

Demand for Excellence

How to use subject matter experts who are not great communicators

The Facilitator: Paul Stout

- 23 Year veteran of Construction
- Worked Through The Ranks
 - 5+ Years Estimator
 - 10+ Years Project Mgr
 - 5+ Years Laborer / Operator / Field level Foreman
- Specialized field - General Engineering
- General Manager - Executive level
- 10 yrs - Seminar Developer / Producer / Presenter

2009 AGC National Instructor of the Year

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Great Expectations

- Just because someone has great industry knowledge, doesn't mean that person knows how to share it effectively
- **Learn how to turn technical experts into great teachers**

Challenges

- Common challenges faced by technical and professional development learning programs?
 - Finding and filtering willing instructors
 - Ensuring quality
 - Ensuring consistency
 - Getting and keeping loyal participants (Students)
 - Achieving stellar evaluations
 - Avoiding cancellations
 - Feeding other programs

It is true . . .

- The construction arena produces many willing 'teachers' that are consummate industry professionals
 - They possess a wealth of technical knowledge
 - They bring to your learning environment a strong desire to share their knowledge with others
- The possession of both the technical knowledge base necessary to provide relevant training and acceptable communication and presentation skills are usually very difficult to find within the same individual.

A broken model

- Come one - come all
 - Ambush alert
 - Just show up . . . or at least we hope they do
 - Secondary priorities
 - Interest wanes as training dates approach
 - War stories prevail once in the room
 - Learning objectives missed
 - Participants disappointed
 - Future offerings in jeopardy

The pros and cons of pre-developed programs

PRO

- Well prepared / measured information
- Appropriate real world examples
- The Author has 'built-in' Learning objectives
- The presenter can blend experiences to create a dynamic learning experience
- The delivery can be 'just ok' and participants achieve value because of the quality of the materials

The pros and cons of pre-developed programs

CON

- Reading and interpreting vs. 'fresh from experience' learning
- War stories vs substance
- Battling the author. 'I'm here to prove how much more I know than does the Author'
- Unless a stellar delivery ensues it can come across:
 - detached
 - book report-ish
 - flat

Considering a different model

- The power of facilitation
 - **Great** learning experiences require a carefully crafted combination of:
 - subject matter knowledge
 - clearly defined learning objectives
 - a medium for effective delivery
 - A teamwork approach using a Facilitator *and* a subject matter expert can help ensure success with each of these three requirements

Winning Combinations

- Facilitator and Subject matter experts / presenters collaborate on program outline
- Program is developed and produced by those best suited
- Facilitator:
 - sets the stage
 - 'Interviews' the subject matter experts
 - facilitates the group for the subject matter expert
- Subject matter expert:
 - backs-up the Facilitator / Presenter

Finding willing and acceptable subject matter experts

- Keep a list of potential presenters from ALL interactions
- Ask 'stand-outs' if they are interested
- Explore their great minds
- Ask for a rough outline of topics to cover
- Let them put their signature on it
- Make the match
 - Subject matter
 - Philosophy
 - remuneration
- Don't be afraid to say "we see this moving in a different direction"

How to structure great learning sessions

- Build in:
 - More open forum discussion
 - More contemporary case studies
 - More 'on-the-fly' tailoring
 - More questions answered on purpose
 - interview style introductions of subject matter experts
 - pre-class "Burning Questions"
 - build learning materials around known or perceived questions
 - promise follow-up to answer residual questions
- Avoid mediocrity
- Leave your subject matter expert "spent"

What's missing?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
