

# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



Today's topic: **What's the difference between Training, Seminars, and Workshops? Aren't they essentially the same?**

Professional development is a core value to the oil & gas industry worldwide.

The three traditional methods are Education, Training and Mentorship.

This is an introduction to the various forms of professional development, and also examines the common misuse in describing these methods.

Key understanding : Quite often, the term **"training"** is mistakenly used to describe what should be properly described as **"education"** ( **i.e. seminars, workshops, lectures**).

# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



At [ArtificialLift.pro](http://ArtificialLift.pro), three types of formats are offered for oil & gas production artificial lift professional development.

1. Training – (predominantly our recommendation, and the method of choice by our clients)
2. Educational Seminars
3. Educational Workshops

How do you evaluate which form of professional development is best suited for you and your company?

A sad truth is that many people in our industry broadly use the term “training” to mean something that is actually not training at all. So let’s define what each of the three terms above actually means.

## **Question:**

**What is the definition of training? And how does it differ from other forms of professional development such as seminars, lecture presentations and workshops?**

# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



## Answer:

Measurable skill set output is the best litmus test to define whether you've actually received training.

After completing training, you should be proficient at executing pre-defined objectives introduced as the "measurables" prior to commencing training. These objectives should be clearly listed in any class description. Read the objectives carefully, as these define the valuable "takeaways" you'll achieve

During training, you should actually learn these skill sets and do them during training to demonstrate that you understand and know how to do it. Training is an interactive process. You'll find that you will be putting your newly acquired knowledge and processes to work during training. It's usually a lot of fun, and frequently challenging to participants.

If objectives are not listed, or are not measurable – THEN IT IS NOT TRAINING! Instead, you'd be spending your time in something else called a seminar, workshop, or other form of presentation.

# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



Have you ever attended a session where you just hear an expert talk and talk and talk about lots of things he knows on a particular topic, while the attendees try to stay focused but find themselves drifting away in thought. Often at the end of the day, you find that all that time in a seminar was just information-in and information-out, without any real practical skill set learned. A couple of weeks later, you remember even less.

So real training is about learning skill sets that meet target objectives and are measurable. And those skill sets you should be able to apply on your job, after completion of training. These new skill sets also should be valuable to your business.

Training is very much a process, and requires a lot of preparation time. It also requires experienced facilitators who are learned on techniques to best communicate and relate ways for you to capture knowledge and learn new processes. Facilitators are also experienced to handle many of the situations that can occur during training. Facilitators are focused during training to achieve target objectives with 100% proficiency.

# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



Rule of thumb – for every one hour of real training, there are 25 - 40 hours of program work to prepare. So a three day training session would typically require an investment of about 700-1000 hours of preparation. Training is indeed an investment.

One more note about training. Its value can easily be quantified financially. The net effect of training can be demonstrated to directly affect a company's bottom line profits. In other words, training provides the means for a return on investment (ROI), whose functions are set forth in the measurable curriculum objectives. For example, in the oil and gas business, this would translate into definable OPEX savings and production revenue increases by way of the new skill sets learned in training.

Whereas, all those other forms of professional development are actually education – similar to your school days. Educational formats used in industry today are seminars, lectures and workshops. These are rarely "takeaway" skill-set focused, the objectives are not measured during class for each participant against the objectives, and often time soon after the session is completed, the information is not readily or accurately retained by the attendee. However, there are reference

# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



notes and printed material that can be accessed again, although frequently this never occurs.

One advantage to a seminar is that it can be prepared quickly by an SME on a topic of interest by prospective attendees. Of course, the SME believes he knows what is best to present. He would often believe he has an intuitive understanding of what the audience needs to know, or work from a cursory outline of interest items from the audience.

## **Question:**

**So what exactly is a seminar?**

## **Answer:**

In the oil and gas industry, seminars are group gatherings in which a single or multiple subject matter experts (SME) gather for a presentation by the SME around a topic of interest.

