

Take Charge of Your Learning

By Rebecca Morgan, CSP, CMC

Have you ever attended a training session that didn't meet your needs? Perhaps you didn't want to make waves during the session, so you didn't speak up. But on the evaluation, you made it known that you were disappointed.

This is not fair—

- To you: You've wasted your time, perhaps your money, and you didn't get new information or skills to perform your job more competently because you didn't get your needs met.
- To the instructor: S/he doesn't have an opportunity to make any course corrections to address your needs.
- To your manager: S/he released you to take the training, and perhaps paid a registration fee, and expected your performance to increase as a result.
- To others: Perhaps others were turned away because the course was full.

Here's how to make sure you'll get more of your needs met:

1. Ahead of time, study the course description and outline. If you're not certain your needs will be met, call or email the instructor to ask if your issue(s) will be addressed.
2. Determine how much of the training will focus on your needs. If your areas are only addressed in one hour of the day, perhaps you'd be better off listening to an audio tape, taking a brief online course, or even reading a book on the topic. That will allow you to focus on your specific area(s).
3. Once in the session, if you have a concern, talk to the instructor before the session begins or at the break. Don't wait until the end to say you didn't get your needs met. Take responsibility to get what you came for.
4. If your needs are beyond the parameters of the course or expertise of the instructor, ask for other resources. Ask the instructor what other courses would cover your needs. What books would s/he recommend on this topic?

Bottom line: take responsibility for your own learning. When you take responsibility, you can make this a positive experience and get your needs met.

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