form the final evaluation will take (see chapter 11).