These presentations frequently utilize MS Powerpoint visuals during the mostly one way oratory by the presenter. Questions can be raised by the audience. Often times, a notebook binder is provided with a copy of

# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



the Powerpoint presentation, and some other support information. Perhaps there is an exercise or two during the presentation, formatted similar to instruction used in High School. Sometimes, there is an exercise acted out during the class. In this case, this would often be the class highlight mentioned by attendees as it breaks the monotony of lecture format.

In most educational seminars and workshops, more than 80% + of the actual talking and exercises are done by the SME presenter. Compare this with training, where significantly less amount time involves facilitator presentations and instead participants would be in active mode to learn their new skill sets.

Granted, in seminars the attendees are able to gather a lot of information. In fact, there is often an information overload. It's up to them to sort it all out, and determine what is useful. The dilemma for attendees of a seminar is what to do with the information once they get back to their jobs!

# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



There may be objectives shown for a seminar in pre-announcement advertisements. Mostly these are indefinite and hard to measure.

If you find yourself drifting off often during a lecture or hearing pop off questions from other attendees, then you're probably in a SME seminar.

## **Question:**

### **What's a workshop?**

## **Answer:**

As seminars have lost their welcome mat over the years, workshops are being introduced more and more as a way to bring together professionals in the oil and gas industry, without having to define measurable objectives nor invest time and expense in training development.

Workshops bring together lots of people and invite them to prepare a presentation themselves. This helps get away from the old fashioned and unpopular method of a single SME lecturer. It allows multiple SME lecturers from the common group to present.



# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



Some advantages to educational workshops, versus a seminar:

1. You are refreshed by continual new presentations on varying topics by different presenters.
2. The SME presenters are often the attendees.
3. Workshops include a lot of social break time for attendees to get to know each other and have a good time.

The cost of a seminar and workshop should be a lot less than training as there is significantly less curriculum development investment. Still, the meals, meeting rooms, travel, etc add up!

Today in the market place, there are actually some vendors of educational workshops charging in the area of \$5000-\$6000, **without any measurable skill set takeaways or professional curriculum development.**

In essence, these workshops are charging large sums of money for the participants to present their own SME Powerpoints. Meanwhile, the organizers make sure to show the participants a good time!

Note that seminars are not intended to be training sessions, unless each curriculum is clearly defined with

# Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development



measurable skill sets objectives. So beware if you see the word training when reviewing a workshop or seminar outline and program description. Don't expect it (training) unless you can measure it. However, sometimes a training session can be included in a workshop, and in this case valuable takeaways achieved by participants. It's up to the workshop council to decide whether or not to include real training in their workshop together with the SME presentations.

The good news : Most people will agree that it's a lot more enjoyable to attend a workshop and listen to a lot of experts through the workshop days on various topics, instead of just one or two lecturers the whole time like you would in a seminar.

On the flip side of the coin, workshops do not typically have skill set training. So often the net result of seminars and workshops is that it's in one ear and out the other. Sum it up as a good repository of information from varied sources, some interaction and lessons learned, and hopefully a good time to get to know other professionals.

# **Oil & Gas Production Artificial Lift Professional Development**



**Bottom line – Know what you want before you sign up for any type of professional development. Understand the differences between training, and educational seminars, and workshops.**

**And don't assume that just because someone uses the word "training" in their description that you'll actually be receiving it – unless the objectives are well defined and measurable, by way of takeaway skill sets that you can apply on your job once training is completed.**

We hope this brief on training and educational professional development has been informative and helpful.

**Interested to learn more about Oil & Gas production training? Looking for a special class, and would like to find out what is currently already scheduled? Please visit [www.ArtificialLift.pro](http://www.ArtificialLift.pro) and send an email today [service@ArtificialLift.pro](mailto:service@ArtificialLift.pro)**

**We'd like to hear from you! Please let us know how we can assist and be of service. Thank you.**

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**Other topics? Please contact us today and let us know how we can be of help.**

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