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*Ruby Newell-Legner, Certified Speaking Professional, is considered the pre-eminent Customer Satisfaction Expert in the Sports & Leisure Industry today.*

*For over two decades Ruby has been helping organizations make exceptional customer service a way of life.*

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*Ruby's Satisfied Clients include:*

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  - Dolphin Stadium**
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  - Heinz Field**
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  - Ralph Wilson Stadium**
  - RCA Dome**
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## 5 Mistakes in Staff Training

*By Ruby Newell-Legner, CSP*

We have all attended training sessions that made us wish we were at the dentist getting a root canal instead. But what makes a program so miserable? Here are a few mistakes trainers make and how to avoid them.

### **Mistake #1 - Sending the "Mandatory Memo" for staff training**

Invite staff to attend and let them know why the training is taking place and why their attendance is important. Get them excited about attending. Training should be an opportunity not a punishment so create a learning culture so employees embrace staff development. Recognize new hires with a special orientation designed just for them.

### **Mistake #2 - Doing the same old stuff year after year**

It has been said that sometimes organizations "Breathe their own exhaust." Although I think that is a little harsh, I certainly understand how some folks get in a rut and just don't know how to do something different. Some take the philosophy that "We have always done it that way." And I bet their staff is sick and tired of it. Involve the attendees in the training. Have group activities that engage everyone to their comfort level. Not everyone likes to get up in front of a group and share so have different ways to involve them. A small discussion group where someone reports back to the group is more accommodating and productive.

Please see *5 Mistakes in Staff Training* on page 2

## The Handoff: Turning Fans into Season Ticket Holders One Step at a Time

*By Ruby Newell-Legner, CSP*

In every organization there is a handoff of some kind. It is a time when one employee finishes their responsibilities with the customer and then 'hands off' the patron to the next staff member. These specific moments can either paint a positive picture or set the customer up for multiple disappointments. Here are the key steps in a handoff, using the example I used while presenting the Guest Relations Training Program for Heinz Field, home of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

### **Selling the Ticket**

The first step probably involves the purchase of an event ticket. If the ticket agent is positive, friendly, and enthusiastic about their job, not only do they sell the ticket, they offer insight in making seating choices.

They ask questions like, "Do you like seats in the middle of the field or do you prefer to be in the shade?" An astute sales person will prepare for the handoff by explaining the best

Please see *The Handoff* on page 2

*5 Mistakes in Staff Training from page 1*


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*"Ruby's Guest Services training sessions for our event supervisors exceeded our expectations. She did an exceptional job and probably gave Dolphin Stadium our most informative and fun supervisor training sessions in our stadium's history."*

**Andrew Major,  
Sr. Director Guest  
Services and Ticketing,  
Dolphin Stadium**

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*"Ruby not only speaks, but she delivers a very enthusiastic, informative, 'out of the box' thought provoking presentation on how to improve the performance of employees. Ruby challenged, Ruby shared ideas, Ruby responded to the needs of over 300 employees of the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum."  
"Ruby is the key to turn satisfactory customer service into extraordinary customer service."*

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**Randy L. Brown, CFE,  
General Manager,  
Allen County War  
Memorial Coliseum**

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**Mistake #3 - Not designing the training to reflect your expectations of their responsibilities and actions**

First assess what tools they will need to succeed. Then invite key leaders at every level to be involved in the planning of the program. Review problems staff members have encountered in the past and develop guidelines to help them avoid those problems in the future.

**Mistake #4 - Lecturing to employees on and on**

Presenters think that just because they "told them" that employees will do what they cover in the training. Adults can only listen as long as their bottoms can endure. Get creative with the presentation and make it fun. Participants appreciate a variation in delivery and will learn better from interaction.

**Mistake #5 - No follow up or Recognition Program**

That which is not reinforced disappears." Decide what is really important and then reinforce it every chance you get. Create a staff recognition program for the end of the year or the end of the season to celebrate everyone's accomplishments.

Call Ruby today at 303-933-9291 to learn how to design and implement your staff development and recognition program. After presenting over 1400 programs in nine countries, Ruby has the knowledge and expertise to set your staff up for a great season.

*The Handoff from page 1*


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place to park and the best gate to enter based on the seat location. Offering a detailed map of the stadium when the ticket agent hands the customer their ticket is a nice touch. If the ticket seller offers a fan guide to the purchaser, even better!

**Parking at the Event**

When the sports fan arrives at the game, they enter the parking area with a smile because they already know the best place to park. When the parking attendant greets them with a smile and directs them into the assigned space in a pleasant manner, impressions are on a positive role. If the parking lot attendant notices the guests carrying a large bag of goodies and a big thermos of liquid as they leave their car, it is appropriate for the parking lot attendant to warn the guest of the guidelines for what fans can take into the stadium using a positive demeanor to explain it to them. Adding "I thought you would want to know before you got all the way up there," can help avoid an ugly confrontation after the fan has walked from the parking lot all the way to the stadium. Once again, the handoff has been positive and promoted a positive experience for the fans and the employees.

**Entering the Venue**

When the fans reach the gate with a long line, a preventive action can be for security personnel to clarify bottle guidelines with fans before they get up to the gate. This allows a patron time to drink whatever they have in a glass bottle or make decisions on how to dispose of it without feeling the pressure of everyone when they hold up the line at the gate. This also makes the process run smoother for the ticket takers.

