

IAAPA Institute for Attractions Managers

Course Preparation Manual

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IAAPA Institute for Attractions Managers Program Preparation Manual

Introduction

The following document has been developed to help instructors and facilitators prepare for the IAAPA Institute for Attractions Managers (IAM). As a faculty instructor, your role is vital in creating a positive and engaging experience for the attendees. You will set the tone of the program and with the right preparation and approach you will create a rich learning environment for the attendees.

This document provides an outline of the IAM and its learning objectives. It considers what we know about the typical IAM attendee including a summary of feedback on the course to date. The document also presents some adult learning theory, and some notes on preparation. Finally, you will find samples of group work exercises to consider incorporating into your presentation.

IAAPA is committed to constantly seeking ways to improve this course in terms of content, delivery method, teaching aids and the overall classroom experience. We value the feedback and perspective of the instructors and welcome any comments you may have on this document, the presentation materials, the classroom set or any other aspect of the IAM program.

Course Design, Mission and Purpose

IAAPA Institute for Attractions Managers (IAM) was designed as a professional development program for emerging leaders in the attractions industry.

Goal

The goal of the IAM is to meet the professional and career development needs of attractions industry professionals who have an aspiration and capacity to become senior management and who are responsible for leading other leaders.

Target Audience

The target audience for the course is attractions facility professionals who have had 3 to 5 years of full time supervisory experience, are responsible for leading other leaders, and setting the direction for work groups.

Course Structure

The program provides:

- 1) face to face learning – balancing lecture with group activities,
- 2) relevant and dynamic industry case studies; and,
- 3) networking opportunities.

The course is comprised of the following 5 core subject areas (or domains)

- **Attractions Finance:** Managing capital, expense and revenue budgeting, and other financial tools.
- **Attractions Marketing:** The role of marketing, media relations, advertising, group sales, and public relations.
- **Attractions Leadership:** Human resources development strategies.
- **Facility Operations and Safety:** Industry regulation, facility management best practices, and crisis management.
- **Attractions Revenue Operations:** Food and beverage, merchandise, pay-per-experience attractions, and rental services revenue.

Attendees should leave the course with a solid understanding of the key disciplines and processes required to manage a successful attraction.

In addition, at the end of the course attendees are tasked to work in teams on a case study of a business scenario as it relates to a facility.

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Each course module is designed along a standard framework. The example below is based on the marketing course

- **General industry information:** a “big picture” view of marketing and PR in the attractions industry.
- **Funworld Park information:** an overview of Funworld Park’s marketing department.
- **Theory and Practice:** A consideration of general marketing theory and its application
- **Skill exercise:** an exercise (preferably group based) to test or practice the information presented in the module.

Funworld Park

Funworld Park is a fictional amusement park that is used throughout the course to illustrate the concepts, ideas and processes presented during each module. The park is presented as a small regional amusement park like a Six Flags in the US or a Walibi World Park in Europe. Attendees receive a history of the park as well as recent park financial information, an organization chart and other relevant information. Every effort has been made to make the data as realistic as possible. While the case study is a park the learning outcomes may be applied to other types of facilities.

What Attendees Are Saying About the Program and the Facilitators

Feedback from the attendees on the course to date – both in the US and Europe – has, for the most part, been very positive. Many attendees cited the ability to meet with and exchange ideas with their industry peers as being a very valuable part of the program. In addition, attendees have indicated the following three things that they would like to see incorporated into future versions of the program.

Class - Facilitator Interactivity: More engagement with the audience and more encouragement for the attendees to learn from each other.

Facilitator personal history and experiences: More sharing of personal experiences by the instructors of their time in the industry.

Networking and social interaction opportunities: Lunches, receptions, evening activities etc.

Your role as a facilitator

Things to Consider For Your Presentation:

- Know your topic and presentation so that you don’t simply read slides off the screen
- Provide an introduction such as a short story or video that will frame the concept you are about to present
- Try to be interactive when appropriate (see Facilitation Tips below for some ideas)
- Be energetic from the start – our industry is about keeping people engaged – your energy level will impact the successful learning of the participant
- Announce when you would be open to questions; are you comfortable being interrupted during your presentation to answer questions or would you prefer to wait until the end? Whichever approach you would like to use let the audience know at the beginning of the presentation.
- Repeat an audience members question into your microphone before answering it so that everyone may know the content of the question.
- Remember to stay within the allocated time of your presentation.
- Humor can be a good tool to engage people just be careful to use it appropriately and not so often that it deters from the content of your session.
- Remember that we are an international organization and sometimes acronyms and regional phrases may not easily translate to people from a different area of the world.
- Provide tools, examples, ideas that people may take away from the session to implement in their own business.

