



atd Association for
Talent Development

Trainer's Guide

**Delivering Exceptional
Learning Experiences**



Introduction:

The learner's experience is pivotal to whether or not the learning will stick. Their experience doesn't start when they enter the classroom, it starts when they sign up for the course. Are you doing everything you can to make that process painless and exciting?

In this guide, we'll go over how to:

Create Nurturing Learning
Environments

- β Create Nurturing Learning Environments
- β Identify the 5 Most Effective Skills Trainers Need to Have
- β Deal With Challenging Participants
- β Keep Your Training Programs Funded
- β Identify the Best Way for You to Enhance Your Skills.





Part 1:

As Catherine Lombardozi explains in *Learning Environments by Design*, “Learning theorists and researchers have come to understand that we don’t so much ‘teach’ as we create an environment in which people can learn.”

Six main components make up the environment, and learning and development professionals should keep these in mind when planning a training experience. The components include resources, people, training and education, development practices, experiential learning, and learner motivation.



Create Nurturing Learning Environments



1 RESOURCES: Resources comprise such assets as performance support tools, job aids, podcasts, video chats, procedure manuals, and online databases. Resources are helpful for conveying explicit knowledge or providing just-in-time learning. According to Lombardozzi, “the trick is finding resources that are at the right level, high quality, and relevant to a particular context.”

2 PEOPLE: Peer support systems, coaching, social media connections, and communities of practice form the people component. The depth of these interactions can vary a great deal, from a close, daily relationship in the workplace to following experts on Twitter, Lombardozzi explains.

3 TRAINING AND EDUCATION: These components include on-the-job training, courseware and seminars, certification or licensing programs, and follow-up exercises to the education event. Training can be in person, self-study, online, or a combination. “Research has shown that retention and application depend on relevance, deep engagement, practice, and feedback,” writes Lombardozzi.

4 DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: Stretch-assignment management, after-action review practices, supervisor support and feedback, and career coaching are facets of development practices. Managers and the organization as a whole play a critical role in developing a culture where development practices are supported and encouraged.



5 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: Collaborating, creating personal notes and job aids, engaging in critical reflection, and learning by doing fall under this component. A trainer can promote and nurture these types of activities, “most especially by making self-assessment and reflection tools available to learners,” says Lombardozzi.

6 LEARNER MOTIVATION: Learner motivation can be described as self-direction, confidence in the ability to learn, and a belief in the link between learning and performance. “Learners need to choose to learn, so without some degree of motivation, little learning can occur,” stresses Lombardozzi.

While several of these factors are tangible and within your control as a trainer, it is important to remember that many of them are not. Success also depends on the learners and their relationships with others, such as coaches or team members.

Source: Adapted from Lombardozzi, C. 2015. Learning Environments by Design. Alexandria, VA: ATD Press. www.td.org/magazines/td-magazine/cultivating-valuable-learning-environments

Part 2:

The 5 Most Effective Skills

Trainers Need to Have

Whether classroom-based, e-learning, webinars, or coaching, training is the generic and an all-encompassing term to describe any moment when we're in front of a group of people who want to hear us or when we're developing content that people want to learn. For most in the training profession, our activities are as varied as the topics we deliver.

It's a huge responsibility when you're asked to develop the knowledge of others. Think about it—people are giving you permission to get into their heads. Whether you're recent to the training business or consider yourself a seasoned veteran, it's incumbent upon you to hone your training skills, not just for your professional capacity but also to exceed your audience's expectations. Here are five areas where trainers should strive to improve.

1

KNOW AND REFRESH YOURSELF WITH THE FUNDAMENTALS.

One lesson effective trainers discover early is to keep things simple. Doing so allows them to revisit essential fundamental training skills. They will address items such as the following:

- β Be aware of participants' learning expectations. What does each participant want to learn?
- β Align those learning expectations with the learning objectives of the course. Are you able to adapt the learning to the needs of the participant?
- β Prepare learners to focus on that addresses learning objectives.





1

Know and refresh yourself
with the fundamentals

2

BE AWARE OF AND MANAGE BARRIERS TO LEARNING.

Effective trainers must be attentive to anything that might interfere with the learning process. For example, you should be ready to handle participants with deep experience, resistance to change, hidden agendas, and, of course, fear of failure. It's your responsibility to reduce and try to eliminate barriers.

