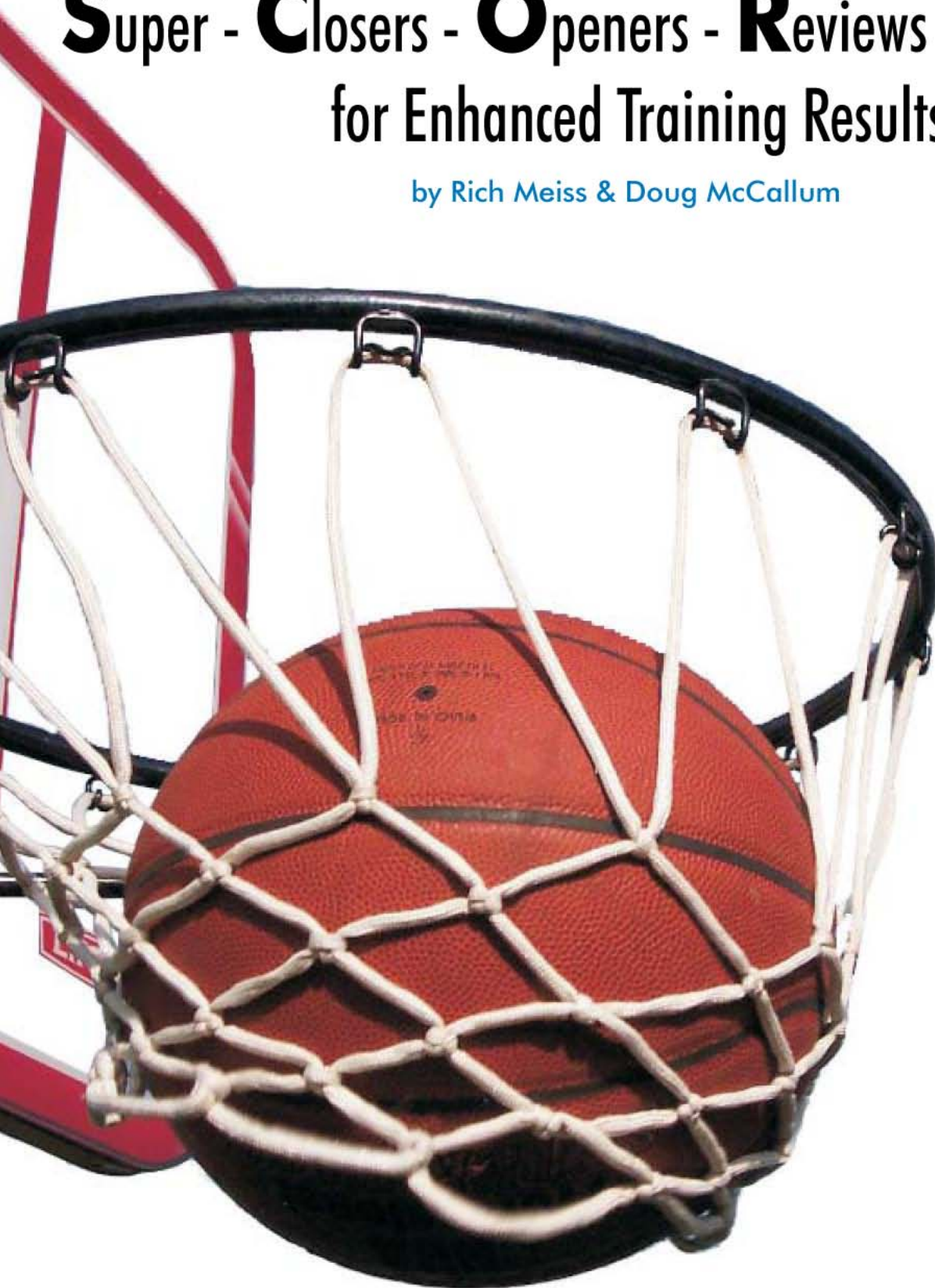


SCORE!

