

BEST OF THE BEST



HONING YOUR SKILLS AS A CTO

06/26



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What does it take to be the best?

To be the best of the best you must conduct frequent self-assessments, constantly challenge yourself and be willing to do the work necessary to stay ahead of the rest. It is crucial that you conduct periodic examinations of your knowledge, skills and attitude. As trainers, you are indeed the “pick of the bunch” however, it takes dedication and commitment to maintain any level of excellence. Let’s explore a few ways to ensure you stay a “cut above the rest”.

Crème de la Crème

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Prepare yourself and your training material.

Thorough preparation is key to delivering successful training. Familiarize yourself with the training material, organize it logically, and create clear and concise outlines. Print and review policies and be sure to prepare any necessary visual aids, handouts, or interactive activities in advance. Check material for accuracy (grammar, spelling, dates, etc.). Test your delivery and understanding of each topic on a trusted peer. What sounds good in your head may confuse a trainee who has no prior experience or knowledge of the topic being taught.





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Prepare yourself and your training material.

Work on becoming a subject matter expert, familiarize yourself with the technology and equipment at your agency. Educate yourself and incorporate relevant news stories, court cases, or personal experiences to enhance each session. This keeps the session interesting and keeps the trainee engaged. For example; introduce a news story of a dispatcher sleeping on duty, hanging up on a caller or not sending help, to teach liability in addition to discussing the applicable policies. Examples do not have to be from your home agency or state. Do your research (Google it) ahead of time and think outside the box.

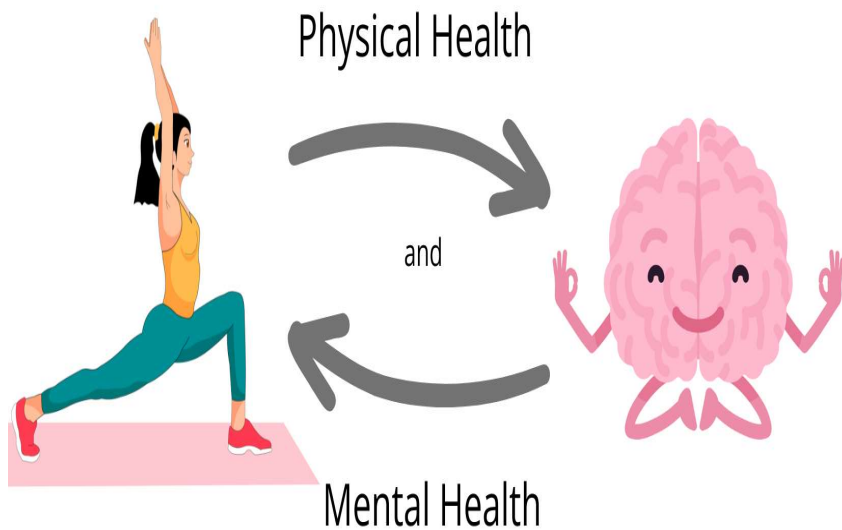
Practice until you have confidence in yourself and your material.

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Prepare yourself and your training material.



“Mental readiness refers to the state of being prepared, both physically and mentally, to perform a task or handle a situation. It involves having the necessary knowledge, skills, and mindset to effectively respond to challenges and opportunities”. Karin Andrea Stephan

Practice makes proficient.

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Prepare the trainee and the training environment

You may not be able to control the physical environment (lights, chairs, location, temperature, etc.), focus on controlling only what is within your span of control. Properly introduce yourself and get to know the trainee. Discuss expectations, allow the trainee to ask questions, review the learning objectives and ensure the trainee is given any material/learning aid applicable at the initial session. Give the trainee a physical tour of the PSAP to include introductions (include titles where applicable). The goal is to put the trainee at ease, create a collaborative atmosphere, and encourage active participation.

WELCOME THE NEWEST CREWMATE

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Adopt your teaching style to your trainee's ability.

The best trainers are adaptable and flexible. They can provide customized training that is tailored to their trainee's learning style and personality. They are open to feedback and can adjust their delivery methods as required to optimize learning.



Each trainee is an individual and may require something different from the trainer. Make sure you have more than one way to explain and demonstrate each skill, as well as multiple examples to reiterate or enhance each topic.



