



NO

SHORTCUTS

## Don't Shortcut the Learning Process

**Richard T. Cleary, President**

Ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius expressed his belief in the importance of learning from interaction when he wrote, "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do, and I understand."

There are no shortcuts when it comes to being successful, just as there are no shortcuts when it comes to gaining knowledge and understanding.

### Why We Must Get Training Right

The training you offer can distinguish your firm or agency from others, which in turn can help you attract top talent. This is one area in which you just cannot take shortcuts.

According to the [2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey](#), about 8 in 10 millennials say that on-the-job training, continuous professional development and formal training led by employers will be important to help them perform their best. Employer training and support quite obviously help millennials and the Gen Z cohort perform their jobs, and as their careers progress, the role of employer as educator will take on even greater significance.

"You always reap what you sow; there is no shortcut."

—Stephen Covey

The study noted that 73 percent of those who plan to stay with their organizations more than five years say their organizations are strong providers of education and training.

But young professionals are looking for training that goes beyond technical and sales skills. Young professionals are especially seeking help building confidence, interpersonal skills and—particularly for Gen Z—ethics/integrity aptitude. In their view, businesses are insufficiently focusing on nurturing these and similar soft skills. More than one-third of millennials (36 percent) say it is "essential" to a company's long-term success that its employees and leaders have strong

interpersonal skills, but only 26 percent are offered much help or support in developing them. A similar support deficit exists in the areas of confidence/motivation, ethics/integrity, critical thinking and innovation/creativity

Failing to train your team members can be a catalyst

for them to seek out organizations that offer better training. That can be costly to your organization. [Employee Benefit News](#) reported that turnover cost approximately 15,000 per employee who earns an annual salary of \$45,000. That number is much higher for top producers.

## We Retain More Knowledge when We Participate in Training Actively

Edgar Dale, famous for his research on this subject and his "[cone of experience](#)," found that after two weeks, we tend to remember only:

- 10 percent of what we read
- 20 percent of what we hear
- 30 percent of what we see
- 50 percent of what we see and hear
- 70 percent of what we say and write
- 90 percent of what we do

The higher our level of participation, the more information we retain. From a business perspective, higher retention of information translates to a higher ROI on your investment in providing training to your team.



## How to Engage Participants in Learning

This is why it is so important to have participants in any learning course do more than just sit there and listen to what is being presented. Here are some strategies you can ask your instructor to use in an effort to get your team members more involved in their learning:

1. Require participants to complete pre-work before the training.
2. Before the training, if possible, connect with all the participants, probably via email. Ask them what they hope to learn from the session and if there are any specific questions they would like to get answered. This involves them in the training before it even begins.
3. During the training, present the material in several different formats, such as written bullet points with images, video or audio clips, quiz questions and hands-on exercises.
4. Offer different methods of training. Consider off-site, on-site, online self-study and online instructor-led programs.
5. Make it easy for participants to follow along with what is being presented and to take notes, either online or on paper—whichever they prefer.
6. Let participants know what's coming. One effective way to do this for longer training classwork is to use the [50-10-50 module/break format](#). People tend to tune out and get restless if a training module lasts longer than 50 minutes. Let them know you will conduct a 50-minute training session, and then they will get a 10-minute break. Then the next 50-minute session will begin. When participants know ahead of time that the workshop will break at a specific time, it reduces

"Forget about shortcuts. Instead, enjoy the wonders of your path."  
—Paulo Coelho

- their stress and distraction. They likely will need to check their email or return calls.
7. Choose participants randomly during the training to answer questions or offer their perspectives. They will want to be prepared in case they are called on, so they will pay closer attention.
  8. Require participants to complete worksheets, and then collect and review them. If it's not worth instructors' time to *inspect what they expect*, then soon it won't be worth the participants' time to complete the assignments.
  9. Break the participants into groups and ask them to engage in discussions on the topic.
  10. Have the participants write or say how they will translate the information, concepts and techniques they have learned into actionable activities they can use with their clients.
  11. Have your instructor create high-value deliverables that summarize and expand on what the participants have learned. Listing or linking to additional support resources is a valuable way to keep adults engaged long after your training seminar is over. You can offer these deliverables in the form of printed handouts or via an online LMS.
  12. Offer praise when participants offer contributions to the training and when they excel at grasping the concepts and translating them into real-world scenarios.

# MISTAKES

## Mistakes to Avoid in Training

In addition to the above tips for engaging learners in their training, here are some common training mistakes for your trainers and instructors to avoid. Most of these common mistakes boil down to organizations, trainers and/or participants attempting to take shortcuts in the learning process:

### **Mistake #1: Offering training as an afterthought — or not at all.**

o become known as the organization that offers the best and most valuable training, it must be included in your budget. You must devote time, staff and money to training. Otherwise, it's no more than an afterthought, or at best, a one-time event. Ongoing training is the hallmark of dynamic organizations that attract the best talent. Plus, when you train your own team members, you are investing in your own company.

