



TIPS, TOOLS & INTELLIGENCE
FOR DEVELOPING TALENT

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JOB AID COLLECTION

10 TOOLS TO HELP ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS



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LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

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In the introduction to her book, *The Art and Science of Training*, Elaine Biech explains, “Although development strategies should clearly be based on sound science and research, knowing when to use them and with whom is more of an art.”

So how do you know which strategies to use to fully engage your learners?

The tools and templates in this job aid collection offer guidance by helping you figure out just who your learners are and what their preferred learning format is.

The initial job aid, “Learning Program Vision Questionnaire,” provides a series of questions to help you craft a vision for your L&D program. Questions include: Who is the program intended for (audience types)? When we look back on the program years from now, what stories will people tell about it? and What’s most exciting about the possibilities for the program?

Malcolm Knowles’s third principle of adult learning states that adults are most interested in learning something that has immediate relevance to their professional or personal life. Trainers can gain insight into what these things are likely to include by asking questions about their learners, specifically the primary learner persona. Among these, What is the PLP’s educational background? What is the PLP’s preferred learning medium? and How open to change is the PLP?

“Am I creating sensory or cognitive overload?” That is one question Jonathan Halls suggests L&D pros ask of themselves. In the “Sandpit Learning” job aid, Halls reminds us how much fun children have while playing and asks, “Why can’t corporate training be as much fun?” He offers tips that will get trainers closer to that fun point.

Biech reminds us of the importance of knowing what strategy to use. The “Checklist: Using Stories and Analogies for Specific Purposes” provides examples of stories to use in various types of learning, from new hire orientation, to making novel concepts more understandable, to coaching. The next job aid, “Analogy-Building Exercises,” gives trainers additional insight into storytelling.

Have you considered using a “day in the life” exercise to boost on-the-job training? “Tips for Using Creative Facilitation Techniques” outlines several similar innovative possibilities for training,

all the way from one-on-one instruction to the large classroom setting.

A prepared trainer will be greatly noticed—and appreciated—by learners. The “Assessment: Effective Classroom Training” is an easy-to-use checklist. Did you use appropriate humor? Did you provide positive reinforcement after participant responses? Did you walk around during the session? Similarly, the “Stand-Up Training Preparation Checklist” offers pointers—everything from considering food breaks to identifying a list of benefits to learners.

The final two job aids take us beyond the traditional classroom to virtual classrooms and bite-sized learning. What is an appropriate application for the polling function or for breakout rooms in virtual training, for example? And before you attempt to make the move to microlearning, know the answer to the following questions and more that are in the “Is Microlearning the Right Choice?” job aid: Are your learners open to working on their own time? Is the knowledge you’re teaching practical, relevant, and actionable?

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LEARNING PROGRAM VISION QUESTIONNAIRE

Use any of these questions with your team to begin the process of crafting a vision for your learning program. These items also can be adapted to ask stakeholders as part of a needs assessment process.

1. Why are we doing this (program purpose)?
2. When we look back on the program years from now, what stories will people tell about it?
3. What do we want the program to be known for, specifically?
4. How will we know it's successful?
5. What's the impact we want the program to have on the organization's employees, customers, and business?
6. Who is the program intended for (audience types)?
7. How far into the future do we foresee this vision being relevant?
8. What are the major goals of the program?
9. Given unlimited time and resources, what would we include in the program?
10. How does the program tie into the organization's vision, mission, and values?
11. What will we not compromise on to ensure the best program possible?
12. What's most exciting about the possibilities for the program?
13. What are we missing?

PRIMARY LEARNER PERSONA (PLP) QUESTIONS

While not intended to be exhaustive, here are a few categories of questions that may be useful as you and your project team create your primary learner persona.

Demographics of the PLP

- What is the PLP's name, age, race, and gender?
- What is the PLP's primary language?
- What is the PLP's educational background?
- What is the PLP's marital status?

Professional

- How long has the PLP been with the company?
- How often will the PLP apply what he has learned in the course?
- Has the PLP taken e-learning courses before?
- What type of computer does the PLP typically use?

Relevant Job-Related Information

- What other skills and abilities does the PLP have?
- How open to change is the PLP?
- Who does the PLP interact with daily?
- How far does the PLP commute to work?

Course-Related Questions

- How much training and experience does the PLP have with this topic?
- How does the PLP use social media?
- What other types of professional development does the PLP do?
- What is the PLP's preferred learning medium?

Personal Information

- Who would play the PLP in a movie about her life?
- What bad habit is the PLP trying to give up?
- What is the PLP's biggest pet peeve?

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