



A GATHERING PLACE
FOR SHORT-TERM MISSION ARTICLES,
RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Evaluating Your Training: criteria for excellent team training

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We have reached the time of year where many people are wrapping up summer mission trips and mission leaders are evaluating all parts of the experience. In this article, I want to examine how you can evaluate the way you train and prepare people for mission trips. To do this, you must ask yourself three questions:

1. **Is the content of my training appropriate?**
2. **Is my training effective?**
3. **Is the right person doing the training?**

These questions cannot be answered in one article, but we can begin walking down the road of discovery. Check out SOE's webinar "Evaluating Your Training: criteria for an excellent team training" to go a little deeper.

Is The Content Of My Training Appropriate?

Standard Six of the Seven Standards of Excellence is "Appropriate Training." The key word is "appropriate." What is appropriate for a 10-week trip to China might not be the same as a weekend youth trip to a Native American reservation. As this is the case, it is best to confine our discussion here to categories of content rather than the particulars that are context based.

Excellent training and preparation begins with the question, "What do I want my goers to know, be able to do, and be like?" Once you've established this, you're ready to start building your training. As you consider this, make sure you're addressing these five major areas: **spiritual preparation, cultural preparation, logistical preparation, team dynamics/interpersonal relationships, and ministry preparation.** Does your training address these? If not, you may consider expanding or redesigning your current training and preparation.

Is My Training Effective?

As you evaluate your training, you may find ways that you address all of the above-mentioned areas. However, is it effective? In my years, I have seen some amazing content but it had one limiting factor—often it didn't go beyond information on a page or in a manual. For training and preparation to be effective, people need to be transformed by it. In other words, it needs to work its way out in their attitudes and behaviors. To do this, consider how you require your participants to put into practice what you are teaching them before you leave for the trip. If you and your host see them living out the training, you know that your training is effective!

Is The Right Person Doing The Training?

You might have the best, most interactive training and preparation program in the world, but it's not helping anyone if it's not being used. Now, you might ask, "if it's the best, why wouldn't it be used?" This is a valid point, but it ignores something—the person responsible for doing your training!

Who does your training? Is it your team leaders or someone designated for training because of their skills and abilities to teach and train? If your team leaders do the training, does it require them to be gifted in the area of teaching and training? Are they equipped and prepared to do the training? Do they see the value in the training? Do they truly understand the "why" behind the "what" of the training? Does each team get consistent and quality training regardless of who is leading?

Appropriate training is key for a mission team to be effective in ministry, but it's also key for long-term impact in the life of the goer. You probably have spent countless hours promoting, recruiting, praying, preparing, and training for your mission trip. Make the most out of your investment by doing all you can to make sure it's appropriate, effective, and used!



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