3

ALWAYS PLAN THE TRAINING AND FOLLOW THE TRAINING PLAN.

Think back to a time when you attended a training session that seemed to flow effortlessly. Chances are you also recall some key takeaways from the session. This didn't occur by happenstance; rather, it's how the trainer planned the session to unfold, executed their training plan, and was able to adapt the plan to the needs of learners like you.

Furthermore, a training session plan is a road map to make sure that you, the trainer, possess the required resources and allocate your time appropriately.

4

Get participants
to "do" rather
than "hear"

5

Continually evaluate and
revise the training

2

3

Always plan the training and
follow the training plan

Be aware of and





...It's how the trainer planned the **5** session to unfold, executed their training plan, and was able to adapt the plan to the needs of learners like you.

4 GET PARTICIPANTS TO “DO” RATHER THAN “HEAR.”

Effective trainers recognize that lasting learning gets people to apply the skill rather than simply listen to a description or observe it. Yes, you will need to set up the learning context appropriately so participants understand what they are doing. You should, however, maximize the time to get them to apply their newly found skill by implementing interactive training activities.

For example, let's say you're facilitating a session on conflict resolution. Set up the context for them to recognize

manage barriers
to learning

why this would happen, but then quickly transition to having participants role-play handling a real-life conflict.

CONTINUALLY EVALUATE AND REVISE THE TRAINING.

You're the trainer, and it's your responsibility to ensure participants have the desired skills when they complete the course. It's also your responsibility to continuously adapt and improve the course to the needs of your participants.

Effective trainers continuously seek to improve upon their training sessions, even if their last one was exceptional. During each session, these trainers quickly adapt to the changing dynamics within the group, focusing on what's relevant to the group while maintaining direction and the primary training message. Afterward, they reflect upon the session and identify what went well and where they can improve.

Conducting a training session is an overwhelming process. If you want participants to walk away with a positive

experience, remember to keep it simple and to always revisit these five concepts when designing and facilitating your next course.

Source: ATD Links Article: Kirkwood, T. and Pangarkar, A.

[“5 Effective Training Skills.”](#) ATD Links Newsletter.

Part 3:

Tips for Dealing With Challenging Participants

Most training sessions will have at least one person who is “not with the program.” By anticipating possible disruptions, you can plan for effective action to handle any issues.

In general, never put down a challenging participant; try to make a positive comment while at the same time asking for a change in behavior. Deal with the issue early before it becomes serious. Here are some suggested solutions to situations in which the individual does the following:



A Challenging Participant...

- 1 TALKS TOO OFTEN.
- 2 TALKS TOO LONG.
- 3 TALKS TO SOMEONE ELSE AT LENGTH.
- 4 BRINGS UP PERSONAL OR IRRELEVANT ISSUES.
- 5 TALKS TOO LITTLE.
- 6 RECYCLES WHAT'S ALREADY BEEN DECIDED RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON THE QUESTION AT HAND.
- 7 CHALLENGES YOUR IDEAS OR OPINIONS.



1 TALKS TOO OFTEN.

Solution: Ask the rest of the group: “What does anyone else think about this point?” or “Who else has some ideas?” or “Let’s make sure everyone gets a chance to contribute before any one person speaks twice.” Or, talk to the person outside the meeting, describe their behavior and its effects in factual terms, and ask the person what the solution might be. For example, you might say: “Jack, you made some helpful points today. However, you tended to add something after each other person made a contribution. Did you notice how few others spoke? Mary and Pedro hardly said a thing. What could you do to encourage others to contribute?”

2 TALKS TOO LONG.

Solution: Wait for a pause, however brief, and interrupt, saying something like, “Could you summarize your idea in a few words so I can write it down?”

3 TALKS TO SOMEONE ELSE AT LENGTH.

Solution: Say something like, “Pardon me, Hans. We can’t hear what you and Sue are saying. Would you mind sharing it with all of us?” or “John, what are your thoughts on the point Maria just raised?”

4 BRINGS UP PERSONAL OR IRRELEVANT ISSUES.

Solution: Say something like, “Jaime, I’m not clear how that fits the issue we are talking about. Could you help me?”

