

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a heavily rusted metal structure, likely part of a bridge or industrial building. The rust is a mix of brown, orange, and dark grey, with some areas showing a blueish-grey patina. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights that emphasize the texture of the corrosion.

Chubb Construction Risk Engineering

Presentation Skills

CHUBB®

Presentation Skills

Conducting the session	3
Characteristics and Skills of an Effective Instructor	3
Avoiding “Stage Fright”	3
Opening	4
Objectives	4
Communication Traps	4
Make the session interactive	4
Ask questions	4
Demonstrate them to teach each other	4
Take a field trip or go on a tour	5
Use the “fishbowl” technique	5
Tell stories	5
Role play	5
Use training games	5
Answering Questions	5
Bridging from Questions to Answers	5
What to do when you don’t know the answer	5
Logistics	6
Ensure comfortable facilities	6
Rules and Enforcement	6
Refreshments	6
Use a timer	6
Provide copies of slides	6
Give out pens/pencils and paper	6
Breaks	6

Preparation

Conduct a “dry run.” Review the materials to be presented to assure that objectives are accomplished.

Present focused materials: avoid fluff unless extra time is available. Organize material into essential and nice to have. This will give you greater confidence, knowing that you are well-prepared.

Don’t plan to be ready “on-time,” instead plan on arriving early. A late trainer has already lost much credibility and respect before even showing up. It gives you time to test audio-video equipment, and greet the trainees as they arrive.

It is important to respect everyone’s time. If you are there and they are there, get started - even if a few of the trainees haven’t arrived yet.

Likely you’ve got some of the usual “housekeeping details” so go ahead and do so. Usually by the time you’re done, the late arrivals will have done so. If not, then they’re way too late to wait anyway, so it’s just as well that you started on time. The trainees who were on time will appreciate it.

Conducting the Session

Basic Guidelines

- *Maintain eye contact.* Speak with authority, confidence, and enthusiasm.
- *Be friendly.* Be professional and kind. Avoid embarrassing the audience. Ask them to make a commitment in your close and have a good time.
- *Be flexible and adaptable.* No one model fits all needs. Adult learners hate a rigid curriculum - they crave flexibility, so be flexible. As much as possible,

let the students (self)-direct the training topics. If they want to discuss something related and you do, they’ll be much more engaged in the training and learning will take place. Encourage questions and participation.

- *Be alert.* Observe body language and facial expressions that indicate that you have said or done something that doesn’t make sense or has offended someone.
- *Smile.* Students will see you as happy to be there, to be answering a question, and to be teaching. Smiles are often “contagious,” too. If the trainees all start smiling too, then the class will go much better.
- *Move around.* Don’t stand stock still seemingly riveted in place, but don’t run helter-skelter all over the place. But to move around the room casually gives the feeling of comfort and casualness, better for comfortable learning as opposed to more typical strictness and lecture. Also, by walking around, it gives the students a change of focus, which can serve to minimize the tendency to nod off, daydream, or “veg out.”

Characteristics and Skills of an Effective Trainer

- *Offering Expertise.* Knowing your topic well enough that a switch in focus requested by learners won’t take you out of your depth.
- *Having Empathy.* Your learners want to know that you value what they have to say and can accept a difference in opinion. They need to see your respect for them.
- *Showing Enthusiasm.* Do you love your topic or can you fake it enough to build enthusiasm for it? Expressing your excitement physically will draw the learner to you and the topic.
- *Demonstrating Clarity.* The most fascinating topic is only as good as how

it is organized and presented. Succinct answers to questions and follow-up of understanding is imperative.

Avoiding “Stage Fright”

Sweaty palms. Shaky voice. Nervous weight-shifting. As you stumble through each sentence of your speech, you’re a wreck from head to foot. Fortunately, you’re not alone -- more than 50 percent of Americans suffer from a fear of public speaking, or glossophobia.

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld, responding to national polls that showed public speaking had beaten out spiders and death as the number one fear among Americans, joked that most people present at a funeral would rather be in the casket than doing the eulogy.

What is it that triggers this common panic? The concern is being evaluated negatively by other people -- fears that they will look stupid, sound unintelligent or boring, that they will make a fool of themselves. Social anxiety is one of the most common psychological difficulties. The nervous system “goes wild” in response to the false danger of speaking in front of a group of people. This “fight or flight” state of panic is actually very normal: it would be more dangerous if this false alarm didn’t go off when there was a real danger, such as if a bear was chasing you.

Almost everyone suffers from nerves. Being nervous can be good, since it causes a body to be stimulated with adrenaline. Without nerves, you’d probably deliver a flat, completely uninspiring presentation.

To manage stage fright, your best tool is preparation. Good planning and practice can significantly reduce your apprehension. Practice several times aloud, pretending you are in front of a

If You/Your	Then
Sweat	Wear light clothes; carry a handkerchief
Have dry mouth	Limit drinks; gently bite your tongue; put your tongue at the top of your mouth and say a silent LLL sound
Hands tremble	Hold your cards; once you've started, they'll calm down!
Throat tightens	Yawn largely; Open your mouth wide until your ears roar
Are breathless	Take deep breaths
Knees shake	Cover them; they'll stop after you get started

group, and use your notes and visual aids. You'll find the more you go over the presentation, the better you deliver it.

