Best Practice Guide:
How to Find New Attendees for Training Courses

(Key Ideas from the CASTIEL Training Best Practices Seminar on 20 January 2022)

To find new attendees for training courses organised by your NCC, you should consider two points:
1. You need interesting courses for these new attendees, e.g. a course specifically targeting this new audience.
2. You must successfully communicate your training offers to make new attendees aware of your courses.

This document wants to give hints on best practices for these two points.

CREATING A COURSE SPECIFICALLY FOR (AND TO ATTRACT) A NEW AUDIENCE

Start by investigating the following:
- What the new audience needs and expects with regard to content, including prerequisites,
- How the course is delivered,
- The methods used and
- How you should address and where to find new attendees.

Ask possibly interested institutions and potential attendees about these aspects. See also the following part on how to communicate training for the last point.

Further, set goals for this new course:
- What do you want to teach?
- How many new attendees (with which background etc.) do you want to reach?
- Other objectives, for example with respect to outreach/visibility on regional/national/international level?

Then tailor the course to your future customers' needs.

Keep in mind the difference between professional training vs. education in all aspects of your planning. In particular, find an appropriate way to deliver the course (in presence, online live/synchronous, online self-paced), consider didactic aspects and how long each part/unit should be, etc.

In general, it is good practice for every course to care about the following:

- Didactic and pedagogical methods,

- Technical methods: Should an online platform be used? If so, which one? On what device(s) will the materials be viewed (smartphone, laptop, …)? Take this into account whilst planning the course.

- Whether collaborative learning might be a good choice,

- How to be learner-centred with active involvement of the learner. For example, you could ask learners about how topics relate to them (if they see any connection) or other (for learners) interesting questions. Start an interaction between lecturer and learner.

- A modular structure: Plan no more than five central learning outcomes per module/unit. This is helpful in many aspects: provide a clear structure, add interaction in each module. Modules might be reused in other course/context.

- Having links between sessions with different modules/units (if more than one). This might be, for instance, a recap or a quiz at the beginning of the following module. It is a good practice to have material in the previous module prepared for the recap or to give learners questions to reflect upon and discuss in the next session.

Finally, one should measure the success of the work done.
Indicators might be:
- Individual learning success and engagement with the course,
- Institutional engagement with the programme,
- Satisfaction with and impact of the programme.

Options to gather data about these indicators could be

- Registration forms,
- Engagement with the materials on learning management systems (LMS) and tracking across the LMS platform (if possible),
- Feedback forms,
- Reflective statements by trainers,
- Interviews,
- Post engagement with the programme by outside evaluators.

COMMUNICATING TRAINING COURSES

Communicating training is part of the marketing.

1. Start with answering the W-questions.

Question	Sample answer
What is the training about?	Training on a newly developed tool
When will it take place?	01.06.2023, 13:00-18:00h CEST
Who is organising/giving the training?	NCC Germany, HLRS
Where will it take place?	Nobelstr. 19, Stuttgart, Germany
Why do you organise this training?	We want to demonstrate our new tool.

→ Your answers should be as precise as possible, for instance do not forget the time zone.

2. The next step is to define goals that your marketing campaign should reach. Stick to the SMART principle. This means your goal has to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.

3. Further, you need to decide on the target group(s) to which you want to communicate your training event. The more precisely you can define the target group, the better, since it allows to tailored messages and communication channels as much as possible. For instance, a good target group definition is "decision makers from engineering SMEs with less than 200 employees", instead of "people from industry". If possible, do research on your target group(s).

4. After preparation of the basic steps above, tailored (or targeted) messages should be created. It might be beneficial to work with people specialised in marketing at this point (e.g. marketing department, external agency). For the tailored messages, think about 3-4 relevant points that could be used, such as problem solutions, benefits your target group could gain or breakthroughs. Working with numbers is a good strategy (e.g., the new tool saves 50% of your time). If you work with marketing specialists, prepare these points in advance.

5. Determine the channels you want to use to spread your messages. They should be effective and efficient for the target group(s). The typical channels are e.g. press, trade fairs, your own channels like websites, newsletters, mailing lists and social media. Also chambers of commerce and other professional associations might be good channels. Only relevant channels for the course's target group should be used.

6. Then appropriate content needs to be produced for each channel. Use images, videos and a suitable amount of text (not too long). The text should be simple but precise and adapted to the target group (e.g. write "supercomputer" instead of "HPC" for deciders in industry). Stick to AIDA for this, i.e. catch the readers'/watchers' Attention, spark Interest and Desire to attend the course and finally make them Act by registering for the course (provide a link or a QR-code).

7. Finally, evaluate the result of your work and if the measurable goals are met.