

FROM SPEAKER TO TRAINER

The transition is not as simple as you may think.

By Beth Black, CC

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." — Benjamin Franklin

Public speakers inform, entertain, inspire and motivate. So do corporate trainers. However, distinct differences also exist between these two activities, and while many Toastmasters have

Sindy Martin, DTM, of Blue Moon Advanced club in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the owner of Smartin International, employs several techniques to engage adult learners. First, she pays attention to various learning styles and offers something for auditory, visual and tactile learners. Martin recognizes that many adults have been trained by years of

Martin points out that the first question adult learners ask is, What's in it for me? Her solution is to always "give them something of value right away." Once, she was training a group of engineers and project managers. She had them work through an icebreaker activity about generational differences and personality types. The participants told her they wanted to try this activity with the rest of their team. By giving these leaders something of value at the start, she earned their engagement for the duration of the session.

"Trainers must prove that a training program was effective by demonstrating observable changes in the participants' behaviors."

prepared hard for speaking opportunities, venturing into training requires even more preparation.

The similarities between public speaking, training — and teaching — depend on the expertise and professional insight of the person in charge. In all three of these areas, the person needs to know if the audience, students or participants are following along. But what if they're not?

That is where a significant difference between training and the other two pursuits becomes apparent. Trainers face a particularly difficult and demanding task. While speakers need to capture an audience's passive attention and teachers need to evoke their students' interest, trainers must *engage* their participants enough to follow instructions and perform complex activities.

TV watching to expect a commercial every eight minutes. Meeting their pace, she makes sure to change things up every eight minutes in ways that strategically appeal to the different kinds of learners. She will ask a question, show something attention-grabbing onscreen or offer a new handout. And she offers plenty of challenges. "I'll have short quizzes or breakout groups," says Martin. "The idea is to get them thinking."

Adults can skip a training session they feel is not worthwhile. Contrary to teenage students in a classroom, adults have the freedom to leave early or decline to participate actively. They will look at the title of a session and gravitate to the back of the room upon arrival, ready to leave if the session fails to involve them in the first five minutes.

Teaching vs. Training

If you are considering using your public speaking skills to educate others, you will find it important to understand the difference between teaching and training. A teacher who lectures and evaluates is using *pedagogy* [**ped-uh-goh-jee**] and a trainer who facilitates self-directed learning is using *andragogy* [**an-druh-goh-jee**]. In the first, a teacher guides students in a predetermined subject of study. In the latter, a trainer determines which skills are needed by participants to reach their stated goals and provides opportunities for developing those skills. An example of pedagogy is a high school geometry class, where a curriculum determines that a student must learn about angles and equations. In contrast, a computer training session for architects is an example of andragogy, where the participants

HELPING THEM CROSS THE RIVER

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Why become a trainer? Beyond the financial and professional rewards, there are often emotional benefits. The trainer's goal is to improve people's lives by helping them gain new skills. This newfound ability may emotionally impact the participants, and it can impact the trainer too.

Florian Mueck, ACS, a professional corporate trainer from Spain, knows this well. "Once I gave a train-the-trainers session in Barcelona for a foundation in the field of emotional intelligence," he says. "There was this one shy, timid lady; she would hardly talk to anyone." After Mueck spent 48 hours with her group providing constructive feedback, this lady gave a final presentation that was fueled with so much passion and enthusiasm that the entire group "was left with our mouths wide open in astonishment," Mueck said.

Mueck's most powerful moment came in the final feedback round when the woman told him, "Two days ago, I was on the other side of the river. You took me to *this* side."



Florian Mueck

may request individualized training to boost their productivity.

In truth, adult learners are experienced shoppers — including browsing in the educational marketplace — and need takeaways showing the value of the experience. Martin makes the effort to offer something of value that can be applied to all areas of the participants' lives. "It gets them thinking," she notes. She's wise to provide this for her participants. Any failure to provide something extra can result in missing attendees and even cancelled sessions.

With such high stakes and easy losses in the corporate training field, how can Toastmasters skills help you become a successful trainer? What, in particular, do you need to know?

Building Skills and Teams

Training is also set apart by its communication structure. While a speaker

stands in front of an audience providing (mostly) one-way communication, a trainer, often positioned centrally in a circular structure, directs the ways participants connect with each other. Florian Mueck, ACS, is a member of the Prestigious Speakers club in Barcelona, Spain, and a professional corporate trainer. He says that as a trainer, he has felt the impact of being in the middle of the participants' activity. "You are constantly in the limelight," he says. "You can never relax, not one second. It's an exhausting but fulfilling experience."