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- Enjoy yourself!

Adult Learning Theory

A positive learning environment is achieved when adults feel engaged in reflection, discussion and interaction activities. You, as a session leader, are responsible for creating an optimal environment for effective learning. This can be a challenge based on the size of the audience and the room set-up. For these reasons we would like to provide you with some information on adult learning theory; experiential learning cycle; and, some facilitation tips you may use to create and maintain a positive and productive learning environment.

Experiential Learning Cycle

Learning is experiential – no matter the age of the learner. The following outlines the 5 stages of experiential learning:

Stage 1: EXPERIENCE – this forms the basis for the rest of the cycle. What is the experience the person has or is about to have?

Stage 2: DESCRIBE – this allows the person to share personal feelings and reactions from the experience.

Stage 3: INTERPRET – this is the time where the individual will process their reactions to the experience into a collective idea.

Stage 4: GENERALIZE – this gives the person the opportunity to transfer their learning from the experience to the rest of the world.

Stage 5: APPLICATION – this is where the person decides on a course of action for the future.

Types of Learners

People can generally identify a type of learning that works best for them. People tend to lean toward a certain mode of learning that may be classified as one of the following:

Visual

The visual learner translates information into pictures and stores it as images in the brain. People who have a visual learning style learn best if a major component of the material or lesson is something that can be seen or watched. This learner works best with written materials and instructions, diagrams, posters and demonstrations. Unnecessary movement can be a distraction to the visual learner.

Activities to incorporate:

- Use pictures, graphics or diagrams in your presentation to illustrate ideas.
- Allow participants time to read something silently.

Auditory

Auditory learners filter the information they hear and store relevant data but do not necessarily form pictures around it. Auditory learners prefer to “talk it out” when problem solving. They learn best if there is an oral component to the material being taught. Unnecessary noise can be a distraction for auditory learners.

Activities to incorporate:

- Ask participants to share thoughts with the person sitting beside them.
- Make sure to repeat instructions and/or questions so that everyone may hear.
 - Speak clearly into the microphone.

Kinesthetic/Tactile

Kinesthetic learners have a tendency to move around while trying to learn something new or solve a problem. People with this style learn best when they can touch or feel what they are learning. The use of their body and feelings are very important to these learners, so hands-on

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projects and experiential activities are a must. Long periods of sitting can be a distraction for a kinesthetic learner.

Activities to incorporate:

- Ask for volunteers to help record ideas on flip chart paper.
- Schedule short stretch breaks or energizers. The typical adult needs to stand up after 28 minutes of seat time. Try to incorporate a short “stand up and turn around in a circle twice now return to your seat.”
- Encourage people to take notes if they would like to.

Some samples of group exercises

Facilitation Techniques

- **Quotes** – find a quote that relates to your topic and that is inspirational or thought-provoking. Start the presentation with the quote and ask people to reflect on it for a minute. You may ask for several people to stand and report out to the entire group what that quote means to them.
- **K W L** – At the beginning of the session ask participants to take a piece of paper and make 3 columns.
The first column is “What I **KNOW** about (topic to be covered).....”
The second column is “What I **WANT** to know about (topic)....” and,
the third column is What I **LEARNED** about....”
Before the session starts ask them to complete the first two columns and at the end remind them to complete the last column. This practice allows them time to reflect on the topic and record what they learned from the session.
- **Think-Pair-Share** – Ask the audience to think about an event or learning experience they have had. For example, “Think about the last time you encountered a guest who was unhappy with their experience. What were the circumstances? How was it handled? What did you learn from it?” Give them a few minutes to quietly think about it. Then ask them to turn to someone near them and each share their experiences. If time permits you may ask a few people to report out about their conversation.
- **Send-a-folder** – place a sheet of paper in a folder with a question/problem written on the top of the paper. It is advisable to have at least three folders each containing a different question. Divide the room into thirds (or equal to how many questions you have.) Ask each group to record their responses to the problem/question on the sheet inside the folder. After 5 minutes each group will pass the folder to the next group and they will get the folder from another group. Each group reviews the answers from the previous group and adds their thoughts. At the conclusion have one person stand and report out on the comments from each folder.
- **Sentence Stems** -- there are several ways to reinforce what a person has learned and may take away with them. Sentence Stems is one way. For a slide near the close of your presentation you may have the following sentence stems recorded and allow people time to take out their notebook to complete the sentences:
 - 1) **As I think about the ideas we have just discussed, it reminds me...**
 - 2) **What surprised me most was.....**
 - 3) **I learned that.....**
 - 4) **I changed my mind about.....because...**
- **Action Steps** – another idea for a closing slide could be: As a results of this workshop, here is one thing I will:
 - 1) **Start doing....**
 - 2) **Stop doing...**
 - 3) **Keep doing...**

