

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

How to use John Medina's *Brain Rules* in your next meeting.

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Q: I'm planning our association's upcoming conference. How can I ensure participants actually remember and use what they learn?

A: According to *Brain Rules*, by John Medina, people usually forget 90 percent of what they learn within 30 days. However, if you understand how the brain functions, you can greatly improve retention and application of new information.

Following are seven of Medina's original 12 rules, with explanations for how they apply to a meeting planner's job.

The brain appears to be designed to solve problems. Encourage speakers to build and implement practice exercises that challenge learners. It's recommended that practice time comprise between 35 and 50 percent of education sessions. Practice time includes practice activities, facilitator feedback and both pre- and post-assessments.

Move to improve your thinking skills.

Develop opportunities throughout the program to get participants out of their seats and moving throughout the room or venue (e.g., breaks, meal functions). Additionally, ask speakers to consider flipcharts, manipulatives, networking and roleplaying as excuses to get people on their feet.

The biological drive for an afternoon nap is universal. The afternoon energy slump is real. It occurs between the hours of 2 and 3 p.m. Planners should avoid scheduling heavy topics during this time, and speakers should design curricula full of engagement and interaction when asked to speak during this so-called nap zone.

We don't pay attention to boring things. Audiences tend to check out after only 10 minutes of content. To

regain their attention, invite speakers to tell personal narratives based on their experiences or to create events rich in emotion.

Repeat to remember. Recommend that speakers leverage learning materials like slide decks and participant handouts to repeat new information in timed intervals throughout their presentations. Periodic breaks will also allow participants the opportunity for reflection.

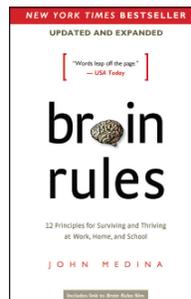
Stimulate more of the senses at the same time. Audiences learn best if we stimulate several senses at once. Provide speakers with the resources necessary to integrate the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch into their instructional experiences when delivering particularly complex concepts.

Vision trumps all other senses. The power of visual tools such as PowerPoint, Prezi, videos, handouts and job aids should not be underestimated. It's said that if participants hear a piece of information, three days later they're likely to remember 10 percent of it. Add a picture and they're likely to remember 65 percent.

Implementing a handful of these simple techniques, when combined with quality meeting management, can enhance an organization's professional development offerings. Often, this means working hand-in-hand with speakers and other subject matter experts well in advance to share with them your expectations. 

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BRAIN RULES BY JOHN MEDINA
brainrules.net



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