Trainers facilitate learning for each participant and also direct the co-learning among various members of the team. An effective corporate training session should build a team made of individuals who know how to contribute to the overall goal. For instance, in a team from a furniture factory, the team member who ham-

mers together a chair frame should know how to work alongside the person who adds the padding. Then, together, they coordinate with the person who covers it in fabric.

The successful corporate trainer uses specialized activities: lecture, role-play, exercises, case studies and demonstrations to help involve and engage the participants. "The goal is a learned, observable behavior that the participants apply to their daily tasks," says Carol Gregory, manager of educational development and training at Toastmasters World Headquarters.

Before the Event

Speakers and trainers both face the preliminary task of learning about their upcoming audience and its needs, abilities and problems. For many speakers, this often means little more than contacting the meeting host to request the information. For a trainer, preparation is more technical and detailed. A trainer's participants usually have knowledge in their subject area but lack practical, hands-on experience in applying it. Trainers provide them an opportunity to experience the tools and techniques they will need to use their knowledge in the real world.

In the corporate world, the trainer's mark is felt through an employee's performance over the following days, weeks and months. Think of an office where new computers have been installed. These machines are only worthwhile if the team members can use them with skill. These skills are vital to the company's success, especially if the investment in new equipment stretched the budget. When the employees not only match, but surpass, their old productivity, an effective training program pays for itself. Each employee's improved productivity offers a working testament

to the training received. To earn this testament, the trainer is ultimately responsible for determining which skills need to be developed and how to develop them most effectively.

During the Training Session

Trainers usually begin with an icebreaker activity, not to be confused with Toastmasters' "Project 1: The Ice Breaker," the initial speech in the *Competent Communication* manual. An icebreaker activity is an opening to the training session, where participants get to know each other and the trainer a little better. It also sets the tone for interactivity.

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Martin recommends using an interpersonal icebreaker where participants ask each other a question or shake hands. "These get people to engage with other people," she says. She asks participants to shake hands because human touch cultivates a relationship between the participants and helps develop their sense of camaraderie for the duration of the event. Of course, using this kind of activity depends on the host culture and composition of the session.

While a speaker may rely solely on one-way communication or perhaps a little dialogue with the audience, this won't work for a trainer. This is where the title "participant" rather than "audience" or "student" comes into play. Jocelyne Vezina, ACS, ALB, of the Comfortably Speaking and Lambs to Lions clubs in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, says interaction is crucial in training. "If you have no

interaction in a training session, very little is retained or understood," she says. "You anchor knowledge by repeating. Also, engaging the audience keeps the energy high and the desire to learn more alive."

After the Training Session

When public speakers finish a presentation, they can often walk away and consider that job done. If a speech received thunderous applause, the speaker can believe the job was done well. But a trainer cannot rely on such feedback. In fact, a trainer's job is only half-done at this point. "Trainers must prove to the company that a training

program was effective by demonstrating observable changes in the participants' behaviors," says Gregory.

The company or trainer may post-test the participants. Some trainers return for a follow-up session and observe any behavior changes. Most rely on evaluations.


While speakers in Toastmasters can expect written and verbal evaluations from their one designated evaluator, trainers often receive evaluations from everyone who participated in the session. One reason for that is that trainers seek to evaluate how *effective* the training was, whereas speakers generally want to know if audience members thought the presenter was *enjoyable*.

Compared to most speakers, "trainers are less interested in participants' opinions of the speaker," says Gregory. "They want to know if they learned something, and if

participants will be able to apply that learning once they leave."

Making the Transition

Mueck used Toastmasters-style networking to assess his skills as a trainer, which provided unexpected results. "I organized two test seminars — one in Barcelona, the other in Berlin — with friends coming from different angles: Toastmasters, professional contacts and other friends," says Mueck. Some participants in Berlin happened to be online entrepreneurs, part-owners of the online start-up magazine gruenderszene.de. "They proposed launching a seminar offer to entrepreneurs." His test gave him the confidence and opportunity to move into a training career.

After contemplating the differences between public speaking and training, you may feel hesitant about taking on training assignments. Only *you* can know if you are truly ready. Have you trained for the extra work involved? Have you practiced the necessary skills? If you have, then don't let simple nerves stop you from your next great adventure. Mueck recalls his first time as a trainer. He was nervous but also philosophical. "The beginning is the most important part of the work," says Mueck, quoting Plato. "When I went to do my first professional training with my first key client, Accor Hotel Group, I definitely knew how important this seminar was going to be for my future career." But Mueck says he couldn't overthink his situation. "In the end," he says, "It's like the Nike slogan — 'Just Do It!'" 

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