



CASE STUDY

LEARNING THAT STICKS

How We Skilled Up Defense Contractors in Earned Value & Scheduling

At AzTech, our clients frequently challenge us to make training sessions engaging and impactful than the norm. Here are four ways we took that dare to make training more memorable — more sticky.

We know from our years of training, coaching, and mentoring that training is not an event, it's a process. And our aim is to make the complex simple.



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THE CHALLENGE

Making Learning Relevant, Engaging and Even Entertaining.

If learning doesn't stick—then it never happened.

There's nothing worse than predictably dull, professional training sessions that are too generic, forget the target audience, and leave gaping knowledge gaps. Then there's the 3-day training marathons that are forgotten by the next Monday. Project teams want—and need—focused training that provides interactive scenarios and real-world applications they can put to use right away.

THE SOLUTION

Examples of how we've made training sessions fun.

1. Speed Dating with Raytheon

Dating can be suitable for work—if it helps build a better schedule!

We used the scary, but fun speed-dating concept in a scheduling workshop to help Raytheon identify the most essential work handoffs between Integrated Product Team Leads. On a complex project, there are dozens or even hundreds of key exchanges where one team's outputs are another team's inputs. When these delay, the project delays. Omit a key handoff and say hello to unpleasant schedule delays. Identifying handoffs takes a lot of time and painstaking back-and-forth meetings, emails, and conversations. In this workshop, our goal was to identify critical handoffs in a single workshop.

Each team lead had just a few minutes to talk to another team lead, keeping conversations brief but insightful. Before the session started, we provided a quick primer on different types of handoffs and why they're so crucial.

In one highly productive morning, the project team compiled key interconnections for a complex, multi-year defense project. The result? The team saved weeks or months to produce and more realistic and meaningful project schedule.

2. Identifying Risks and Opportunities using the BPOP Approach with the United States Air Force (AFWERX)

*BPOP?
Backcasting,
Premortem,
Optimistic,
Pessimistic.*

In this workshop, we developed a management training approach we call BPOP for the Air Force Agility Prime team. The strategy encouraged project team leads to make educated guesses on project outcomes. We helped participants recognize that as much as everybody hates to guess, Project Leads need to toggle between optimistic and pessimistic thinking. Encouraging the team, we enlisted backcasting techniques to envision future outcomes. Then we used premortem methods to imagine what it would take to create those outcomes. The result was about an hour of turbocharged brainstorming.

The result was a high-energy session that helped team members grapple with the inherent unpredictability in project management. The workshop resulted in concrete actions to help mitigate bad outcomes and promote good outcomes.

3. 4D Scheduling with Rolls-Royce

*4D adds the
spatial dimension
to animate
learning.*

In this workshop, we developed and really rolled the dice with a fun and engaging concept to help Rolls-Royce conducting planning and scheduling training for diverse project teams across global business units. We covered what we call the power fundamentals and then deployed new tricks to literally bring scheduling to life.

The workshop organized a life-size chessboard where we had participants behave like tasks in a project schedule. This reinforced the importance of schedule logic and concepts like driving and critical paths plus total float. Things got complicated fast, but we brought concepts to life in a way that no one would forget. Best of all, participants gained a first-hand, palpable understanding of why scheduling tools matter.

Ultimately, the AzTech and Rolls-Royce team compiled the results into scorecards for each business unit. This helped participants identify areas needing improvement. The fun, multi-faceted approach made the training more effective and engaging.



*Fun learning
strives for
awesomeness!*

4. Awesome Analyst Ping-Pong Game with Raytheon

In this workshop, Raytheon asked us to their analysts find the story behind Earned Value data. We created a series of *lunch-and-learn* modules in our Awesome Analyst Training. One of the core elements of the training involved a ping-pong game to teach core concepts about scope, schedule, and cost.

The game not only revealed the discomfort that everyone has when making predictions about time and effort, but also helped the team understand the effect that changing assumptions has on our best laid plans. Ultimately, the exercise brought these abstract project management concepts to life in a fun, relatable, and extremely memorable way.

THE RESULT

Sticky Learning Makes for Better Learning.

These four real-world examples show how AzTech aims to make the complex simple. We strive to make project management more engaging, memorable, and fun. Module training focused on power fundamentals, interactive workshops, and gamification reminds project teams that a passion for excellence and mastery of project management can also be enjoyable and rewarding. To experience the incredible results that can come from bringing project management to life, contact our team and let's brainstorm ideas for your next transformational workshops!

About AzTech

AzTech routinely works with Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE) agencies and contractors. We help project teams streamline project management processes; integrate EV cost and schedule tools, data, and reports; and build a rigorous and repeatable monthly EV cadence. Our role focuses on coaching, mentoring, and training project teams to help the Program Management Office (PMO) team—including Project/Program Management, Business (or Project Controls) Management, Planners / Schedulers, and Control Account Managers (CAMs). We create validation checks, streamline weekly and monthly EV processes; create or improve existing tools and reports; and help project teams develop repeatable EV cadence strategies.