Dramatic telephone skills!

Drama-based learning
There are many hugely successful, long running West End shows which continue to impress their audiences for years and even decades. But where does the success start? The cast learn their lines and then rehearse their roles, receiving feedback from the director until every aspect of the production is perfect. In business the rules are the same. Learn, practise and perform! Give your staff the same opportunity and you’ll be amazed at the results they achieve on their first night and on every other performance.

Drama-based learning brings theory to life and engages your people on an emotional level, which means that what goes in, stays in. Emotional engagement is one of the key components in achieving successful, long-term behavioural change. With a high level of interactivity, the sessions are delivered using visual, audio and kinaesthetic techniques, ensuring that the learning points are absorbed, practised and committed to memory. This methodology is exciting, entertaining and very effective. Participants learn the theory and put it into practice, taking ownership of their own development.

Every session is tailored to the needs of your organisation, with participants gaining valuable insight and feedback from those around them. This is a highly practical, skills-based day, injected with humour and fun throughout the day.

Dramatic telephone skills
Effective use of the telephone is a highly appropriate topic for the drama-based training approach. This programme makes full use of an expert trainer working alongside two actor/facilitators to deliver a very interactive, fun, high energy day. It is carefully structured to ensure an optimum balance between theory and practice – between listening, watching and doing.

Learning objectives
This unique programme will help your people:
• Develop an increased awareness of the way in which the medium affects the message – how quality of voice and the dynamics of telephone calls affect communication and understanding
• Reveal and sharpen their sensory skills, enabling them to accurately ‘read’ customers over the phone and adapt their behaviour accordingly
• Understand and apply a model appropriate to all telephone calls
• Improve their listening and questioning skills to help them achieve the objectives of their calls (whether inward- or outward-bound)
• Learn through practice, practice, practice!

Audience
All staff who have to deal with people on the telephone – whether those people are customers or colleagues, whether those calls are inward- or outward-bound, whether their responsibilities are in sales, customer service or other functions.

Format
The workshop combines a series of drama-based telephone communication exercises, with powerful forum theatre technique and one-to-one skills practice sessions with every participant.

To ensure an appropriate level of interaction, the programme is limited to 12 participants.

With your organization’s own language and examples injected into the day, participants will be challenged to perform and find a gold standard level of telephone performance.
Special features
This programme can be tailored to your specific requirements. The dramatic scenarios will all be specially adapted to you anyway, but the programme can also be given a slant toward, eg, sales or customer service, inward- or outward-bound calls as appropriate.

The programme can also be run in a half-day format, twice on the same day. In that way, you put up to 24 people through a uniquely effective and enjoyable learning experience that is guaranteed to improve their performance.

The expert trainer and actors
Cyrus is an exceptional trainer, facilitator and coach. He specialises in helping managers to focus on their role and responsibilities with the aim of getting great results with the people they manage. He has helped organisations in both the public and private sectors to increase their performance through a range of interventions covering leadership challenges, motivational management and corporate and executive 1:1 coaching. Formerly an internal learning and development consultant to the Ministry of Justice, his achievements there ranged from a major business process re-engineering (BPR) project to designing performance management systems and competency frameworks for over 12,000 staff and creating a range of management programmes for middle / senior civil servants that are still being run to this day.

Cyrus is passionate about coaching as well as training, and has recently developed an organisational-wide coaching programme for the Big Lottery Fund. He currently works with Thomson Reuters graduates on a global graduate scheme, delivering a week of self-discovery, supported by the FACET5 profiling tool. His other current / recent clients include the BBC, 3M, Accenture, Inter Hannover, Legoland, Merlin Entertainments, Mouchel, Phytopharm, Office of the Public Guardian, The Gap Partnership, Central Bedfordshire Council, Finsbury Foods, Lancashire Group, RED Consulting, Gala Coral, De Lage Landen, the Methodist Church, Shaw Trust and the Housing Solutions Group, to name but a few. Whether delivering a one-off workshop or designing an innovative management development programme, Cyrus delivers with understanding, enthusiasm and passion, and truly believes that learning is about creation, not consumption.

