

## New Assets Designed to Speed You Up Just Slowing You Down?

Struggles to climb the learning curve can cost more than training. Imagine correcting each exam record for a patient when you could have changed it in one place and have it corrected on all the records if you just knew where to go. Every business has personnel, equipment, and system changes over time. Such 'turn over' often leaves you with limited personnel who know how to make the most effective use of your resources. How do you keep productivity high and expenses low? Look for training options such as web based training, webinars, on-site training, and full classes.

Web training sessions can be done One-on-One with an instructor and your staff member or a small group of your staff. Webinars provide information and instruction to larger groups who may be from multiple facilities. On-site training has an instructor come to your facility to train staff. Full classes are generally held at the vendor's training facility. All have their benefits and potential downside, so it's important for you to choose what works best for your facility and personnel.

Web training (either in individual sessions or webinars) is popular because it saves everyone on travel. Neither you nor the vendor lose productivity for the time to travel to the class; there are no hotel, rental car, and meal expenses; and it's very focused to specific topics. This helps keep the cost for web training low while providing valuable instruction. The downside of web training is that attendees may be distracted or unclear and the instructor has no indication of it; the timeframe is very limited, so your attendees may not get the time to have their questions fully answered; and the scope of each session is very defined, so they work best for attendees who have some experience with a system and are learning a specific feature or getting refresher training.

On-site training has the instructor come to your facility to train. There is typically a charge for this and often includes the instructor's travel expenses. Be sure you know how much time the instructor is expected to provide during the visit – is it an 8 hour day, 4 hour half-day, or something else? Define whether they will be using a training room you have on-site or the instructor will be working with individuals/groups in different areas of your facility. This approach provides more in-depth training to more personnel and is specific to your facility and workflow. It also allows for more flexibility in the training and, because the instructor is working with your attendees in person, they can usually tell when a trainee is confused or uncertain about something and can clarify it on the spot. The downside of On-site training is that it occurs in your facility while your normal business is going on. This means that you need to pull people from their usual work for the training sessions and that they often will be interrupted during training for 'one quick question – it will only take a second'. The more interruptions there are, the more potential you have for the trainees to not retain the information well and for the instructor to be sitting idle waiting for a person they are supposed to be training.

Full classes are held at the vendor's training facility. These classes may be lengths varying from 1 day to 2 weeks depending on the products covered and how in-depth the training is. Many are 1 – 3 days in length to minimize impact on your staffing while still providing time to go over the subject matter well. You typically are responsible for registration costs and for your attendees' travel and meal expenses. Some, like ASPYRA, include lunch or other items in the registration to help minimize your cost. Full classes at the vendor's facility offer your attendees a chance to focus on in-depth training with minimal interruptions for the length of the class. Like on-site training, the instructor can often tell when an attendee is confused or uncertain and can clarify that item. There is more opportunity for the attendees to ask other questions related to your facility's systems or workflow and receive more customized information than they would get with web training. In some cases, the attendee can work with the instructor outside of the normal class curriculum to get answers or help with specific tasks they have related to your facility. The downside of full classes is that you are without the staff member(s) attending the training for the timeframe of their travel and classes and it is typically more expensive per person than On-site training

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because the on-site training has the instructor training multiple people for 1 travel expense vs. 1 travel expense equaling 1 trainee.

### Key points

- Know whether a 'train the trainer' approach is being used (where the instructor will train a few individuals at your facility and they will be responsible for training the rest of your employees) or the instructor is responsible for teaching all your staff.
- Check if the training offers continuing education credits toward your staff's certifications. This could help you get two benefits for every dollar spent – your staff is better trained on the systems and products they use, so they are more efficient; and you help your staff stay certified, which is better for your staff and your business.
- Watch for special offers. Vendors will sometimes offer discounted prices to help fill class schedules, include some additional training with purchases, or offer training as an incentive for customers.
- Every form of training has positives and negatives. Choose which works best for your needs and most importantly – dedicate the time to pay attention to the training. You get no benefit from sitting through an hour training that is interrupted by distractions every 10 minutes.