

Five Tips for Using Media to Energize Your Training Program

By Steve Mack

As a trainer I have found that including video and other media elements in my training classes have made the programs more effective and helped attendees learn better. Video can visually engage a class and provide an overall energy boost to almost any program. Here are five ways that I've incorporated video and other media to energize a training program.

1 – Opening Music

Try opening the program with an upbeat welcome song. Nothing boosts energy like playing with Black Eyed Peas or Queen to start a training class. It works as a great background while you introduce yourself. Hey, television shows have opening theme music. Why shouldn't you?

2 – Executive Welcome Message

I've been involved in several training programs where a short video message from a company executive welcomed the class. Many attendees consider it important that their leadership team also finds the training class important enough to go through the effort of videotaping the message, even if they aren't able to deliver it in person. I was involved in one long-term training initiative where a different executive introduced each day of the series of day-long classes. We videotaped these and after a few weeks had a video montage of executives providing a unique introduction for the training attendees. That provided a great vehicle to emphasize that the program was more than just a check-the-box training.

3 – Media Examples and Success Stories

There are lots of video examples of what successful companies have done to get where they are. Many of these video clips may be worth showing in your training program to inspire attendees and facilitate discussion? One of the most inspirational video clips that I've used is the old Apple Macintosh commercial "Think Different". Check it out on YouTube. I've also used an audio pre-flight safety announcement that was recorded in a comedic style to show how you can have a unique brand voice in spite of the sterility of government regulations.

4 – Your Own Company Assets

From your own company there may be video clips that you can use to show some history and spur class discussion: old television commercials, executive speeches, and more. I've used company commercials on several occasions. At one large company we weren't able to track down commercials internally, so we just taped them off of television and showed these to the class. And it worked; The television spots were inspirational and many attendees hadn't seen them. You could tell the employees had pride in their company, which made showing these very effective.

In another training program we showed some focus group testing video clips, which gave the

training participants a new perspective on their own product. Maybe all you have are photos, logos, or other static images. Try putting these into a quick montage to make a point or spur discussion and ideas.

5 – Ending Music / Montage / Photos

By the end of a day-long or multi-day program, participants and trainers may all be exhausted. But that's no excuse to end on a quiet note. Try an ending montage of images and text about what the class has learned and how they can use it. Find a cool tune to play along and it can have greater effect. I've found that "Off We Go Into the Wild Blue Yonder" is very upbeat and there are lots of other great songs that are inspirational, upbeat and energetic.

In one training program we created our own photo montage, asking the class to take a group photo at the end of the day. We gave out matching program t-shirts, took group photos, and after several of these classes had enough photos to create a montage to play for the next classes. We used U2's "Beautiful Day" to play over the photo montage. The classes felt inspired by being part of a bigger initiative, which was one of the objectives of the training program.

The Return On Video Investment

Using media elements can positively impact a training class. As a trainer it's great to know that video provides a powerful option for help make a program more effective. Some attendees may not realize how media has helped make the learning experience more effective but others have noted on their evaluations.

"The overall use of video and music was great
and helped keep the audience's attention
as well as reinforce the message."

And the cost to include basic media elements is usually pretty nominal. I've found that compared to the overall cost to design and implement a large program the media incorporation element is usually a small fraction. The costs are often a couple hours of media production to videotape an executive introduction, edit some video clips, or digitize video into the correct media format to play in PowerPoint.

Be sure to check out our article for the steps you can take to include video clips directly into your PPT slides: *"Add Video Pizzazz to Your Next Training Program in Three Easy Steps"*.

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