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Admit when an answer is unknown and follow up

A trainer who openly admits they don't have all the answers is not showing weakness, they are building trust, fostering collaboration, and creating a culture of continuous learning. Be honest with the trainee and work on finding a solution/answer together. Every time a trainer seeks clarification, they and their trainee gain new knowledge. Pretending to know something when you don't can lead to errors, set a bad example for the trainee and create liability for yourself. Admitting uncertainty allows for timely problem-solving and gives the trainee permission to do the same.

"I don't know" is not a disqualifier for being a trainer.

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Never stop learning

Challenge yourself to learn something new about the topic/profession constantly. Look through books, newsletters, podcasts, CAD narratives, speak with other trainers, etc. The best trainers understand the importance of continuous learning and professional/personal development. Stay updated with agency policies, industry trends, new technologies, and advancements in the field. The best trainers invest in themselves by actively seeking opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge, which in turn, positively impacts the quality of their training.

Stay in
the know

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Use tact and consideration when speaking to/about your trainees.

Effective communication is essential. Use appropriate language and tone with your trainee in both verbal and written communications. They are adults and must be addressed as such. Avoid sarcasm and gestures (body language/nonverbals) that can be perceived negatively by the trainee. It is important to maintain a professional yet informal, inviting and approachable demeanor when interacting with each trainee.





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Patience and Empathy

Patience is vital for trainers dealing with diverse learners with different levels of understanding and learning capabilities, especially when it comes to on-the-job training. Trainees may not grasp concepts immediately, and mistakes are inevitable as part of the learning process. Repetition should be expected, you will need to say and demonstrate the same concept/skill several times. Trainees may struggle with memorizing codes, jurisdictional boundaries, etc. The best trainers approach these challenges with empathy, understanding that everyone learns at their own pace. They provide encouragement, give constructive feedback, help to reduce the trainee's anxiety which assist in overcoming obstacles and building confidence.



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Accurate objective documentation

The best trainers only record measurable, observable, and verifiable facts that are void of personal opinions and predictions. Objective documentation provides evidence against complaints, audits, or lawsuits. It shows measurable progress or lack thereof and provides management with a defensible record that supports decision-making and accountability. It allows for early recognition of deficiencies and supports strategic performance improvement plans.

Think of yourself as a news reporter (tell what happened) not as a weather forecaster (don't make prediction).



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Be specific – The trainee answered the phone with the agency approved greeting as outlined in the SOP. ✓

Conclusions/Prediction/Guesses/Assumptions – The trainee is making progress and will be _____ over time with more practice/exposure. ✗

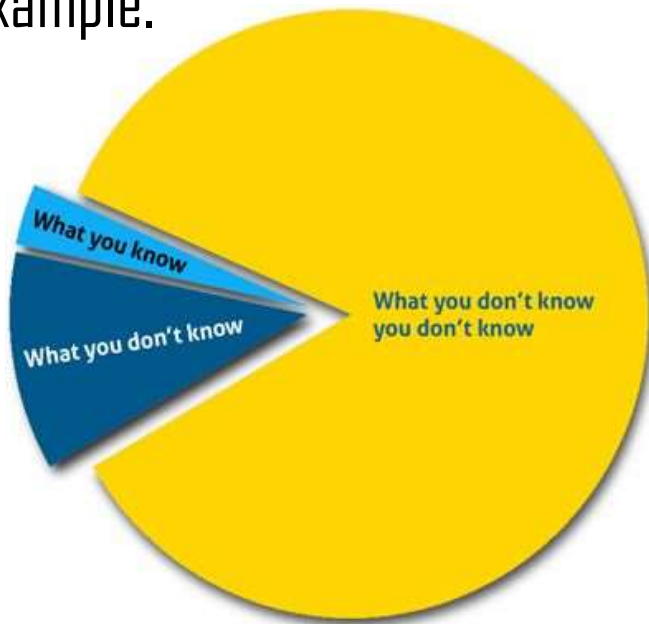
Subjective (feel/perceive) impressions – The trainee is overwhelmed. ✗

Subjective information tells you what someone is experiencing. Objective information tells you what can be verified.



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The best trainers are not just knowledgeable but also skilled in communication, adaptability, and creating a supportive learning culture. They adhere to policies and lead by example.



"Don't come from an egotistical place where I'm the trainer and the know-it-all. Be open to feedback. Be engaging, flexible, and adaptable. Be open to change and listen, listen". Linda Haddad



THANK YOU



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