

Major Roles of the Program Planner

Given the nature of EMS training, most program planners find themselves filling multiple roles. Each role demands different knowledge and skill set to effectively execute. Presented here are four major roles the program planner may find him- or herself filling:

Program designer and manager role

This role is responsible for designing and managing the program. Key tasks essential to this role include gathering ideas for programs, setting program priorities, developing program objectives, planning transfer of learning priorities, and preparing budget and marketing plans.

Event coordinator

This role is responsible for coordinating specific program events and ensuring that all logistical tasks of planning, conducting, and evaluating the program are completed in a timely manner. These tasks include arranging facilities, participant registration, and monitoring on-site programs as a counselor or administrator.

Instructor/learning facilitator

This role is responsible for delivering the instruction and directly assisting learners to achieve their learning objectives. Tasks involved in this role include using a variety of teaching techniques, content expertise, and ability to establish rapport with the learners.

Program evaluator

This role is responsible for making judgments about the value and results of the program. Tasks involved in this role include collecting data as evidence of meeting stated objectives, transfer of skill or knowledge to the workplace setting, and results that are attributable to the education event.

Selecting Instructors

When considering who to select to teach the program you have just designed and developed, care must be used in order to maximize program effectiveness. Caffarella (2002) suggests nine criteria to consider:

1. Content knowledge
2. Competence in the process of instruction
3. Ability to respond effectively to the background and experience of the participants
4. Belief that caring for learners matters
5. Credibility
6. Enthusiasm and commitment
7. Personal effectiveness
8. Enterprise knowledge
9. Ability to teach from the heart and spirit, as well as the mind

Training the Trainers

Sometimes people who design the continuing education are *not* the ones who ultimately deliver the sessions. Instructional designers rely on others to do the actual presenting, especially when someone else is the content expert. But what will help increase the likelihood of having effective training when you have someone else teach? What can we do to make sure the people delivering the material do so as we designed the session? Here are some key elements to consider when you have someone else teach:

1. Recruitment and selection
Take deliberate and calculative steps to select the right person(s) to teach. Context expertise is but one attribute to consider. Be sure to carefully based on criteria on the previous page
2. Bring them up to speed on the continuing education session
Develop their understanding of the continuing education session you developed by providing them the background, context, and history of the session. This will include why decisions were made and who are the key stakeholders. Be sure to provide a full version of all facilitator documents (lesson plans, facilitator guides, readings, handouts, etc.) for the entire session; these will need to be reviewed before the first session he or she facilitates.
3. Dry run
Don't leave details to chance. After the trainers you select have the opportunity to review the lesson plans, take him or her through a dry run of the continuing education session. This can be done as a table-top exercise or in an actual session. Though it takes time, it is well worth the investment! Make sure he or she fully understands all the details of the session before you allow any solo performance.
4. Observe
After the dry run, observe the trainer as he or she conducts the first session on his- or her own. Be available to answer questions, guide the trainer, or step in should the session go completely awry.
5. Feedback
After the trainer's first session, spend time immediately following the session to provide feedback on his or her performance. What things went well? What things did not go as planned (and why)? Were expectations met? What needs to be done differently in the future?