Ice breakers

1. Bingo

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Bingo is one of the most popular ice breakers because it's so easy to customize for your particular group and situation, and everyone knows how to play it.

Ideal Size

Up to 30. Divide larger groups.

Use For

Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting.

Time Needed

30 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Materials Needed

Bingo cards. See instructions below.

Instructions

If you know your participants, make a list of 25 interesting traits that describe different aspects of them, things like, "plays the bongos," "once lived in Sweden," "has a karate trophy," "has twins," "collects children's art," "has a tattoo."

If you don't know your participants, make a list of more general traits like "drinks tea instead of coffee", "loves the color orange," "has two cats," "drives a hybrid," "went on a cruise in the last year." You can make these easy or difficult depending on how much time you want the game to take.

There are lots of places online where you can type in your traits and print your own customized cards. Some are free; some are not

2. Expectations

Ideal Size:

Up to 20. Divide larger groups.

Use for:

Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting, to understand what every participant is expecting to learn from the class or gathering.

Time Needed:

15-20 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Materials Needed:

A flip chart or white board, and markers.

Instructions:

Write Expectations at the top of a flip chart or white board.

When it's time for students to introduce themselves, explain that expectations are powerful, and that understanding them is key to the success of any class. Tell the group that you would like them to:

- Introduce themselves
- Share their expectations of the class
- Add a wild prediction of the best possible outcome should their expectations be met. Ask them to be as specific as possible, and encourage silliness or fun if you want.

Example:

Hi, my name is Deb, and I'm expecting to learn how to handle difficult or challenging people, and my wildest expectation is that if I knew how to do that, nobody would ever get under my skin again. Ever.

Debrief:

State your objectives of the course, review the list of expectations the group made, and explain whether or not, and why their expectations will or will not be covered in the course.

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Content Review Exercises (to be used at the conclusion of the presentation to check for understanding):

Quizzes:

- a) divide the participants into small groups, provide each group a list of 10 questions relating to the course content, allow the groups to discuss the question and answer them.
- b) divide the participants into small groups, ask each group to create 5 questions that may be a challenge for the other groups to answer. Distribute the questions to the other teams and allow them time to try to answer the questions.
- c) ask each small group to answer the question "What more do I need/want to know about this topic?"

Eliciting Feedback:

- a) **Plus/Delta:** On a flipchart paper draw a plus "+" on one side of the paper and a delta shape (of a triangle) on the other side. Ask people what they liked (plus) about the session and what they think could be improved/changed under the delta side.
- b) **Top Three Ideas:** ask participants to record the top three things they learned during the session. Ask them to share with their group. Each group may report out if time permits.
- c) **Crumble and Toss:** Ask each person to write on a piece of paper something they learned during the session. Once they have written it ask them to crumble the paper and toss it onto the floor in a pile. Have people go and select a paper that was not theirs and read it to the group.

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Other Resources

Reading material

Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A Comprehensive Analysis of Principles and Effective Practices (*Jossey Bass Higher and Adult Education Series*)
Stephen D. Brookfield)

The Adult Learner, Sixth Edition: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development
Malcolm S. Knowles Ph.D. (Author), Elwood F. Holton III Ed.D. (Author), Richard A. Swanson Ph.D.

Training Games - *Steve Sugar and Jennifer Whitcomb*

Games That Teach: Experiential Activities for Reinforcing Training, *Steve Sugar*

I'll Take Learning for 500: Using Game Shows to Engage, Motivate, and Train, *Dan Yaman, Missy Covington, and Sivasailam Thiagarajan*

Web-sites:

Create a Learning Culture: Tips for Building a Culture of Learning in your Organization: www.mindleaders.com

American Society for Training and Development
<http://www.astd.org>