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# Training FOR DUMMIES®

**Elaine Biech**

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# ***Training For Dummies***

**by Elaine Biech**



WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

## **Training For Dummies®**

Published by

**Wiley Publishing, Inc.**

111 River St.

Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

[www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

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Indianapolis, Indiana

Published by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2005921606

ISBN: 978-0-7645-5985-3

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7

10/RQ/QT/QV/IN



# About the Author

**Elaine Biech** has been in the training and consulting field for more than a quarter of a century. She is president of ebb associates inc, an organization development and custom training design firm that helps organizations work through large-scale change. Known as the trainer's trainer, Elaine has been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Management Update*, and *Fortune Magazine*. She is the author and editor of dozens of books, including *Marketing Your Consulting Services*, *The Business of Consulting*, and *The ASTD Sourcebook: Creativity and Innovation*.

An active American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) member, Elaine served on the National ASTD Board of Directors, initiated Consultant's Day at ASTD's International Conference and Expo, and writes ASTD's "Ask an Expert" Column. She is a past member of the ISA Board of Directors and currently serves on the Advisory Council for the Independent Consultants Association. Elaine is the recipient of the 1992 National ASTD Torch Award and was selected for the 1995 Wisconsin Women Entrepreneur's Mentor Award. In 2001, she received ISA's highest award, The Terry Broomfield Spirit Award. She is the editor for the prestigious *Training and Consulting Annuals* published by Pfeiffer.

You may reach her office at 757-588-3939 or by e-mail at [elaine@ebbweb.com](mailto:elaine@ebbweb.com) with inquiries about training or to

request additional information.

## About ASTD

ASTD is a leading association of workplace learning and performance professionals, forming a world-class community of practice. ASTD's 70,000 members and associates come from more than 100 countries and thousands of organizations—multinational corporations, medium-sized and small businesses, government, academia, consulting firms, and product and service suppliers.

ASTD marks its beginning in 1944, when the organization held its first annual conference. In recent years, ASTD has widened the industry's focus to connect learning and performance to measurable results, and is a sought-after voice on critical public-policy issues.



# Dedication

For Shane and Thad, my best training projects.

# Author's Acknowledgments

The words in this book were not created in a vacuum. To the many people who were an intricate part of authoring this book: "Thanks!"

Thanks to Dan Greene, my personal and professional support system. Thanks to Lorraine Kohart for your assistance and your sense of humor.

Thanks to the generous contributors to this book. You are the Names to Know in the profession: Jean Barbazette, Ann Herrmann-Nehdi, Don Kirkpatrick, Jack Phillips, Bob Pike, Dana Robinson, Mel Silberman, Thiagi, and Edie West.

Thanks to all the ebb associates clients who have challenged me to always design a better training and to conduct it under all kinds of conditions.

Thanks to Diane Steele and Kathleen Cox, the two professional women of Wiley who are as excited about this book as I am. Thanks to Susan Rachmeler for your editing expertise.

Thanks to everyone at ASTD who allow me to continue to grow and learn: Tony Bingham and Cat Russo for the special opportunity to publish under the respected ASTD brand; Jennifer Naughton for the expertise that you share with trainers everywhere and in Chapter 16;

Elizabeth Hannah, Nancy Olson, and Linda David for allowing me to continue to expand my horizons.

Thanks to Kathleen Dolan Davies, Matt Davis, and Martin Delahoussaye of Pfeiffer who are always willing to help a struggling author.

Thanks to Celia Rocks, the best publicist anywhere, anytime; thanks for your brilliance-to-be on yet another book.

All of you deserve much more than the simple thank you that appears here. Thanks for helping me write *Training For Dummies*.

# Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at [www.dummies.com/register/](http://www.dummies.com/register/).

