

# Winning Trainer

*Series of Winning Articles for Trainers*

## How to Spot Training Talent

By

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# How to Spot Training Talent

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It's a fact of life: most companies can't afford to maintain a full-time HRD staff equipped to meet all their training needs. Instead, budget-conscious organizations often rely on on-the-job training sessions conducted by experienced workers or managers.

Selecting the part-time trainers would seem to be a simple matter. Just choose the person who has been around the longest, does the job best, or has a little extra time. Problem solved, right?

Wrong. Trainer qualifications probably have more to do with the success or failure of an instructional program than any other factor. Although train-the-trainer sessions can help workers or managers become polished instructors, the best part-time trainers display several important competencies in their everyday jobs.

When selecting potential trainers, look for the following qualifications:

- **Job competence.** The most obvious qualification is the ability to do the job well. Look for people who have appropriate levels of technical knowledge and experience. But remember: technical proficiency alone does not make a trainer.
- **Professionalism.** Trainers serve as role models, so they should be mature, confident, and enthusiastic about their topic-and about training. Identify employees who view training assignments as opportunities for professional development rather than as intrusions on their daily routines. Try to find instructors who act the part, and who demonstrate a strong commitment to helping the organization attain its goals.
- **Good communication skills.** An absolute must. A learning

environment in which trainees feel comfortable taking risks without the fear of ridicule depends on the instructor's ability to create open lines of communication. Not only should trainers be able to explain tasks and procedures clearly, they must also know how to listen actively and be sensitive to the importance of body language and nonverbal communication.

- **Rapport.** In choosing part-time trainers, look for people who demonstrate good interpersonal skills when they interact with customers and co-workers. Friendly and congenial, qualified candidates for training positions also exhibit the ability to handle conflict without losing their cool.
- **Good organizational skills.** The ability to balance various responsibilities and manage time are critical to training success. If your instructors will have to develop and implement their own training plans, it is important to find people who know how to organize work and work flow.

If you can fill your roster of part-time trainers with people who display all those characteristics, chances are good that your organization's employees will receive top-notch instruction. To make doubly sure, be aware of some pitfalls.

First, be certain the managers recognize and support the training program. Ensure that new trainers have enough time to learn the job and enough time to actually fulfill their new responsibilities. Otherwise, the message comes across that training isn't really all that important.

Second, make sure trainers know what you expect of them and why they were chosen for the job. Laying out your expectations in advance helps prevent new trainers from feeling overwhelmed and dumped on.

Finally, give part-time trainers all the logistical and instructional support you can. Without an organized plan complete with objectives, outlines, timelines, and procedures, new trainers will struggle and the training program will suffer.

By carefully selecting well-qualified trainers and giving them the tools they need to be effective, you can help your organization meet its objectives even if it lacks a large training budget.

## About the Author

*Karen Lawson, PhD, CSP, is an international consultant, executive coach, speaker, and author. She has built a successful organization and management development consulting firm working with Fortune 500 companies as well as small businesses. Dr. Lawson specializes in cultivating outstanding leaders who enable their organizations to outperform the competition. For a complete list of her products and services, contact Lawson Consulting Group, Inc. at 215-368-9465 or at [www.LawsonCG.com](http://www.LawsonCG.com).*

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The Trainer's Handbook, 2nd Edition  
50 Communication Skills Activities  
New Employee Orientation Training  
Improving On-the-Job Training and Coaching

### Growth Tools:

Self-Assessments  
Audio CDs and Tapes

## Links to Exceptional Resources

Please go to these exceptional resources:

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Lawson Consulting Group's Main Website  
Training and Consulting Tools - Self Assessments  
Leadership Solutions: Cultivating Truly Outstanding Leaders  
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Training the Trainer: Even Trainers Need Training!  
Career Development: For Organizations and Individuals  
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