

5 TIPS FOR MANAGING LATECOMERS TO TRAINING

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Effectively managing training activities and staying on time is an important skill for learning and performance professionals to possess. Unfortunately, many participants have not learned the importance and value of being punctual in arriving to a session or returning from a break. This deficit can inhibit your ability to start, proceed and end on your time schedule if you have not anticipated having such participants in a group.

The following five strategies can help in maintaining control of your planned activities even though some participants are not doing their part.

Set the Example

If you expect positive time management behavior from others, you need to act as a role model. Arrive at your sessions at least forty-five to sixty minutes ahead of schedule to ensure that everything needed is present, in order, and working.

Start on Time

Demonstrate time expectations by announcing scheduled start times; then, punctually begin when those times arrive. By doing so, you communicate the importance of being on time and your expectations about maintaining an established schedule.

Reward Punctual Behavior

Announce the reward system that you will use at the beginning of the session. Select any method you desire to recognize punctual learners with some small item related to the session topic. For example, a toy with a smile face for customer service training, a crossword puzzle for a decision-making or problem-solving class, or an inexpensive book related to the session topic.

Welcome Latecomers

Just because someone arrives late does not make them a bad person. They may have a valid reason for their tardiness (e.g. traffic accident, family emergency, or boss/client who calls them just before they were to leave for the class). As the latecomer enters, smile, briefly welcome him or her, direct them to a seat, provide any necessary materials, or assign them to a group (if appropriate).

Assign Team Tasks

Prior to letting participants go on breaks or to lunch, assign them to teams. Give them a task to complete upon returning from the break (e.g. discuss a course related question, solve a riddle, or find a solution to a puzzle). This puts peer pressure on team members because they might feel they need to get back on time so they do not let their peers down. You can further encourage an early return by stating that the first team back with the answer/solution will win a prize.

Bob Lucas B.S., M.A., M.A, CPLP is an internationally-known author and learning and performance professional. He has written and contributed to thirty-one books and

compilations. He regularly conducts creative training, train-the-trainer, customer service, interpersonal communication and management and supervisory skills workshops. Bob can be reached at blucas@robertwlucas.com or through his website www.robertwlucas.com. Follow his blog at www.robertwlucas.com/wordpress and like him at www.facebook.com/robertwlucasenterprises