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## American Cancer Society Train-the-Trainers

CBI Practitioners: [Lawrence Susskind](#)CBI Practitioners: [David Fairman](#)CBI Practitioners: [Michele Ferenz](#)



CBI's relationship with the American Cancer Society (ACS) began as a month long project. In 1995, ACS wanted a one-day negotiation skills training course for its Executive Managing Directors from regional offices all over the country. CBI President Larry Susskind and Senior Associate Sarah McKearnan presented the one-day course.

Four years later, ACS's training efforts have really just begun. The initial one-day course catalyzed an organization-wide commitment to build the negotiation skills of all ACS staff and volunteers. With training and ongoing support from CBI, a team of ACS trainers is now providing their own negotiation skills workshops throughout the organization and around the country.

ACS is one of the country's largest and most influential non-profit organizations, with over two million volunteers and a budget of nearly half a billion dollars. Over the past several years, ACS has faced increasing challenges negotiating with corporate and community-based sponsors and health care partners. The outcome of these negotiations has a significant impact on ACS's bottom line. After the 1995 workshop, ACS decided it needed to better equip people throughout its organization to negotiate effectively. CBI proposed developing a tailored negotiation course, and then training an internal team of ACS trainers to teach the course on a continuing basis.

First, CBI worked closely with ACS National Board member Barbara LeStage and senior Income Development staff Jane Calvert and Martha Perusek to develop the curriculum. In April 1997, Larry Susskind, Sarah McKearnan, David Fairman, and Michele Ferenz presented this training for income development volunteers and staff from around the country.

Then a decision was made to turn the curriculum into two separate courses: 1) a one day basic negotiation skills course for volunteers and staff taught by a team of ACS trainers at regional and field offices; and 2) a two day advanced negotiation course that will be taught by Larry Susskind once a year in Cambridge. The two day advanced course will be open to ACS staff and volunteers who have already taken the basic course, and who are facing especially difficult negotiation

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challenges.

The one-day introductory course builds negotiation skills by integrating theory and practice. It includes:

- An “ice-breaker” negotiation game that highlights the challenge of building and maintaining credibility in a negotiation;
- A presentation on the Mutual Gains Approach to Negotiation;
- A role play tailored to ACS that challenges participants to apply the Mutual Gains Approach;
- A “strategy clinic” that gives participants an opportunity to think through negotiation issues they face in their daily work, with coaching from trainers and support from peers.

ACS selected a group of eleven trainers from different offices around the country. To help them get ready to teach the course, CBI prepared detailed teaching notes, offering advice about how to highlight the course’s lessons during each of the lectures and debriefings.

Then the trainers met with CBI in Denver for a two-day, intensive train-the-trainer workshop. Teams of two trainers took turns presenting the Mutual Gains Approach, briefing, running and debriefing the negotiation games, and facilitating a strategy clinic. CBI President Larry Susskind, Sarah McKearnan, and David Fairman played the part of participants, and offered advice and coaching in a stop-action format.

Since the Workshop, several pairs of ACS trainers have conducted one-day training workshops for other ACS volunteers and staff. Some of these workshops have been held during divisional and national conference events, while others have been conducted as “stand alones.” Initial responses from ACS volunteers and staff have been very positive.

Our experience with ACS suggests that the train-the-trainer model can be an excellent approach to

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building an organization's negotiating capacity.

For more information on this case, please contact [CBI](#).

Clients: [American Cancer Society](#)