5 TALKS TOO LITTLE.

Solution: Simply ask, “Yancey, what are your thoughts on this question?” or “Helen, you’re new to the group, so I think your views could be especially valuable. What do you think?”

6 RECYCLES WHAT’S ALREADY BEEN DECIDED RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON THE QUESTION AT HAND.

Solution: Say something like, “Our purpose is not to go over what’s already been decided. It is to identify potential problems coming from those decisions and to work out solutions. Now, what do you see as a way to resolve the problem, Malik?”

7 CHALLENGES YOUR IDEAS OR OPINIONS.

Solution: Try one of the following:

- β Cite the authorities you used as a source and acknowledge that other authorities (name them if possible) think otherwise.
- β Acknowledge that the challenger’s idea or opinion has merit, and that you will need to think about the effect it has on your own thinking.
- β Ask the group what they think about the challenger’s idea or opinion.

Source: ATD. 2016. “Basic Training for Trainers” TD at Work. Alexandria, VA: ATD Press.

Part 4:

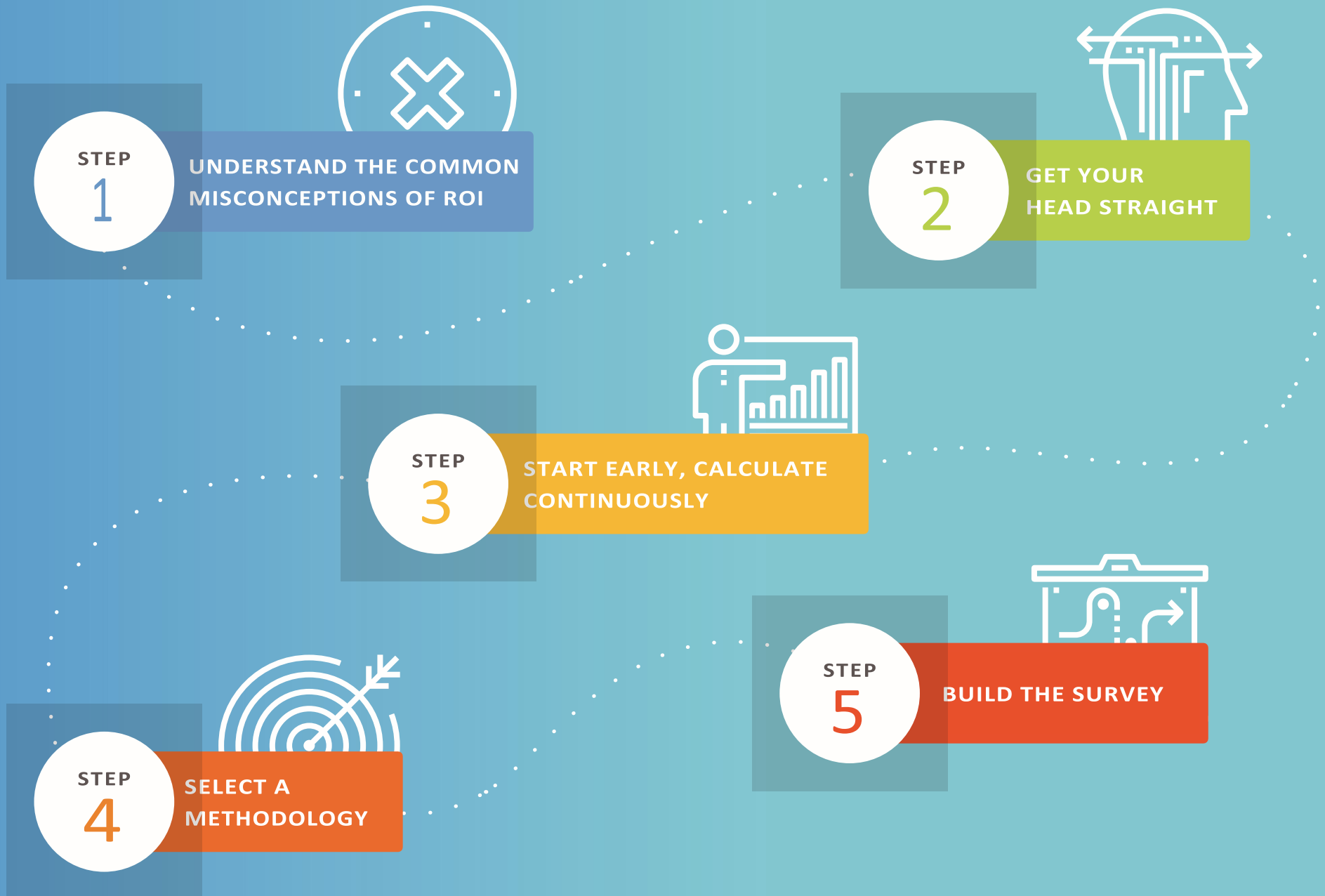
How to Keep Your Training Programs Funded

