

# Getting the Most from Training

## *Here Are Some Suggestions*



*Attendees listen to an Incident Command Systems workshop given by Barry Wante*

Most people attend training for new knowledge and skills. Sometimes they want to expand on what they know, or to refresh themselves on a topic. Training also provides an opportunity to network with others in the same or related fields. Whatever the purpose, they expect to be able to do their job better, and to advance in their careers.

What people learn depends on the quality of the training. Perhaps even more important, it also depends on the learners' preparation, participation, and application. This article suggests ways to get the most out of training.

### **Selecting Training**

Above all else, people should define training topics based on their need for knowledge. For many topics, there are often a number of training options. For some, options are limited, and for a few topics training must be developed. Managers must often search for the options. The search is easier if they get on training providers' mailing lists. Web searches might reveal possible training possibilities.

After finding a training provider, managers should ensure the training will fulfill their need. If necessary, they should contact the provider and ask specifically what will be covered. People often contact the UNH T2 Center with specific questions about courses. They can also ask others who have attended a course.

### **Have a Training Purpose**

Before attending a session, learners should have a clear purpose. It should be based on the training need defined above, and in terms of "learning outcomes." That is, learners should know what they want to learn, and how they might apply it in their job. The clearer they are about learning outcomes, the more likely they will learn what they want. In other words, knowing learning outcomes creates more active, and satisfied, learners.

If a boss requests a learner to attend training, he or she should understand the boss's expectations. The learner can ask, "How do you expect me to use what I have earned?"

### **Involving the Boss**

Many municipal officials require approval for training. Before requesting approval, learners should list the training benefits for the department. After the training, learners should meet with superiors to discuss what was taught. Such discussions also reinforce learning.

### **While You Are There**

It is the instructor's responsibility to clearly present material. Learners should hold instructors to that responsibility. They should help by asking questions. Moreover, questions help learners fulfill their learning purpose.

Some learners hesitate to ask questions. They should remember that, if they do not understand something, others probably do not either. Asking questions can generate discussion and benefit other learners. Of course, learners can speak with the trainer during breaks.

Learners should take notes during the workshop. No one can remember everything that is said. Notes are useful for later reference. They are also another way to learn the material. Notes are especially important for ideas about application of the material.

During breaks, learners should organize the handouts and their notes. They also try to discuss the material with other learners.

*continued on page 11*

## Milestones:

*Boscawen* has joined Mutual Aid.

*Alex Cote* is the new Road Agent in Deerfield.

*Martha Drukker*, City of Concord, has joined the UNH T2 Advisory Committee as a representative of the New Hampshire Public Works Municipal Engineers Association.



*Richard Petell*, Highway Superintendent in Gilford died after a brief illness on July 6, 2003

## Websites:

UNH T2 Center: <http://www.t2.unh.edu>

Construction Work.com field manual provides practical tools <http://www.constructionwork.com/>

Forest Applications Training, Inc., newsletter and training issues. See Tim's Tips for practical information. <http://www.forestapps.com>

ITE Neighborhood Traffic Control Manual  
<http://www.ite.org/traffic/documents/tcir0365.htm>

NH Municipal Websites  
<http://webster.state.nh.us/municipal/index.html#h>

NH General Court, see what bills are being reviewed. <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/ie/>

PSNH Contractor information  
<http://www.psnh.com/Business/Contractor/building.asp>

Short-cut keys for Microsoft  
<http://www.assistu.com/archive/view/20000215>

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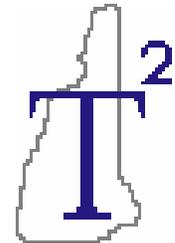
## After The Session

The following will help learners retain what is taught.

- As soon as possible after the workshop, go over handouts and notes. Make additional notes to help organize ideas.
- Discuss what was taught with superiors and co-workers. This review reinforces learning, and benefits the department.
- Apply what is learned as soon as possible.
- Periodically review the course materials and notes.

These suggestions will help learners get more out of workshops. They will benefit learners, others, and the municipality. It also helps ensure approval of future training requests.

Adapted from Bacal, Robert, "Going to Training? Here's Some Hints". *TTS Quarterly*, South Carolina Transportation Technology Transfer Service, 1-2, Summer 2003



### PW.NET

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