Super - **C**losers - **O**peners - **R**eviews - **E**nergizers
for Enhanced Training Results

by Rich Meiss & Doug McCallum



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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Here are four simple steps for using this book effectively:

1. Remind yourself why it is important to use closers, openers, reviews and energizers by reading the first page of each chapter.
2. Select the appropriate category — closers, openers, reviews and energizers.
3. Pick the best exercise based on PATS MBA (see the next page).
4. Practice, practice and practice using the exercise before you actually use it.

Why Use Closers, Openers, Reviews and Energizers?

Each chapter gives more detail about the reasons to use these core exercise in your presentations, but here is a general overview. Too many presentations simply start and end, without a process or purpose. Yet research reveals that people remember best that which they see or hear first and last, so we need to start strong and end strong — using good openers and closers. The purpose of reviews is to make sure the participants really learn the content. A favorite phrase we use is “Just because you said it doesn’t mean they learned it.” Review multiple times with a variety of methods to insure learning takes place. And energizers are used to keep participants alive in the session.

What Categories Are Included in the Book?

Although many of these exercises can be used for multiple purposes, we have divided them into four key categories:

Closers

Openers

Review techniques

Energizers

They are the CORE to help you SCORE and win in your presentations. Each exercise has been placed into one of these categories and put in that section of the book. In addition, we have often indicated that the exercise may be used for another purpose. For example, several of the review techniques are also good energizers.

How Do I Decide Which Exercise to Use?

There are many details to consider before choosing an exercise. What is my purpose? What do I know about my audience, and will this exercise work for them? What about time and space considerations? What materials do I need, and how much will it cost to purchase them? And will participants be able to gain a learning point and apply it as a result of the exercise?

You can answer these questions briefly by glancing at the format of each page. Each exercise is explained in detail in the following areas.

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Purpose

Audience

Time

Space

Materials

Budget

Application

Also, each exercise includes

Process — the step-by-step procedure for using it

Cautions in using it

Variations with its use

Why Do I Need to Practice the Exercise?

Good presenters make an exercise look easy, but usually that is only because they have used it a number of times. My experience is that I need to try out an exercise several times — either on some friends and relatives in a low-risk setting, or in front of a mirror by myself — before I have the word track and the flow down to use it effectively. Remember the 6 P's: **P**roper **P**reparation and **P**actice **P**revent **P**oor **P**erformance!

Enjoy these CORE exercises!

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CLOSERS



Why start with closers, you may ask. Isn't that a strange way to begin a book?

The answer is really quite simple. In my experience, it is the part of a presentation that is usually the most difficult to execute in an effective way. For most people, closing just happens.

“Well, I see our time is up, so thanks for being here.”

“Oh my goodness, it's already four o'clock. I'll see you tomorrow.”

“OK, that's it for our session today. Please fill out the evaluation.”

Those approaches are all boring and ineffective!

As I write this, I am reminded of the closing ceremony at the Olympic games that I just observed. What a show it was! There was music, dancing, and fireworks. There were inspiring words from dignitaries. There was celebrating by the athletes as they paraded through the stadium, many of them carrying the flag of their country or showing off their gold, silver or bronze medals. There was a transition from the current games to the next games in four years. It was fabulous!

That's the way a presentation, training or facilitation should close – with power and impact. I use the acronym STAR to remember the key elements of a good closing:

S – Summarize

T – Tie things together

A – Apply the new learning

R – Wrap up: close with power!

Here are a few more thoughts on each of these steps. In a presentation, it is OK for the presenter to summarize or review key content. In a training session, it is better to allow the participants to summarize, as they'll retain and use more of the content that way.

Tie things together by circling back to the beginning of the presentation. Help participants recall how you began, and close the circle for them. I am reminded of the great example of this in the movie “Forrest Gump.” In the opening scene, a feather is blowing through the streets, and it ends up by the foot of Forrest Gump, who puts it in his *Curious George* book. At the end of the movie, as he is putting young Forrest on the bus, he hands him the book, and the feather breaks free and blows back through the streets. The story is complete. Good closings bring completion.

The application part of the STAR acronym is important in training and facilitation sessions. Give the participants time to reflect on the content, write down some goals or action plans, and share how they'll put the ideas into use.