### **Mistake #2: Creating [cognitive overload](#).**

That occurs when too much information is delivered at once. If participants feel overwhelmed, they will be

unable to absorb the concepts you are sharing with them. This is a common occurrence when it comes to new agent/advisor onboarding training, since there is so much information to provide in such a short period of time. Offer classroom training in short segments, and stick with ["bite sized" online training courses](#) or modules that offer learners a small bit of vital information at once. This online coursework can be used as an initial presentation of the subject matter or as a training follow up after a classroom session. Repetition is the key to learning and recall. (This is one of the beneficial features of FSEdNet video training; our hundreds of videos last an average of only 8.5 minutes each.)

### **Mistake #3: Using outdated materials.**

Make sure all your training materials are updated, with current statistics and facts. Participants are likely to lose confidence in the credibility of the information if the information is no longer accurate.

### **Mistake #4: Ignoring differences in learning styles.**

We know people learn by doing. We also know that some people tend to learn better through visual or audio content. Be sure your content isn't just written or spoken; but it contains a blend of written, audio, visual and even [gaming elements](#) in your training materials.

### **Mistake #5: Ignoring generational differences.**

We can't assume that all baby boomers prefer traditional training materials and millennials, or Gen Z prefer online training. A study of 1,000 professionals by Activia Training found that younger employees prefer classroom learning. Thus, when utilizing eLearning the style and design of its format is very important. The best designs are those which replicate a classroom experience, which should contain a blend of live speakers, along with visual enhancements to engage and supplement the learning process. Voiceover PowerPoints scored the lowest when it came to eLearning.

### **Mistake #6: Trying to teach all knowledge levels in one class.**

When possible, tailor your training according to skill level. Veteran agents or advisors who have been selling life insurance for their entire careers obviously don't need an introductory class on life insurance. Assess knowledge levels before deciding which participants should take which training. Also, don't assume people know more or less than they really do.

### **Mistake #7: Leaving out important aspects of the participants' everyday activities.**

Training your agents or advisors in sales and negotiation strategies is essential but be sure to complement that



training with product training and how to manage a practice as well. And, as mentioned earlier, millennials and Gen Z want training in "soft skills." Offer training in a variety of skills.

### **Mistake #8: Failing to follow up.**

The learning shouldn't end the moment the training ends. Training is a *process*, not an *event*. One of the key benefits of eLearning via an LMS, is that the training curriculum is available for a refresher whenever the information is needed. No trainer can design a curriculum to fit every situation or client event at the exact moment needed. So, having the ability to return to a specific training topic at any time is a winning solution. Thus, repetition is the key element to any learning process. Set expectations for post-training follow-up. Ask participants to submit reports three months later, for example, to explain how they have used the training. Schedule a get-together three or six months later, and have participants share their thoughts about the training. Ask participants to write down two or three specific goals for how they will use the training in their professional growth. Check back with them three and six months later to learn about their progress.

### **Mistake #9: Skipping the assessment step.**

Ask participants to fill out an evaluation form before they leave the room or as soon as they sign off the online training platform. Make sure someone compiles the data on these forms to understand what

worked and what could be done better next time. This is extremely important. Training requires a significant investment of your organization's time, money and resources, so it pays to learn what type of impact it's having.

Do not allow anyone involved in the training of your team, or the participants, to take or accept shortcuts! It's human nature to try, but we must form the habit of never accepting any shortcuts in learning or business.

“When the reward is the activity itself—deepening learning, delighting customers, doing one's best—there are no shortcuts.”

—Daniel H. Pink

### **Consider FSEdNet for Advisor, Leader and Staff Training**

An effective resource for training financial advisors is [FSEdNet](#), which features online, on-demand, total video-based training built on four Disciplines of Success with access to more than 600 training sessions. The coursework can be either self-study or facilitator-led, and it complements any firm, agency or company training programs and marketing selling systems. With our mobile application your advisors can access the video training anytime, anywhere, on their computers, smartphones or tablets. It's a cost-effective, time-efficient way to increase productivity, thus retention.

Our three training platforms provide competency-based learning that is ideal for each member of your team: [FSEdNet](#) for advisors and agents, [FSLEdNet](#) for leaders and [FSSEdNet](#) for staff members.

All of our platforms are designed to help all levels of those in the financial services industry enhance their career opportunities by learning and understanding more. Which results in helping them reach their full potential by sharing ideas, concepts, techniques on topics that will help turn potential into reality.