

HOW TO...

DESIGN A WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Creating a great workshop outline is an essential skill of any training professional – internal or independent. The outline is what allows you to sell your concept to key stakeholders. It's what you use to start generating interest in an event. It's what potential delegates will want to see before they decide whether or not to enroll. It's also what guides your design process.

For me, a great outline should be a 1-page document (unless you are outlining a multi-day programme). It should include enough information to allow people to make a decision about the value of your course, but not be so detailed that's it is restrictive or doesn't allow for the development of ideas. Of course, if you are independent, the outline should be detailed enough to persuade a potential client (or delegate) to buy the course, but not so detailed that you give away ALL of your ideas.

Here's how I do it...

1. **Start with the title** - It sounds almost trivial, but what you call your workshop is important in gaining interest from the reader. Use active words where possible: "Improving your Productivity" sounds much more appealing than "Planning and Organising" – even if they will cover the same things.
2. **Summarise it in one sentence** - Describe what your workshop is all about in one sentence if you can. If not, a VERY short paragraph. Try to focus on how people will benefit from it, rather than what will be covered.
3. **Be clear about the duration** - You may be able to use terms such as '1-day' if you are designing a course to be run internally, but otherwise be precise: "7 hours which includes 30 minutes for lunch". People need to know that they can make the logistics work.
4. **State the objectives** - List the objectives that people will achieve by attending the workshop.
5. **Describe any pre or post course work** - You don't need to explain it in detail – just state whether there is any and give an indication of what it will be (e.g. reading, watching YouTube Videos and completing self-analysis questionnaires). It's a good idea to state how long it will take and any requirements needed for delegates to complete it.
6. **Summarise the content** - Stakeholders will want to know what's going to be covered (in broad terms) and you can then use this as a guide when you design the workshop in detail.
7. **Indicate HOW the content will be covered** - You don't need to explain it in detail – you can simply indicate whether it is input, discussion, case study, group exercise etc. This isn't always necessary, but some stakeholders appreciate this extra layer of information.
8. **Link to any accreditations** - If your workshop links to a qualification or is accredited in any way, state it clearly. Again, this can help persuade people to choose your workshop over another.

Here's an example of one of my Outlines...

Module 1: Managing Yourself

Objectives		Duration: 9:30 – 4:30
<p>This Module is about understanding personal strengths and weaknesses in relation to the demands of a management role. By completing this module, delegates will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the main skills and behaviours of a good manager • Identify the core tasks of effective managers • Recognise their impact on others • Explain their own personal strengths and potential weaknesses in terms of managing a team/section/centre • Take action to make a positive difference in their own area <p>The content and structure of the workshop is described below.</p>		<p>Pre-Course Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Analysis Questionnaire • Identification of duties of a manager
Welcome and Objectives	<i>Delegates are taken through the agenda for the day and an ice-breaker exercise is run</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer input • Individual contributions
What Makes a Manager?	<i>Delegates explore the characteristics of good managers to identify that more is down to attitude and behaviour than knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group exercise (using picture cards)
What Good managers DO?	<p><i>Identification of what the role involves</i></p> <p><i>Introduction to the ACL model</i></p> <p><i>Analysis of how the balance is in THEIR area and where it ought to be (Dangers of working too much in one circle)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-it note group exercise • Trainer Input • Group discussion • Case studies
Managing a Team/Centre	<p><i>Introduction to the Management Cycle</i></p> <p><i>Identifying what tasks fit where</i></p> <p><i>SWOT analysis of own area</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer input • Group work
YOUR skills as a manager	<p><i>Recognising your impact on others (Johari Window)</i></p> <p><i>Analysis of strengths and how these should be developed and used in their role</i></p> <p><i>Exploration of the effects of 'overdone' strengths, and how this can be managed</i></p> <p><i>Personal SWOT analysis</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer input • Individual/pairs work • Group discussion
Taking the Lead	<p><i>Identifying opportunities to put into practice NOW</i></p> <p><i>Drawing up a detailed action plan for something specific that will be carried out BEFORE the next workshop</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual/pairs work • Coaching
<p>Post-Workshop Assignment</p> <p>Specific activities to test understanding will be included in the workbook. These activities will take approximately 2 hours to complete.</p> <p>Delegates would be expected to agree and implement specific actions with their Manager to illustrate application of learning. This will be discussed briefly at the next workshop.</p>		