

Ten Things Not Do At Your Training Day Based on genuine experiences that have really happened to Independent Thinking speakers over the last few years - by Ian Gilbert

Most organisers we work with get things right first time and make our lives so much easier. And for that, we thank you. But there are some who organise conferences and training days who could do with a few pointers. Here are ten from us that we hope you will find useful...

1. Think teachers can start the day without a cup of coffee. Teachers can't go for more than 90 minutes without it either. Bacon sandwiches first thing always go down well too.
2. Make the introduction too long - *'...so, by the time our speaker got to university the war was entering it's endgame, as Churchill once said...'*; too short - *'Morning colleagues, here's Simon'*; too clichéd - *'So, without further ado...'*; too weird - *'Before I introduce our speaker for the day I want us to take this opportunity to give the person next to you a big hug and tell them that you're there for them'*; too distracting - *'Remember, we've allotted five minutes at the end of the day to go through the redundancy details agreed with the governors last night'*; too off putting - *'Before I introduce our speaker for the day I'm afraid I have to tell you that Harry from Science died yesterday evening and that we'll be having a whip round in the break. Anyway, over to you now David to inspire us...'* or just plain wrong - *'OK children, just before I welcome our motivational speaker, here's a video on the Holocaust...'*

How you first heard about a speaker and how what they are going to talk about fits with where you want to go will be fine

3. Leave as soon as you have given the introduction if you are the headteacher
4. Not find out what equipment the speaker needs or else find out and then ignore it – we don't all use PowerPoint and just because you spent all that money on a fancy projector doesn't mean to say you always have to use it!
5. Have the speaker at one end of a long thin hall, miles away from the back row. Put them on the side wall if necessary with a horseshoe around where the speaker will be speaking from. Just make sure that any visual aids such as a flipchart or screen do not end up in front of the audience at the edges – check your sight lines
6. Have someone drilling, hammering, mowing, cooking loudly, clattering crockery or listening to Ken Bruce within 100 yards of the venue
7. Have a tea urn boiling away noisily in the corner all day
8. Bring the food into the hall 30 minutes before the allotted lunch break. It's hard for a speaker to compete with the smell of chicken goujons
9. Think people will stay behind afterwards for a cup of tea – if you can't manage the afternoon without one, have a comfort break part way through where they can get a cuppa and bring it back to their places and carry on. Ten minutes tops

Ten Things Not Do At Your Training Day Based on genuine experiences that have really happened to Independent Thinking speakers over the last few years - by Ian Gilbert

10. Give a vote of thanks to the speaker that is just repeating everything the speaker has said - *'...and then at 10.47 you mentioned the fact that...'*; that is too flat and unmoved - *'Cheers Andrew, that was a really nice talk and who, knows, perhaps we will see some changes in our teaching one day...'*; that is too weird - *'How many words do you know that begin with the letter 'G' that we can use to describe Ian's talk. Whoever gets the most gets a special hug from me'* or that is going really well until you spoil it by saying something along the lines of *'Anyway, back to reality - we have a meeting of the workforce remodelling party...'*

And finally, one from Roy Leighton - one of our top educational speakers - and is based on a recent experience of his. I think you can sense the frustration...

'Do not over prepare the intro and then f*%@ up reading from your two pages of typed notes and then apologise to the audience and say that really you are very used to public speaking but just not today and then sweat, shake and p*%@ yourself before handing over the day to the speaker saying 'Well I hope you get something from this as it has cost a lot of money to get Ray here...'

So, there you are.

Don't say we haven't warned you and we look forward to having the opportunity to work with you soon for a coffee-drenched, Ken Bruce free, relaxed and rewarding educational experience all round.

From all at Independent Thinking and fellow speakers everywhere