



Training on a Shoestring Budget

By Robert C. Harris, CAE

Small chambers have limited time and money for staff training though education is critical for good member service and effective management. Here are tips for training inside the small chamber.

1. **Job Shadowing**—Have staff learn from each other. Whether you ask the meeting planner to shadow the bookkeeper or the lobbyist, walking in the other person's shoes for a few hours helps staff relate and interface.
2. **Lunch Series**—Have each staff member prepare a 30-minute presentation on their job responsibilities and priorities. Hold the training lunch once a week until every staff member has made a presentation.
3. **Pop Quiz**—Not exactly a pop quiz, but a page of the most often asked chamber questions. Distribute it and discuss at a staff meeting. Pull it out six months later and see who has forgotten the answers to critical questions.
4. **Cross Training**—Cross train staff to ensure that if one person is out sick

or departs others will know enough to be able to continue. Job sharing and rotation has the same benefit. By sharing phone answering, for example, staff learn answers to the most common queries.

5. **Online Education**—Online education saves expenses associated with travel.
6. **Peer Advice and Support**—Visit the ACCE website and log onto the message boards to ask peers questions.
7. **Community College**—Check with local colleges for courses on practical topics such as budgeting, computers and writing skills.
8. **Documentation**—Use the association operating manual, policy manual, board orientation manual and employee handbook as study guides.
9. **Local Seminars**—Check the offerings of your local businesses, Society for Human Resource Management, etc. ☐

Robert C. Harris, CAE, offers leadership training and strategic planning. You can

STAFF POP QUIZ

Use a pop quiz to find out what staff know (or don't know.) Tailor it to your organization—pulling it out every six months to be certain everyone has the answers to the most frequently asked questions.

1. If a member of the press asks for a copy of our mission statement, where is the best copy filed for public distribution?
2. Name the officer positions and office holders composing the executive committee.
3. What's the most requested member benefit, and how do we most effectively respond to members asking for the information?
4. Identify by name, key contact, and phone number the three organizations to which we most frequently refer callers.
5. Identify the past chairmen for the past three years.
6. If someone asks you for our federal IRS tax return, what procedures should you follow?
7. What are the Chamber's three most commonly requested membership benefits?

Create your own staff pop-quiz to discuss periodically. The goal is not to have any person fail the quiz, but rather to be sure all staff members have a solid knowledge of the critical information.

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