

The Adult Learning Model

Studies verify that successful training follows a structured pattern that significantly increases the chance for successful transfer of training. This 5-step approach is referred to as the “**Adult Learning Model**”.

- 1. Describe why the skill (behavior) is important.** If participants do not recognize the importance of the skill, their involvement in the training session will be reduced or nonexistent. More importantly, the likelihood of the participant using the skill on the job is severely weakened. If you doubt the importance of this step, ask yourself why children fail to pay attention in history class. The answer is that they feel it is unimportant to what they will do in life.
- 2. The specific skill (behavior) is explained.** The skill must be described in specific and simple behavioral terms. The participant must understand what he or she is expected *to do*. When the skill is easily understood, the participant will be able to utilize the skill successfully.
- 3. Demonstrate the skill.** Observation of successful skill performance reinforces learning and teaches the practical application of theory. The skill may be demonstrated with videos, live performance, role play exercises or media. The facilitation skills of the trainer are paramount during this stage of learning.
- 4. Practice the skill.** The skill is remembered best when practiced. The first opportunity to practice a skill occurs during the training session when there is little consequence if a behavior is practiced poorly. The participant gets a “free” opportunity to use the skill before real life situations occur and negative consequences might result.
- 5. Plan to use the skill.** The purpose of the training is to create behaviors on the job that are linked to organizational objectives. Before the training session is complete, participants should identify situations in which they will successfully use the skill in the workplace. The manager can work with the participant after the session to support the use of the skill and measure performance.

NEXT STEP—Contingency Learning Model. Beyond the Adult Learning Model, the next step is dealing with contingencies such as varying levels of experience, skill and learning modalities. **Contact us to learn techniques for structuring educational programs which involve your experienced sales leaders as well as newcomers to the profession.**