And then wrap it up – with power. Do something to celebrate the learning and leave participants wanting more.

Here are some effective closings that will make you a star!

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WADDED PAPER

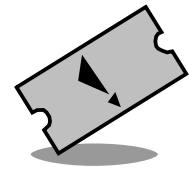
- Purpose:** To give participants a fun yet effective way to reinforce their new learning and build new habits
- Audience:** Any size, usually a training class audience. Individual exercise
- Time:** Five minutes
- Space:** No extra requirements
- Materials:** One 3 x 5" card or Post-it® Notes sheet per participant, and pens
- Budget:** Limited
- Application:** Help participants recognize the power of using a simple reminder to develop a new habit.
- Process:**
1. Ask participants how long it takes to develop a new habit, at least according to conventional wisdom. (In his classic best-selling book from the 1960s, *Psycho-Cybernetics* author Maxwell Maltz introduced the idea that it takes about 21 days to change a habit. Today the research suggests that the timeline is more like four to six weeks. I am told that Weight Watchers®, for example, suggests it takes 38 days to change an eating habit.)
 2. Tell them that you'd like to give them an opportunity to build one idea they've learned in class into a new habit. Have them select a key idea, and write it down on the card or Post-it. After everyone has their idea written down, have them hold the card up to their forehead, and think about how they are going to use this idea, and what benefits they'll gain when they do.
 3. Then ask them to wad the paper up into a little ball. (I usually say jokingly at this point, "Now please don't eat this, and don't throw it at anyone.") Tell them that they need to carry this wadded paper with them for the next four weeks to make this new idea a habit. Encourage them to take it with them each time they change slacks, purses or handbags (or wherever they carry the paper).
 4. Explain that we each need reminders to do what we know we should do to get better results. Challenge them to apply the new behavior and develop it into a habit.



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CLOSERS

OPENERS



“You never get a second chance to make a first impression!”

Although it is an old saying, its wisdom is eternal. The way you begin your presentation, training session or facilitation is critical to the overall success of it. Let’s go back to our Olympic example.

One of the questions I ask in my seminars is the following: “What Olympic events have the most expensive ticket price?” I usually get answers such as swimming, gymnastics or track and field. And once in awhile a participant will answer: “The opening and closing ceremonies!” Of course that is the correct answer.

I read in *USA Today* that the price of a single ticket (we’re talking face value here – not scalpers’ prices) for the opening ceremony at the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in 2002 was \$850. That’s a lot of money for a few hours of entertainment, but tens of thousands of people are willing to pay it! Why? Because they know they will be treated to a once-in-a-lifetime show.

Just as the Olympics ends with an incredible display of power, punch and pizzazz, it also opens that way. Music. Pageantry. Costumes. Fireworks. The parade of the athletes behind their nation’s flag. The lighting of the torch. All of these create an element of excitement and anticipation. And presentations, training sessions and facilitations should begin in a similar way.

I suggest that we take AIM for a powerful opening. This acronym stands for:

A – Attention: Get the positive attention of the group.

I – Involvement: Get the group mentally and physically involved.

M – Meaning: Help participants see the value of what you will present.

Get the positive attention of the group. Popular speaker Zig Ziglar has said, “I could walk out onto this stage in the nude, and I’d have your attention, but it wouldn’t be POSITIVE attention.” Most presenters start out talking about logistical information. BORING! Find a way to Warm Up the Crowd* in an engaging and positive way.

Get the group mentally and physically engaged. Many presentations don’t even engage people mentally, much less physically. Find a way to get participants to use their small and large muscle movements.

Answer the “What’s in It for Me” question! Help participants see the meaning, relevance and use of the material to be covered in the presentation. This step makes the difference between an icebreaker and an opener. It makes the opener relevant to the content and the participant. Let’s look at some good openers.

*For 57 additional ways to begin a program, see Rich Meiss and Dave Arch’s book, *Warming Up the Crowd*.

