

Neundorfer Learning Center Events Philosophy

How and why we structure our workshops

Overview

Our schedule of workshops for the year is published on the Neundorfer website, at www.neundorfer.com/learning-center. These workshops fall into two categories:

Planning and strategy workshops are focused on topics surrounding people, policies and processes. (Example: the effects of fuel changes on plant systems.) Audience: participants in managerial roles.

Equipment troubleshooting workshops are focused on best practices for operating and maintaining electrostatic precipitators (ESPs), baghouses (fabric filters) and other plant systems. Audience: participants whose jobs involve daily contact with the equipment.

Both types of workshops are interactive, hands-on learning events designed to help participants solve their specific problems. When possible and appropriate, facilitation is shared with combustion and heat transfer experts from Storm Technologies, United Dynamics Corp (UDC) and Stephen Storm, Inc.

Learner's Bill of Rights

We design our workshops and seminars to align with and respect the following learner's rights.

As a learner, I have the right to:

- Know why I'm learning something
- Learn by doing
- Solve problems that matter to me
- Explore subjects that are of immediate use to me
- Be approached as a thinker

Active Learning

We use the active learning model to design all our workshops and seminars. Information is presented through working with the person to resolve an issue, plan a project or strengthen a skill. Presentation does not precede application. The takeaways from the learning are new skills and an action plan to use them.

Best Practices

From our experience facilitating past workshops and seminars, and from participants' feedback, we have identified the following best practices for effective, meaningful learning events.

- Ahead of each learning event, relevant pre-reading learning material is provided to participants.
- From the start of each learning event, focus on conversation (rather than presentation) is established as the norm.
- Participants are asked to share their learning objectives, and these are listed on a wall chart for all to see and refer to throughout the event.
- Learning is structured around focusing on each participant's specific issues.
- Facilitators regularly stop to ask participants, *"What does this mean to you?"*
- Concepts learned are immediately applied to each participant's specific situation.
- Whenever possible, concepts are reinforced using real-world data from participants.
- Participants are grouped based on common issues. (No more than four people in a group.)
- Materials are created by participants and facilitators working together, and this information is kept accessible and visible throughout the learning event.
- At the end of each section, participants talk with others about how they'll apply what they learned; this conversation is drawn out by asking, *"What are you going to do after you leave the workshop?"*
- During the learning event, a next actions list is created for each participant.
- Facilitators work from a knowledgebase (information/resource toolbox) rather than a formal outline.
- PowerPoints are used as reference material only, not for presentation.
- Facilitators are familiar with available information (hard copy or digital format), and draw on this only when it is relevant.
- During the learning event, relevant information is made available in a format accessible to everyone within the learning space.
- The focus stays on conversation about information rather than presentation.
- Facilitators take the role of both "expert" and "student;" both learn from each other.
- The focus stays on participants; it is about the customer, not about Neundorfer.
- Facilitators adjust on the fly as needed to keep learners engaged.
- At the end of the learning event, or shortly afterward, participants are given quality take-home reference material (e.g. detailed slides, tutorials, manuals, "cleaned up" PDFs of images/information created during the event).