Cyrus’s academic and professional qualifications include a Masters Degree in Management Practice, MBTI accredited, SDI accredited, Facet5 accredited, DiSC accredited, Diploma in Executive and Corporate Coaching, Diploma in Business Coaching, Diploma in Business Excellence (EFQM), NVQ Assessor, etc. Cyrus is enthusiastic and practical in his approach, with tools and methodologies explained clearly. His strong facilitation skills and focus on his audience create a powerful learning experience and the response from individual participants is invariably appreciative, as the following comments show:

‘Cyrus was fab – as usual.’   ‘Building a Customer Mentality’ course participant, Inter-Hannover

‘This session was exceptionally brilliant. The trainer drew me out of my shell.’
Graduate Development Workshop participant, Mouchel

‘We used Maximum Performance to design and deliver leadership skills for our people managers at LEGOLAND Windsor. We were pleased with the structured approach which provided a parallel process to our Team Leader training activities. Maximum Performance also helped incorporate some new training techniques we wanted to try such as Forum Theatre. This part of the session was fun and energetic. It provided a powerful and memorable alternative to role play with excellent feedback from our managers.’
Head of Learning & Development, Legoland

Stephen and his team of drama-based learning specialists have been delivering highly successful, hands-on, practical presentation and personal impact training solutions for the past six years. With a combined experience of over 50 years’ in theatre-style training, Stephen and his team can help you to overcome the challenges associated with standing up and speaking in front of others, resulting in a highly polished professional presentation using drama inspired techniques. Stephen’s clients include, among others, Boston Borough Council, Camden Council, Kent County Council, EBP, Oxford University, Westminster Council, British Telecom, Legoland Windsor, Nutricia, Sodexo Jeans for Genes, Vizards Tweedie, Biz Unlimited and Vodafone.
‘For a presentation on social enterprises, I came to Steve for help and advice. He helped me communicate in a relaxed and natural way, giving me the confidence to face my audience and engage them by expressing my style and personality.’

Lynne Brooke, Partner, Vizards Tweedie Law Firm

‘Stephen listens to our needs and delivers professional and engaging work. He sees the opportunity to inject the learning with fun and humour. We feel Stephen gives us the edge when developing our people.’

Mary Tobin, Repairs Contact Centre Manager, Camden Council

Workshop outline

1 Curtain up!
   • Welcome to the programme
   • Aims and objectives
   • Learning diary / action plan

2 The warm-up
   • Exploring how you sound on the phone:
     - Voice
     - Breath
     - Pitch
     - Tone
     - Pace
     - Power

3 Previews
   • Understanding the dynamics of telephone calls
   • The medium and the message – how the way you sound affects how people understand you
   • Introducing the call control model
     - Opening
     - Message (yours or theirs)
     - Response
     - Close

4 Communicating with your audience – the call control model
   • Opening
     - Greetings
     - Names
     - Establishing rapport
   • Message
     - Differences between inward- and outward-bound calls
     - Questioning
     - Listening
     - Testing understanding
   • Response
     - Discussing options
     - Agreeing solution / action
     - Providing information
     - Managing expectations
   • Close
     - Summarise
     - Confirm details / next actions
     - Thank / names

5 The second night blues – handling challenging calls
   • We love problems!
   • Making it G..Great FUN!
• Entertaining Forum Theatre sketch presenting a typical example of a challenging call. Participants watch and then dissect the action, challenging the characters to remould the scene into a successful customer-focused outcome.

6 The dress rehearsal – review of morning (5 mins)
• Review of key points
• Learning diary / action plan

7 An award-winning show, Act 1
• Participants put learning in to practice with one-to-one role-plays
• Each scenario followed by feedback, relating to:
  – Listening skills
  – Use of open questions
  – Use of silence
  – Body language (yes, even on the phone!)
  – Vocal tone
  – Solutions based content

8 An award-winning show, Act 2

9 The curtain call
• Group discussion
• Key learning points

© Actor Based Training