Most importantly, remember that good or bad, the session will only last a short time. To keep it in perspective, look past the session and think about what your plans are for the rest of the day or the next day. It wouldn't hurt to schedule a reward for yourself after the session for something to look forward to.

It's also important to remember that your audience truly wants you to succeed. And while a slip of the tongue or a mistake of any kind might seem a big deal to you, it's not very important to your audience. Their assessment will usually be much more lenient than yours.

Opening

Start with a bang or attention-getter

This is all about doing something out of the ordinary. Do something fun, funny, or exciting! It starts the training session off on a good foot and conveys the message, "This trainer is different – more good stuff to come!"

Use an icebreaker

An icebreaker is an activity that relieves that pre-training tension, and it engages the trainees right from the start – always important.

Objectives

Make the object/goal of the training exercise public. Learners need to know why they are spending their time and what some of the expectations are. These should be clear and express what the learner will be able to identify, exhibit, demonstrate or know when the session is complete. Objectives should be active and should never include terms such as "understand." Learners should be able to actively demonstrate their increased knowledge.

If appropriate, have participants set personal objectives initially and at the end, review for attainment. Ask what they want to learn! Adult learners want to and need to be involved in all aspects of their learning including setting the agenda, so do it, involve them.

Communication Traps

If you've ever thought, "The people I dislike are the people that start talking and ...never listen."
...never stop."
...don't know what they're talking about."
...wander all over the place."

Then you've experienced an example of communication traps. There are four common traps.

- **Broken-down Railway** is the trap of getting off the subject.
- **Rocky Mountain Trap** is the trap of

going up and down steep hills making your listeners exhausted as they work to understand your most important points.

- **Roller-coaster Trap** is the trap of talking fast and furious. You hope that break-neck speed will make up for lack of meaningful ideas.
- **Lost in the Desert (or Whirlpool)** is the trap many people in technical or analytical professions fall into. They put fact inside of fact inside of fact inside of fact, until you get lost in the whirlpool of ideas.

To avoid the communication traps, make sure your thoughts are organized before you speak by using logic and structure.

Make the Session Interactive

Ask Questions

By posing a question to the trainees (as opposed to just telling them something) you are prompting and enabling them to more actively participate. The more they are talking, the more engaged they are, and the more learning that takes place.

Tell yourself to not talk and to let them discuss a point. Speak last; let the students contribute first. If you speak first, they might not or it might be what they were going to say. You can always offer a few final words on a subject, put it into perspective, and/or clarify or correct a student's comment. Also, we tend to remember best the last thing said, which will be your words of wisdom.

Demonstrate

Demonstration is a wonderful training tool. Students like to "see" for themselves before they are expected to repeat a task for the first time. In a demonstration, you show the students what to do first. Then, you give the students a turn right afterward. Immediate practice and

repetition help to enforce the skills that were taught.

Get them to Teach Each Other

Students remember, retain, and learn the greatest percentage when they teach. When we prepare a training session and then have to teach it (usually several times) we learn so much more than if we sit in a class about the subject. Isn't that what we want for our students? So get them to help teach. There are those who want to help teach anyway, so put them to work. They will learn better.

Take a Field Trip or Go on a Tour

Students love tours and they can be very instructive when facilitated well. If you're discussing machine guarding, get them up and go out on the floor to look at the machines. If you can't take them around, then ahead of time take some digital photos or video and do a "virtual" tour instead.

Use the Fish Bowl Technique

The fishbowl technique is where a small group has a discussion and the remainder of students gathers around the group and just observe the group (the "fish") and their discussions - no talking. Afterwards the observers then comment on the overall process and specific discussions. This method is great for behavior-based safety, culture, communication, and similar subjects.

Tell Stories and Roll Play

Everyone loves a good story and if it helps to make the point, so much the better. For a story to be effective at teaching it does not have to be real, it just has to instruct.

Use Training Games

Safety games make learning interactive by making the trainee an active participant and making mundane information something enjoyable and memorable. Games can help provide opportunities

for the attendees to collaborate with one another and be social. When your trainees work together, they will use more of their total brain and learning will increase.

It is important with safety training that we help trainees learn to take the information that is presented to them and then have them customize it for their specific needs. For example, in a hazard communication training class, you would not just review a sample MSDS but you would have the trainee:

1. locate the MSDS for a product he or she actually uses on their daily job and
2. ask them to determine which types of personal protective equipment are required when using that chemical and
3. where they would find that personal protective equipment.

Answering Questions

Bridging from Questions to Answers

Researchers say that when answering a question the first five seconds are the most important - when you "bridge" from question to answer. The way you start answering a question shows the following:

- You're listening.
- You want to answer.
- You know what you're talking about.
- You're sincere and honest

Here are a couple of bridging techniques:

Compliment and thank: This is the most obvious bridging technique and a good one if you sound sincere when you use it.

