

Cyrus Cooper

brilliant Workshops

How to deliver
effective
workshops to
any audience

Praise for *Brilliant Workshops*

Cyrus has a wealth of experience in designing and delivering learning and development solutions. The key to his success is how he works collaboratively with his clients to truly understand their needs and always having the courage to be himself. This book will help you develop your own training style and enable you to deliver workshops that have a unique personal touch and add value to business.

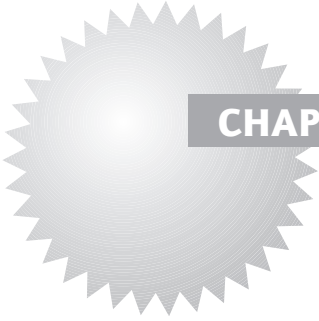
*Elizabeth Crosse, Head of Learning and Development,
Legal Services Commission*

Cyrus Cooper has had an ongoing relationship with Thomson Reuters for a number of years focusing on the training and development of our graduates. His experience of creating and delivering workshops that add value to attendees and drive results is vast, and the results speak for themselves; our graduates come out more secure in themselves, more prepared for working life and with an array of soft skills they can use every day. This book will be an excellent bible for any manager who wishes to develop similar workshop results.

*Elizabeth Pedler, Head of Graduate Programmes, Markets Division,
Thomson Reuters*

Cyrus Cooper connects quickly and effectively with his audiences. Along with excellent content, this provides a powerful platform for brilliant training to occur. In *Brilliant Workshops*, Cyrus shares with the reader many and much of what has made him and can equip you to deliver brilliant workshops of your own.

Ken Buist, Founder of The Trusted Adviser, Author and Speaker



CHAPTER 4

The audience

Know who the audience is. You need to make it your business. Find out as much as you can about them. How do they learn? This can be as a collective or individually. In this chapter you will learn how to identify your potential supporters and your saboteurs, especially if the stakes are high. You need to know what makes them tick and adapt your style accordingly.



People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou

In many ways, your skills, confidence and experience as a facilitator will account for a high percentage of your success. To make success more certain, knowing your audience can give you an added advantage.

Some people find it harder to deliver to people that they know, others find it the opposite. There are positives and negatives to each – they are personal feelings. A good facilitator should take the emotion out of the situation and focus on logical outcomes.

There are various types of learning intervention available to you. We all learn in different ways. Teams and organisations learn in different ways. This is where building rapport with the client is crucial. You need to ascertain what will and will not work and why.

For example, if you are in front of a group of financial accountants, understand the environment they work in, what is important to them and how they approach their work, as well as the ways things are done there. My experience has taught me that to run a day full of extroverted activities, with role plays and high level theory, will not be received as well as a day using practical exercises linked to theory and allowing for reflective thought.

Likewise, with a marketing team, it will generally not be as effective if you include lots of individual working and little in the way of creativity and expression of ideas. Although this is not always the case and we must not stereotype, really get to know your audience, the environment they work in and know what will work for them.

**brilliant tip**

Get to know the language and jargon that the audience use and incorporate it into your design and delivery.

Think about the following.

Who are they?

- Find out who will be there and how many will be there.
- Divide the audience into generic groups or broad categories. This will help in positioning your presentation and give you some idea of their level of knowledge and level of interest in your subject.
- It may not be possible to do more detailed analysis than this, particularly with a large audience. If it is possible, obtain more detailed information about each individual:
 - experience;
 - education;

- job description;
 - attitudes;
 - seniority;
 - role in any organisational politics;
 - work pressures and priorities;
 - attitude to change;
 - level of knowledge;
 - sensitivity to subject, etc.
- Try to identify the decision-makers, and find out how they have reacted to speakers/presentations in the past.

Why are they coming?

- Again, it may be possible to split your audience into broad groups:
 - those who are there to be entertained – ‘the joy riders’;
 - those for whom attendance is compulsory – ‘the captive audience’;
 - those who are interested in the subject – ‘those who **want** to know’;
 - those who need information – ‘those who **need** to know’.
- If your talk has been successful in their terms, what will this mean, i.e. what is ‘successful’ to them?

What do they expect?

- Think through their expectations.
- Find out what interests them.
- Identify how they will benefit from attending.
- Include information which is appropriate to their range of feelings – are they hostile, cynical, worried, enthusiastic?