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

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**Cover Photos:** © Photodisc Collection/ Getty Images/Photodisc Blue

**Cartoons:** Rich Tennant, [www.the5thwave.com](http://www.the5thwave.com)

**Composition**



**Project Coordinator:** Adrienne Martinez, Emily Wichlinski

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# Introduction

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Training is the best job I've ever had. That's because the training profession is one that touches almost everyone every day. Whether you're taking a golf lesson, finding out how to use new computer software, trying out a new recipe, or being coached by your boss, you're experiencing training. Your trainer doesn't need to be in the same room or on the same schedule.

What other job affords you the opportunity to increase an organization's bottom line, improve your country's productivity level, and enhance individuals' lives, all at the same time? It is truly a privilege to be a trainer, yet it's also a responsibility.

Training is a profession on the move, and those moves are ones to be proud of. As I finished this book, the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), the trainers' professional association, was putting the finishing touches on the first internationally recognized Workplace Learning and Performance certification process. Based on the competency study completed in 2004, certification will be the final and most critical element, providing credentials for the profession and adding excitement to an already exciting profession. Chapter 16 describes the certification process in more detail.

# About This Book

*Training For Dummies* is both practical and fun. It has been written in a logical sequence and is loaded with practical ideas. It is designed to take you through a training cycle from start to finish, and in sequential order. So, if you want to, you can start at the beginning of this book and move through to the end. If you're interested in finding only specific information, however, you can also use the index at the back of the book or the Table of Contents near the front.

This book is also fun to read, but don't let the conversational tone fool you. It is jam-packed with technical knowledge about the training profession as well as tips, tricks, and techniques for honing your training skills.

I feel fortunate that several gurus in the training profession have agreed to contribute snippets of content that focus on their areas of expertise. So as you read *Training For Dummies*, be sure to check out what experts like Thiagi say about facilitation and Ann Herrmann-Nehdi say about learning styles.

## Foolish Assumptions

While writing this book, I imagine you, the reader, sitting next to me and telling me what you want to read about.

And what did I hear you saying? “Practical. Make it practical.” So I did.

I assume you fall into one of two categories: Either you’re interested in becoming a trainer, or you’re already a trainer and want to hone your skills. Perhaps you’re even interested in obtaining professional certification from ASTD.

I also assume that you’ve been a participant in training and that some of those training sessions have been life-changing, while others have been a waste of your time. And I assume that you want to know how to conduct more of the former and none of the latter.

I assume that you know how important the training profession is to corporations’ bottom lines as well as this country’s productivity.

Finally, I make one other assumption: that is that you love (or will grow to love) training as much as I do!

# How This Book Is Organized

*Training For Dummies* is divided into six parts, and the chapters within each part cover specific topics in detail. The parts and chapters follow a logical sequence — from thinking about becoming a trainer to designing, delivering, and evaluating a training session and, finally to ensuring that you continue to enhance your professionalism.

# **Part I: So You're Going to Be a Trainer!**

This part explores the field of training and uncovers what a trainer does. It introduces you to The Training Cycle and presents a quick list of training jargon. You can even explore whether you think you'd like a profession in training. And if you're already a trainer, a self-assessment provides data about your areas of strength and those that may need a bit of shoring up.

## **Part II: Designing the Best Darn Training in the World**

Trainers must remember one very important rule: It's all about the learner. When you have this concept firmly planted in your mind, you're on the right path to designing a successful training session. This part helps you understand how to assess your learners' needs, how to write learning objectives, and how to design a training session that will knock their socks off! You also explore using off-the-shelf training programs and preparing for success.



# **Part III: Showtime: Delivering a Dynamic Training Session**

Many trainers are born stage hounds. And while training is not always a circus, seeing people's eyes light up when you put knowledge in their hands, and seeing how their lives change with new skills, is often reward enough.

This part focuses on the implementation aspect of a trainer's job. It describes how to deliver success by ensuring that learning occurs. It also helps you become a master of audiovisuals and provides suggestions for how to address the many problems that occur in a classroom.

## **Part IV: It's Not Over Yet: The Follow-Up**

Evaluation and other follow-up activities occur at the end of The Training Cycle, but they are of critical importance because only with evaluation can you be assured that the training is a success. The training session may be over, but your work is not. This part shows you how and why.