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OPENERS

FINDING TRUE NORTH

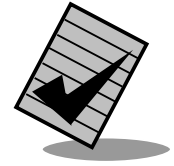
- Purpose:** To help participants learn the value of setting a direction
- Audience:** Any size
- Time:** 3 minutes
- Space:** Just enough room to stand and turn their bodies
- Materials:** None
- Budget:** None
- Application:** I like to use this exercise when I am working with organizations or teams of people who need to establish a direction – such as purpose, values, vision and goals.
- Process:**
1. Tell the participants to stand and do an exercise with you. Tell them that it won't hurt, and that you would like them to close their eyes.
 2. Tell them to keep their eyes closed, and say, "Please turn physically so that you are facing north. Your body should be turned so that you are facing in the direction of north. Please do that now." There will be a moment or two of awkward silence and then some moans and groans as they realize what you are asking them to do.
 3. Give them a moment to complete the exercise. Then tell them to open their eyes, and observe how people have turned. Allow a few moments for them to look around and laugh, as they see their fellow participants facing in nearly every direction.
 4. Ask, "Did anyone bring a compass today, or does anyone know exactly the direction of true North?" Pause for discussion.
 5. Then tie the exercise to your learning point and content for the presentation: "I call this exercise 'Finding True North.' It is designed to help us realize that unless we know where we stand and from where we are beginning, it is impossible to know in which direction we want to be moving."
 6. Ask a debrief question related to your presentation purpose. For example: "As an intact work team, how important is it to discover our true North – that is, our vision, mission and values as a team?" Pause for discussion.



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REVIEWS



“Just because you said it, doesn’t mean they learned it.”

This is a phrase most parents understand. And yet many presenters have a hard time with this phrase until they really stop and think about it. Most of us do not remember much of the information that we have only heard one time.

In research at the University of Southern California, Albert Mehrabian came up with some statistics on the importance of covering a topic multiple times. His research suggests the following:

If people hear something one time, they will remember less than 10% after 30 days.

If they hear it six times with interval reinforcement, they will remember as much as 90% after 30 days.

(Interval reinforcement means that they hear the information at different intervals, versus hearing it six times in succession.)

In a presentation or meeting, it is important for the presenter to think about which points he or she wants participants to remember, and find a way to cover them multiple times. And in a training session, the trainer must find a way to review often if the goal is for learning to occur.

In our train-the-trainer sessions, we suggest the following key points as related to review:

Review early and often.

Don’t call it “review.”

Use a variety of review techniques.

All too often presenters wait until the very end to review their key content. One of the secrets to helping participants learn is to review early and often. After presenting a key content module, find a way for the participants to review it to help the learning stick.

We suggest that presenters avoid the “R” word (don’t call it “review”), because we all know that when we hear the word “review,” our brain says, “Been there, done that” and we tend to tune out. Good presenters do a lot of reviews, but they avoid using the word.

Use a variety of review techniques. This section of the *SCORE!* book will give you a number of options for review techniques.

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REVIEWS

ALPHABET PROBE

- Purpose:** To help participants review the content of the class
- Audience:** Smaller training audiences can do this at wall charts in groups of 4-6; larger groups would need to do it at their tables or chairs.
- Time:** 5 – 7 minutes
- Space:** No extra space required
- Materials:** Chart pads, tape and markers, or blank sheets of paper
- Budget:** Minimal
- Application:** This exercise is a celebratory and interactive way for participants to review key content covered in the training session.
- Process:**
1. Have each team get a piece of chart paper, some masking tape and a set of markers, and hang their chart paper on the wall.
 2. Have them draw a line down the middle of the chart, and write the letters A – M down the left side of the chart, and the letters N – Z down the middle of the chart.
 3. Have the teams gather around their charts. When you give the signal, have them begin writing down words, ideas or concepts that have been covered in class by each of the letters of the alphabet. Make sure they are all engaged in the writing.
 4. Call time after five minutes. You may debrief by having someone from each team call out the words they came up with for each letter.
 5. Be flexible with the harder letters. For example, “x” could be something “x-tra.”
- Cautions:** None
- Variations:** Have this become a competition, with the team completing the most letters in five minutes declared the winner.



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