



iMOTION

iMOTION - Framing Informal Moments (IM) in Trainings

“You can’t have your cake and eat it” – A letter to our clients

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this article,

- **Is targeted towards training bookers and other staff responsible for booking inhouse trainings and organizing courses for team members. Also targeted are said staff’s managers and everyone who shops for external lecturers, training experts etc. to be able to deliver on a company learning strategy.**
- **Sums up our experiences – from the delivery of custom-tailored seminars, trainings and workshops to interacting with clients and learners.**
- **Can inspire and support you to create memorable learning experiences with longer lasting effects and a stronger aim for overall success.**

Dear client.

We are grateful that you picked us to supply your specific training needs. But we would also like to congratulate you on your choice. Because we are passionate about our profession and highly invested in the process of bringing meaningful trainings and sustainable adult education to life. We do not beat around the bush when it comes to sharing our insights and experiences. Thus, we would like to warmly invite you to listen to some of our key findings as adult education experts dealing with clients. Rest assured that we do not rely on our own perspective only, as we are a part of a Europe-wide community of trainers.



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We know our relationship is often boiled down to merely a transaction: You spend money on us to fill a gap or a need you can't provide yourself. But for us it goes way deeper than that. In fact we would like to bring all our methodical knowledge, our best performance and our professionalism to the game. Instead, a substantial number of training jobs do not draw out our full set of abilities. It is our impression that this is due to a lack of knowledge and courage on your side. Dear clients, we want to create overall innovative and creative learning environments TOGETHER with you.

Talking about “learning environments”

Why is it that you always suggest your own meeting rooms be the training venue? If you want your employees to detach from their daily work chores and connect with us and the contents we facilitate:

How come you think this is the right place/space/environment?

We wonder what your thought process is behind that choice – a choice where it seems that immediate costs overrule any other criteria by default. Other than that, is it necessary for the training to happen within your companies' walls? Did you know that there are so called maker spaces in many areas nearby now? A lot of public spaces immersed in beautiful surroundings can often be rented on a day-to-day basis and might serve specific training purposes better than small glass cubicles next to other people's glass offices.

So, why would we ask you to spend money on another venue?

It is quite simple, really. You want the maximum return on your investment. During “in house” sessions your employees (our learners) will be way more distracted and less able to concentrate on the learning contents. A training should not enhance the workload of your employees. They should neither be tempted to write some work-related e-mails nor schedule some work-related tasks whenever they feel they are on a training break. Those breaks are much needed pockets of time during which they should feel free to unwind in any which way they prefer. Those breaks are part of the often untapped potential of informal moments. Training breaks are not held so that unattending colleagues can get in touch with a participant and distract them with work.



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What can be done to prevent unwanted disturbances?

Protect your employees (our learners) by sending them away. It is as simple as that. Your employees will be more likely to learn more and your company will benefit from more competent employees. We – your hired trainers – need our learners (your employees) to be present both in body and mind. That is the only way we all can do a good job. Work distractions result in your employees losing track during a training and might even pick up bad habits and mistakes due to time pressure. The overall gain for you and them will be next to nothing. And guess what: Our training concept and schedule suffers, too, if the learners constantly drift off to work or are on “standby”.

Detachment from the workplace during trainings will enhance long-term effects of the learnings and findings. We strongly recommend, that you seek for those effects.

Talking about “time and agenda”

Again, economical reasonings seem to be at the core of the topic – as much as possible output for as little as humanly possible investment. But please, do not expect us to squeeze too many topics into way too little time. – Trust our feedback! Don’t be fooled – we technically can create a scheduled training monster with content overflow as a default – after all we know our stuff – but our learners (your employees) need time for reflexion and to digest all those new impulses and inputs. Relaxation windows are key for this. Try to remember, that every learning exercise requires introduction time. Sure, we are well aware of the “90 minutes input 15 Minutes break” routine – but we consider it an outdated concept. We would like to rethink it together with you.

So, why don’t you give us the freedom to plan and implement breaks according to the learners needs and our own judgement?

We do not wish to make our learners feel like they are back at school – we deal with grown-ups. This is adult education. Some creative exercises might take 2 hours and some highly complex content might require a break after 45 minutes. We are attentive practitioners of our craft and thus would prefer to be able to



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support a more “g(r)o(w) with the flow” approach in terms of initiating breaks. Be it because an emerging social group situation requires an extraordinary break or because a learner asks for it specifically. We as professionals always calculate buffer times. Meaning: We can adjust the agenda according to the learners actual needs on the day. Also, we do wish the informal to happen in our trainings, for that we need you, dear client, to give us sufficient amounts of time. And another big one: Please respect that we as trainers consider breaks to be on the clock for us. We are always “on” during trainings – particularly during breaks. We observe the needs of our learners and we are there to answer questions, to share experiences, to encourage them or to mediate conflicts.

Successful trainings have a proper beginning and a proper end. Meaning: There is enough time allocated towards adjusting/levelling both the learners’ and our own expectations. And at the end there is enough time to reflect and evaluate. A proper evaluation supports you to understand your employees and their learning needs better. Also, they allow for you to update your training strategies on informed grounds. Time pressure during the evaluation is not to be favoured. Thus we ask you to:

Rethink your training assignment and consider beforehand which content (quantity) you are willing to sacrifice to reach the envisaged learning goals (quality).

...talking about resources one more time...

We will likely ask you for some “extras”. This could be a request to add another trainer in order to be able to perform as a team and share roles or we might ask for a higher number of presentation boards or access to separate rooms for groupwork or retreat spaces for the learners. We might also ask for additional tables for display purposes and materials used during the training as well as during breaks and informal moments in general. In actual fact, we might even calculate a higher lump sum for extra materials than you might be used to. Because we believe in the delivery of learning experiences and not in the delivery of PowerPoint presentations. We use lots of things, slightly unconventional things, such as games, gifts and other media and materials to initiate the learning process. We consider that a necessity to engage (y)our learners and to boost creativity.



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We are always capable to restrict ourselves and downgrade our own expectations, but we encourage you to try something new.

See you at the next training! 😊

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