What We've Learned About Adult Learners at PLRB/LIRB Events…

Here are a few things we've learned about adult learners over many years of PLRB/LIRB educational events:

1. Adults like to learn new things within the context of their considerable, past experiences.
2. They appreciate respect from facilitators or presenters.
3. Adults seek answers to specific problems, rather than acquiring more information about a topic. They seek real-world content that is practical and job-related.
4. They seek and admire true subject matter expertise by presenters.
5. Adults abhor sales promotions or "info-mercials" posing as education.
6. They like to be challenged, but not overly frustrated by a learning event.
7. They expect well-organized and well-orchestrated classes, with clear handouts and visuals.
8. Adults like to share and learn from classmates, as well as from facilitators or presenters.
9. They are curious about how others across the industry face the same day to day challenges associated with various job demands.
10. Adults like a comfortable learning setting: proper room temperature, plenty of space, easy to hear and see the presentation. They like a relaxed, trusting, informal and supportive climate.
11. They like to be able to negotiate and influence some aspects of the agenda.
12. Adults like to be surprised and delighted by the content or activities.
13. They appreciate humor, but not jokes or sarcasm.
14. Adult learners like job aides to take away and share with colleagues back home.
15. They like learning activities to be re-set every 10-15 minutes within the life of the presentation.
16. Adults learn best when actively engaged in the learning process. They resonate with active learning. Passive learning is a "drag." They like to participate and help shape their own learning.
17. They learn differently: by seeing, hearing and doing. Doing is best. Telling isn't training.
18. Adults like a challenge, using attainable goals and results.
19. Adults like encouragement and sincere praise. Positive reinforcement enhances learning.
20. Education is a joint enterprise. Persons are more important than the information to be learned.