- "That's a good question, and I can best answer it by telling you..."
- "Thanks for asking that question. I know I didn't address it earlier, but I'd like to do so now." Don't overuse this

bridge. If you start every answer with "That's a good question", the annoyed listener might doubt whether you know how to recognize a good question from a bad one.

Acknowledge the Questioner's Viewpoint:

This is a versatile and diplomatic bridging technique that shows you're listening and have respect for the questioner.

- "I appreciate your point of view, and you have some very good reasons, but let me explain my thoughts on that topic..."

You might agree or disagree with the viewpoint. You might add facts that the questioner doesn't know. You might describe viewpoints held by others. The important thing is to acknowledge the viewpoint, not to dismiss it.

When You Don't Know the Answer...

What do you do when you only have 10 seconds to respond, and you are asked a question you don't know the answer to?

Say you don't know

It's ok to say you don't know, but you'll find out – and do so. Worse than not knowing the answer is faking it. It's just plain bad training and wrong to do. Plus you will lose all credibility with the students. Besides, no one can know everything. I like to say, "You don't have to know everything, you just have to know where to find the right answer!" Also, it gives you the opportunity to be sure and to have a follow up contact with a student – a good thing, too.

Redirect the question

This technique is a form of bridging, and in this case it helps to gracefully re-direct the focus to something you can talk about with credibility and comfort

For example, you might be asked the question: “What are the keys to success in the Russian market?” -- and you happen to know nothing about the Russian market!

Rather than say, “I don’t know,” you could bridge to a related, or more general, topic:

- “Our experience with new markets suggests you need three things: First ... Second... Third... -- and I imagine the Russian market is similar.”
- “We don’t have a lot of first-hand knowledge of the Russian market, but our success in China tells us that the key is getting the right partners.”

The key to a “response” is bridging to something you feel confident talking about. You can then decide to give a short reply, or a detailed answer.

When you’re asked a question, ask if others know the answer

Ask the audience; it’s another way to get your listeners involved. Also, if you are going to have to come up with the answer, it’s a good stall tactic.

Logistics

Ensure Comfortable Facilities

Granted this may be out of your control. However, it is worthwhile to do anything practical to make the session environment conducive to learning. This can pay off greatly. Uncomfortable facilities will make it more difficult for trainees to focus on the training or the learning.

Rules and Enforcement

Set appropriate ground rules and enforce them (gently). We all need rules - health and safety rules and training rules. So be clear, firm, and polite. No smoking. Turn cell phones off or to vibrate. If you have to answer it, do it outside the classroom. Ask

any question at any time. One at a time for talking. Show respect.

Refreshments

Food and drink just seem to naturally go with good training. Caution: Once you start to bring something, you’d better keep it up each time thereafter. They will expect it and word will get around. But they’ll be looking forward to your training and that is exactly what you want.

Use a Timer

A timer will help to keep you on time and on task. But why not just check your watch? Checking your watch can appear to trainees that you can’t wait to leave and really don’t want to be there - even if this is a misperception, it is the trainees’ perception. Or ask one of the trainees to help you by letting you know when it is a certain time. The trainee will appreciate being involved and will give the student a reason to pay attention.

Provide Copies of Slides

If you’re projecting words on a screen, some trainees may have difficulty reading them. It is also more important for trainees to pay attention and not spending their time furiously scribbling the words down. If you’re worried that they’ll be reading the handout and not listening to you, don’t worry. It’s likely they prefer to learn by reading as they may be a visual learner and engaged.

Give Out Pens/Pencils and Paper (and Highlighters)

How many times will you have trainees arrive without something to write with and something to write on before you take matters into your own hands? There will always be trainees unprepared for one reason or another. If you want them to be able to write down your words, and their thoughts, help them do it. Highlighting and having available highlighters goes hand in hand.

Breaks

Consideration should also be given to the type of session and how frequently your learners may need breaks. For lectures, a break every 45 to 60 minutes is appropriate. In a more interactive session, breaks can be spaced at 60 to 90 minutes. Breaks allow people to get up and stretch and also for the trainer to answer questions or work with a learner who may need some additional assistance, without addressing them in the general session.

Give frequent, but short breaks

Breaks are an important part of training. We all get tired. That’s where a break comes in, so take one; if not for them, then for you. Get recharged, regroup, evaluate the training so far, get off your feet, and get them onto theirs. You and they will come back with more energy and a better focus. But don’t let the break go too long. More frequent, shorter breaks are better over the course of the day.

Give them 5 minutes if you expect them to take 10 minutes

As a general rule, people take longer to come back from a break than you give them. Otherwise expect they will take longer than you want, so tell them to take less time.

Be available at breaks

Trainers don’t get or take breaks: you are always on. Even on a break you have to be available and it’s a good thing. Students need “private time” to ask you or tell you something. Additional trainer-student interaction is conducive to better classroom relations and facilitating learning.



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