

Ideas for Interactive Sessions

★ Tips for making your conference sessions interactive and experiential—even in 75 minutes!

Start with your objectives:

- 1) How are they going to use the content when they return to their jobs?
- 2) How can you help them learn it so they can use it successfully?

Tip: *Remember—getting them involved with the content will help them learn much better than just telling them something.*

The following are simple and easy to use with your content to create a focused discussion:

- Pairs—have learners work with the person next to them
Use for:
 - identifying situations from learners' organizations for application of session content
 - discussing how a particular topic can be applied back on the job
 - Triads and Quads—have learners create small groups of three or four with people immediately in the row in front or behind
Use for:
 - Group problem-solving of a scenario relevant to the content
 - brainstorming
 - Movement—have people get out of their seats and find others across the room or aisle (as space permits)
Use for:
 - Reenergizing the group (particularly after lunch or end of day)
 - Creativity exercises—applying content in new ways with people from different backgrounds and organizations
- ★ Make this fun--Have them group according to hair color, height, or clothing color. Or by function, type of organization, job role, etc.

Tip: *Notice what other speakers do in their sessions to create interaction*

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But don't limit yourself to the above choices. Be creative—try some other options like:

- **Bingo**—create Bingo cards as part of your handout which capture key points in your mini-lecture. Divide the group into teams of two-three players. Have prizes for winners.
Use for:
 - Introducing topics
 - Motivate learners to actively use and apply the content
- **Brain Frame**—create a matrix with vertical and horizontal axis as one page in your handout. Divide the group into teams and give them a topic from your session content to use for creative thinking or problem solving.
Use for:
 - Create multiple options for the topic
 - Use to brainstorm and get people to think outside the box
- **Q & A Cards**—give learners index cards to write questions and pass to the front. Redistribute the cards. Tell learners to get up and move around the room exchanging cards. After 30 seconds ask them to return to their seats.
Use for:
 - Have them ask the question on the new card for you to answer
 - Or have them work in pairs, triads, or quads to answer the questions themselves. Have some groups share with the whole group.



Stories, Music, Theater—these methods bring creativity and interest into your session. Make sure you know how to use them correctly and practice to ensure smooth delivery and transitions between topics. (See Resource List for publications.)

Use for:

- Anchoring specific points
- Energizing the group and the topic
- Motivating learners to retain and apply the content

Tip: *Plan your session to be about 40% mini-lecture (information) and 60% application (group or individual exercises, facilitated discussions, etc.)*

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More ideas to make sessions interactive:



- Interspersed tasks—stop periodically and ask learners to perform a task that requires recall and application of what they heard earlier.
- Active summary—at periodic intervals (or at the end), ask teams to summarize the key learning points by using different combinations of words and pictures.
- Idea sharing—conduct a structured activity to help learners share their experiences, knowledge, and best practices related to your topic.
- Debriefing discussion—conduct an activity that provides a metaphor for a concept, skill, or principle that you are covering. Facilitate a debriefing discussion to encourage learners to reflect and share insights.
- Participant control—permit participants to control the content and sequence of the presentation, when feasible.
- Coaching and feedback—demonstrate a skill to a small group; ask them to teach others through one-on-one coaching.
- Job Aid walk-through—demonstrate the use of the job aid so learners can use it effectively back on the job.

Tip: *The sky is the limit! Engage your creativity. Keep it simple. Trust the process and the learner. Experiment!*