It is easy to focus on the quality of training rather than the impact of the learning.

Learning professionals and managers have always been tasked with building the talent required to meet public demand for better and more services. Now they are asked to do it with less money and fewer resources, and that likely will not change anytime soon. Every dollar must be justified, and if managers are unable to prove that training programs deliver more value than they cost, they put their programs in jeopardy. Proving value over cost is the essence of return on investment (ROI). Here are the top five important steps to proving training ROI.



5 Steps to Proving Training ROI





To prove value,
shift thinking
from a quality mindset to an impact
and results mindset.

1

UNDERSTAND THE COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS OF ROI

People intuitively understand the value of training. Generally, people understand that learning programs bring value to the organization, but that is not the question; the question is, How much value? Not every worthwhile initiative gets funding. In an environment of scarcity, the challenge for learning professionals and managers is to keep critical development programs at the top of the list. ROI is the best weapon.

Calculating ROI can be difficult and expensive, particularly when the value of training is not conveniently quantifiable. There are ways to calculate ROI that are easy, inexpensive, and most of all effective. Learning professionals and managers need to prove only that their training programs are cost justified.

2

GET YOUR HEAD STRAIGHT

ROI is more than a calculation, it's a way of thinking. While quality is important, it doesn't go far enough in determining value. The assumption that quality leads to learning and learning leads to impact is not necessarily true. To prove value, shift thinking from a quality mindset to an impact and results mindset. This requires a willingness to accept responsibility for the actions of learners after they leave the learning event.

3

START EARLY, CALCULATE CONTINUOUSLY

One of the core benefits of ROI is the opportunity to make adjustments to the training program along the way. Suppose, for example, that after two years of running a program the ROI comes up negative. That's two years where costs exceeded value—not a helpful analysis when it comes to justifying the program. ROI should be viewed as a real-time process. By calculating ROI continuously, program benefits are always known.





If the number is trending toward the red, the root cause can quickly be identified and action taken.

4 SELECT A METHODOLOGY

There are two ways to calculate ROI: measure actions or measure opinions. While measuring what people do is better than measuring what they think, this is not practical for most training programs. A survey approach to ROI can be effective and efficient; good survey methodology is the key.

When surveying opinions, the more data points the better. ROI must be credible, and that means providing as many different perspectives as possible to validate the data. As most students are asked to complete course evaluations, surveying students for ROI simply means adding a few extra questions to the evaluation.

Three prerequisite measures are critical lead-ins to showing ROI: learning effectiveness, job impact, and business results.

5 BUILD THE SURVEY

Remember math class: It is not enough to show the correct answer; demonstrating how the answer was reached is important. Three prerequisite measures are critical lead-ins to showing ROI: learning effectiveness, job impact, and business results. These are important not because they are required for the math (only job impact is needed), but because they provide quantitative proof to support the final conclusion. Training effectiveness supports job impact, which supports business results, which leads to positive ROI.

Find out what all 10 steps are for keeping your training program funded [here](#).

Source: Bashrum, M. 2012. "Keep Your Training Program Funded: 10 Steps to Training ROI." The Public Manager. Alexandria, VA: ATD Press.

