

Keith and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Start to a Training

Transactions
↳ Experiences

Primary Goal of the Skit

Creating an awful initial experience for the attendees of your client experience training...and use their own reactions, perceptions, and feelings to discuss the impact on their experience and what we could have done to make it better. By creating negative feelings and inducing anxiety for the coming hour of training (how bad is this going to be?!...I should have stayed at my desk...!) you demonstrate how our actions in the moment drive the experience. No matter how much planning and for thought went into it...the delivery will drive the immediate experience.

Begin in the minutes leading up to the training – as people begin to arrive. This works best if the actor is someone everyone knows in a different light – someone friendly who is known to deliver quality, engaging training – people will be wondering “what’s wrong?”

Things you can do to create this negative situation:

- Be frantically trying to get set-up – clearly not ready in time. Body language and sounds help – exasperated sighs, walking quickly, ignoring people. If someone asks if they can help – just respond shortly ‘no, I’ve got it!’
- Have the room only partially set-up - lights not on in the room, not enough chairs out & leave the chairs stacked “get your own chair”, have tables not set in the right place...ask early attenders to help set-up the room
- Feign IT issues – possibly a TV not coming on, Zoom issues, slide issues, wrong presentation
- Have snacks on the tables – but make them horrible snacks...candy no one likes (think Circus Peanuts)...or vegetables, saltine crackers
- If you usually play background music as people arrive, choose horrible music, maybe slow or weird
- Spill something as you are trying to frantically get set-up – not something messy – but like a container of pens or a stack of napkins
- Maybe dress poorly – inappropriately for the event, stain or wet spot on your shirt
- After or just before starting, have an accomplice call your phone (unmuted) and urgently take the call...as you walk out begin talking to the caller “Doctor, thanks for calling me back...” this induces anxiety on behalf of the others...concern for your health
- As you get started, have the initial slides contain typos or default text blocks or use ugly, fonts and colors. Think like a 5th grade speech.
- Have a slide that is a huge block of small text about your topic - turn and read directly word for word from the slide in a monotone voice – read rapidly – as if you are just trying to get through this stupid thing with no emotion or excitement

SHIFT: In a few minutes have the other presenter – kind of rudely from the back of the room – stop you in the middle of something – call you out “what in the heck is going on? What are you doing? This isn’t acceptable – you have a room full of people and this is just a MESS!” You can begin to reply with excuses...continuing in your role...then the person calling you out turns to the audience and says “AND CUT!” and asks the group to give you a hand for your acting abilities (or lack thereof!)

Follow-Up Discussion

As with any skit, the impact is in the follow-up facilitated discussion. Remember: your job as a facilitator is to get as many people as possible to have a voice in the conversation. Use their comments and insights to lead your discussion. Also, you must learn to be OK with silence. Ask for responses...then wait. Awkwardly. For as long as it takes. ☺ It is important to talk about how it felt and how it created negative expectations for the coming hour. Suggested prompting questions:

What did you observe?

How did overhearing the phone call make you feel?

What were you feeling?

Did you dread the coming hour?

What was your initial reaction?

Did any of you comment or exchange looks? Perhaps expressing how awful this was going to be?

Who arrived early? What did you see and how did it feel?