Please see *The Handoff* on page 4

# Your Checklist to Make Every Training Program a Success!

By Ruby Newell-Legner, CSP

## Planning the Training Session – Clarify and Identify Expectations

- Review past seasons and determine what your focus will be for training this season.
- Gather input from department heads or key leaders. Determine the focus for the training, specific topic or general orientation.
- List the specific results you hope to achieve from the training. Answer these questions to help you determine the agenda:  
After the training is over,  
- What do we want the participants to know? (Information that they need to do their job)  
- What do we want the participants to feel? (Attitudes)  
- What do we want the participants to do? (Skills and actions)
- Identify and list experts in the areas you are seeking results. (In-house leaders, outstanding staff examples or outside experts in the field)

- Identify selection process for presenters. (Credibility, expertise, experience, ability to captivate an audience.)

## Planning the Training Session – The Details

- Choose a location, type of meeting room and the best date. Confirm that date works for everyone involved in the training.
- Insure the learners are "Invited" to attend. An invitation will get better results than the "Mandatory Training" Memo. Promote excitement about attendance.
- The invitation should include all the details like, when, where, how long, agenda, meal details, where to park,

specific entrance of the building if working in a large facility. Extend the invitation for attendees to submit questions before the training to make sure you cover their answers.

- Arrange for food and beverages as well as any materials for the meeting. (Pencils, nametags, and handouts.)
- Confirm site arrangements including AV and room set up. Arrange for signs, if needed, to direct participants to the training session.
- Prepare nametags or name tents and a list of attendees in alphabetical order to easily check them off as they arrive.

## The Day of the Training Session

- Arrive early and inspect the room for correct set-up. Post signs and set up a 'check-in' table.
- Double check equipment and supplies. Make sure there is power to the speaking area for AV equipment and provide a visible clock to presenters so they stay within their time frames.
- Create a friendly and collegial atmosphere. Be prepared before anyone gets there. Have key leaders welcome participants as they arrive. Have their materials set out for them to pick up as they enter.
- Create an opportunity for everyone to get to know their co-workers. Orchestrate an icebreaker exercise or activity to help participants mingle and get to introduce themselves.
- During the training, get everyone involved. Adults won't just sit still and be spoon-fed information. They want to participate.
- Use a game format to cover your materials and energize the learning

environment. Good examples are versions of Jeopardy, Trivial Pursuit, and Survivor.

- Encourage small group activities so that participants all get a chance to talk.
- Utilize visual aids to increase retention, it's "Velcro for the mind." Use audio, video, flipcharts, magic tricks, demonstrations, and PowerPoint.
- Distribute and collect evaluations.
- Thank everyone for attending.

## After the Training

- Create a way to review what they learned after the training. (Newsletters, staff meetings, bulletin boards and pop quizzes before events)
- Keep track of topics to add to next year's training as the season progresses.
- Schedule post-season debriefings with the participants to identify what went well and what should be changed for future training sessions.

Sure there are a lot of details to remember, but this checklist will get you through any standard staff training session and make it a success.

For more resources and FREE articles, visit [www.GuestRelationsTraining.com](http://www.GuestRelationsTraining.com)

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*"Ruby and her team delivered!!!  
I heartily recommend Ruby for your customer service and management training needs."*

**Ronald P. Krueger II, Regional  
Vice President, 2004 Convention  
Programming Chair  
National Association of  
Concessionaires (NAC)**

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*The Handoff* from page 2**Being Seated**

Once inside the stadium, ushers can begin positive relationships with those in their section by offering assistance to find their seat. Simple reminders for fans to take their tickets with them if they leave the section will help avoid delays or a possible altercation after a quick dash to the restroom!

**Assistance with Concessions**

When merchandise vendors know where specialty foods can be purchased and can direct fans to the correct location, refreshment stand workers often return the favor. Food vendors can direct their customers to a specific cart or store selling specific sports paraphernalia. One good turn deserves another. When this kind of synergy is not in affect, the entire experience becomes a nightmare for the fan. Let's look at the other option for each stage of the handoff.

Imagine the decrease in ticket sales with just one encounter like this... The ticket seller doesn't explain where to park or where to enter the stadium so the fan misses kick off because they were lost. When they finally get to the gate with all their stuff, security tells them they can't bring it in and they have to take it all back to the car. Grrr. After finally getting to their seats, little Johnny decides he wants Dippin' Dots so dad takes Johnny up to the snack bar. No one on the concourse knows where Dad can buy Dippin' Dots and after settling for regular ice cream,

the "ticket police" won't let dad and Johnny back into their section because Mom has their tickets. What are the chances of that family becoming season ticket holders or even coming back for another game? Probably slim!

Whether you are running a special event or managing guest relations staff, there is always a handoff from teammate to teammate. Are your players aware of the importance they all play in this process?

The experience each team member creates at every stage of the handoff can turn your one time guest into a season ticket holder...or not!

*For assistance in creating an environment where every "Handoff" creates an opportunity to turn a one time guest into a season ticket holder, schedule Ruby to contribute to your seasonal staff training.  
Call today! 303-933-9291*



**Ruby Newell-Legner, CSP**  
Speaker • Trainer • Author

*Specializing in Guest Relations Training for the Sports and Entertainment Industry*

Ruby's training sessions are perfect for:

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- ✓ Ushers
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- ✓ Merchandise Sellers
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For additional resources and to sign up for Ruby's *FREE* Electronic Newsletter, "Great Customer Service for Leisure Professionals", visit [www.GuestRelationsTraining.com](http://www.GuestRelationsTraining.com)

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