Part 5:

How to Enhance Your Skills

Take the quiz or connect with a professional development specialist to determine the next step in your professional development journey! Visit www.td.org/learning-path-quiz/trainers or use the following contact info:

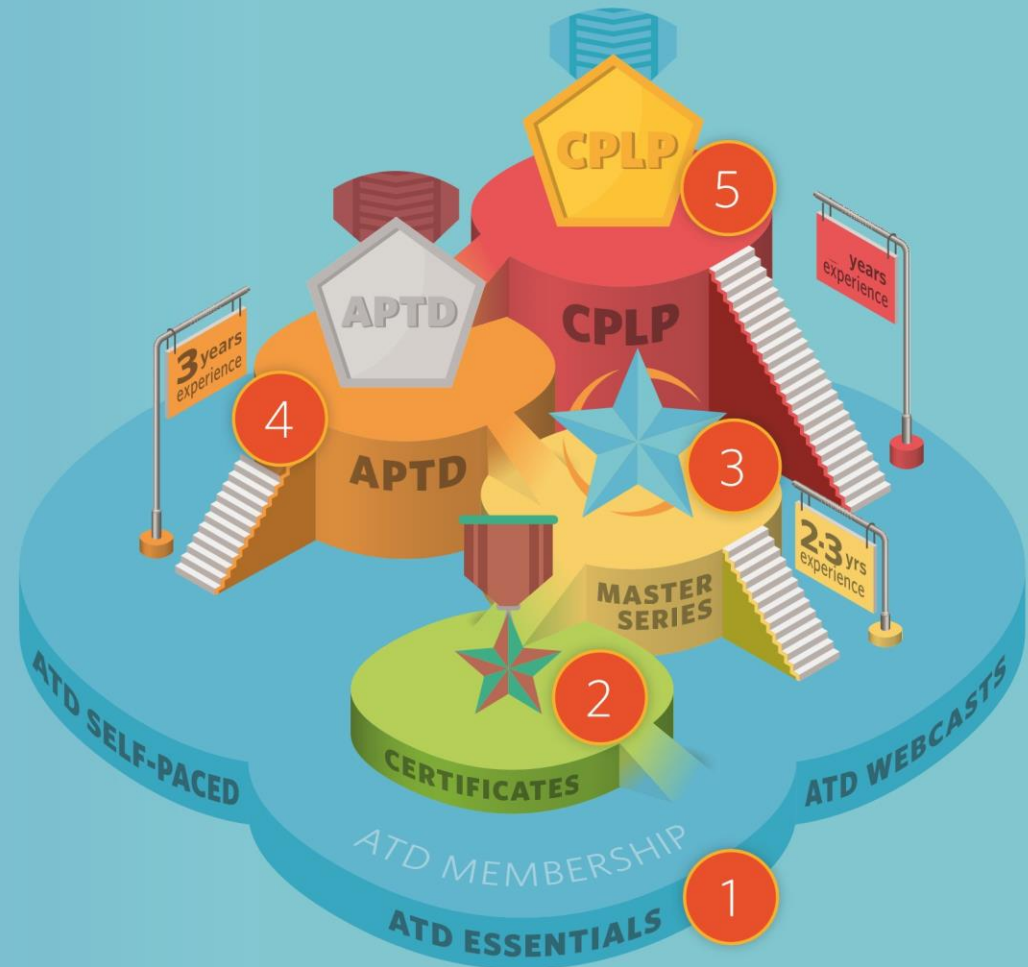
| 855.404.2783 (domestic)
703.372.9504 (international)



ATD's Stackable Framework allows you to map a career growth plan. You can combine your skills and years of experience to find the path that's right for you, saving you time and propelling your career forward.

ATD Stacked Career Development Framework

- 1 TACKLE COMMON CHALLENGES**
Essentials of Writing Impactful Learning Objectives
- 2 EXPAND YOUR SKILLSET**
Instructional Design Certificate
Facilitating Virtual Training
Foundation for Master Series
- 3 VALIDATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE**
ATD Master Trainer
2-3 years experience (recommended)
- 4 GET CERTIFIED — ELEVATE YOUR CREDIBILITY**
Associate Professional in Talent Development (APTD*)
3 years education/experience required
- 5 GET CERTIFIED — DEMONSTRATE EXPERTISE**
Certified Professional in Learning and Performance (CPLP)
5 years education/experience required



Depending on your role within the organization and/or your career aspirations, ATD has a variety of learning opportunities to help you professionalize your skills and continue learning.

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Phone, U.S. Only: 1.800.628.2783

Phone, International: 1.703.683.8100

Email: customercare@td.org

Fax: 1.703.683.1523