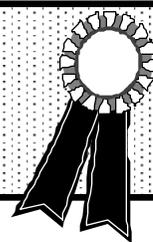


SkillsPlus International Inc.

Training Tips



Are Ice Breakers 1 Big Waste of Time?

Training new employees, especially those who have never been associated with the pharmaceutical or medical device industries are one of the biggest challenges for GMP Trainers. What makes it such a challenge is frequently the lack of any reference to what these regulations really mean. To help create understanding and interest link the GMP concept to other more commonly shared life experiences. We call this teaching aid, an analogy. This helps to trigger the ah-ha experience of understanding the regulations, and stimulates interest in the topic.

Get To Know You Class – For A Reason

To determine what topics to use for an analogy we must get to know the students in our class. For those who training the same group of employees regularly you will most likely know many of the attendees in your class. You will also most likely know their interests. Not knowing the participants in a class makes this a little more difficult, but not impossible.

The Ice Breaker

Often seen as a big waste of time, the ice-breaker gives the instructor ample material to work into an analogy. The very simple game of asking each attendee to share with the class their name and their prior work experience gives you the common frame of reference you need for great analogies. As each attendee shares their background with the class, remember as many of the backgrounds and experiences as you can. It is acceptable to take brief notes. Do not worry about who said what, just remember the essential details, like someone worked in a paint store before coming to work for you.

Working the Ice-Breaker to Teach

How is a paint store attendants job like working in the pharmaceutical industry? Both must use approved raw materials, both must sell it in a packaged form. The paint store worker may need to blend material. The paint store clerk may need to deal with customer complaints. The list could go on for days. With all of this data I can now create on-the-spot analogies to teach essential concepts. Like this one.

“Who worked in the paint store?” You ask the group.

The attendee, who did will usually say, “I did.”

“Great!” Is your immediate response.

“Did you ever mix paint for a customer?” You ask, knowing he or someone there probably did.

“Yes.” We really hope Robert answers.

“How do you know how to mix a custom color for the customer?” You ask.

“The formula is on the color card.” Robert takes pride in being able to answer.

“Yes the color card usually does have the correct formula on it for mixing that particular color.” You say summarizing and restating what Robert already said. Repetition is good.

“What happens if you change the amount of one of the colors you add to the paint?” You ask knowing very well that the customer is unhappy because they will get the wrong color when the paint dries.

“You get the wrong color and or the customer complains because their living room will be the wrong color when they paint it.” Robert adds all this proud to be the in class expert on the subject of paint.

“And they can really complain when it’s wrong. Well, that is just what happens here when we do not follow our color card equivalent. In our business we call our color card, a procedure or in some cases a batch record. If we do not follow our procedure we will most likely produce product that is not what we wanted. When that happens we can not even ship the product out the door.” Touchdown! They will get the point.

**For more information call:
(415) 487-3500**

Not only did they learn a little more about the value of procedures, during the entire discussion, just about everyone in the class will be following every word, because you have create a real human interaction for the to watch and learn.

About Allan Dewes, MA

Allan Dewes is the President of Skills*Plus* International Inc. Allan possesses over 20 years experience in identifying training needs and designing training programs. He is known for designing user friendly programs and conducting highly interactive sessions that teach concepts easily and playfully.

Allan is the author of the extremely popular *GMP Trainer's Survival Kit*, and the *Supervisory Training Talks*.

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