



SECURITYIN30
LIVE WITH ALLEGION

Training Strategies to
Support Business Growth

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Question & Answer

Q. Does Allegion offer any courses I can challenge my team to explore?

- A. Yes – in-person classes, webinars, videos, and e-learning courses. Right now, due to the pandemic, I would suggest focusing on the digital options, but if you have a particular need, you can always reach out to your Allegion sales rep to discuss in-person options. We offer 2 categories of webinars; 20 micro sessions offered every Wednesday on a variety of topics, and 9 “Allegion 101” events, also offered on a schedule, perfect for anyone new to the industry. We also have over 120 videos on installation, service, and animations and whiteboard videos on intro to door hardware and access control topics. To explore all of these options, go to the Allegion US web site (<https://www.allegion.com/us>), and click on Training.

Q. How do you know how much training to give at once?

- A. Even though our capacity for learning is practically unlimited, our willpower/mental energy is not. Scientists did a study where two groups of people were asked to sit in a room with a plate of cookies. The first group were told they could eat the cookies if they wanted, and the second group was asked to refrain. After a short period, they gave each group some math problems to solve. The group that was asked to refrain took longer to solve the math problems and made more mistakes. I think your intuition can guide you when it comes to how much training to give at a time. Try to remember that your learners will learn in many other ways beyond your training; sometimes you have to decide to leave something out and say, “They’re going to have to learn that somewhere else.” Focus on your target audience, and create specific learning goals – then, it will be clearer what to include and what to omit, and your content will be much more digestible.

Q. How do you break up training to fit into people’s schedules?

- A. You have two general choices here, we call them symmetric and asymmetric. Symmetric is on a schedule, like an in-person class, or a webinar. Asymmetric is on-demand, like a video or an e-learning course. When we make training, after we’ve analyzed our target audience and created learning goals/objectives, then we ask what kind of training it should be. It’s usually a bad idea to say *first*, “We need a video.” or “We need an in-person class.” Sometimes the right training doesn’t reveal itself until you have a good sense of your audience and goals. And, once you do have a good sense, what to do becomes more obvious. We recently were approached with a request for, “Order Entry Training.” With just that, it could be any type of training, and include any type of content. So, we asked who it’s for, and developed goals together. After that, we all saw that we should make a video that demonstrated how to resolve common ordering mistakes. Everyone bought in; there was no disagreement. Really think about your audience, and goals – it helps align your team, keeps your content tight, and your learners will thank you.

Q. How do you know what kind of training to do (video, in-person class, webinar, etc.)?

- A. Define your target audience and goals, and it will likely become obvious. It's okay to start with "our target audience is customers," or "Locksmiths," but if you only go that far, you'll be able to justify including anything, or making any kind of training. Try to be more specific: are they new or experienced? What do they already know? Same thing with your learning goals. It's okay to start with, "They need install training." But try to find more detail: have they ever installed it before? Are they brand new, or making mistakes? You can also think about how they might like to consume the training – do you think they need quick help right when they're trying to do the thing, or do they need a practice session under supervision so they can get feedback? This kind of analysis doesn't take too long, and really helps you make sound decisions for your team, and your learners.

Q. How would you identify your learners?

- A. Usually they make themselves known pretty readily! There can be many types of learners just for a single program – installers, dealers, order entry, spec writers, sales, and more. Each one of these groups can have their own needs, and it's usually the case that the more groups you try to target with a single training effort, the more generalized the training will be, and that risks not being as valuable for those learners. You have to prioritize. And prioritizing doesn't mean you are choosing one group and leaving the rest out. By choosing who to focus on, you control your scope; you're saying that, "When I have a decision to make about my content, I will choose the option that supports my highest priority learner."

Q. How do you make time for a training day or a training time during the week?

- A. You have to prioritize, which means it comes at the expense of something else. It's hard to "make time" because you only have a certain amount of time each week. I think it's probably more the case that you need to set aside "energy" as opposed to time. I'd rather spend 15 minutes when I had energy and focus, than an hour at 4pm on Friday when I'm wiped out. Make goals for your training time (e.g. what do you want to get better at, or practice) and try to find good materials that support it. Get active during your training time, and it will feel like a productive session, whether it's 10 minutes or 2 hours.

Q. For new employees (some industry experience), we would like to implement a repeatable 30-60-90 day training program. Do you have a framework for something like this that you could share?

- A. I don't think we have a ready-made one that we could send, but even if we did, I'd want to use it as a starting point to develop one that means the most for you. Some domains have good and sound frameworks that are repeatable (carpentry, maybe locksmithing), but many of them change so much, or have so much innovating going on, that a circa 2015 framework compared to a 2021 framework would look very different. I think it's a great tactic to ask yourself, "What do we want them able to do at 30 days, 60 days, etc.," and your learners will probably feel a lot better about their workload when you've put so much thought into it. Having a 60 and 90 (or maybe 120 too?) goalposts means that there are things you are saying they don't need to learn right now (because they'll learn that later), and that's fantastic for learners. We once did a virtual training program that took 8 weeks, and each week there was a 25-minute virtual meeting, and then homework assignments. Each week built upon what was covered the prior week. By keeping the meetings short, and activating them with homework, we got a lot of great feedback that students really felt they were improving.

Q. Is there a best practice to do training in the morning when people are fresh or late in the afternoon when the “learners” may be tired?

- A. It's a matter of managing the will power, which is a limited resource. Making things asymmetric (on-demand) can help, because then learners can take the training when they are ready. I'm not aware of a good general rule about “early” or “late” in the day or the week, but I can tell you that part of our training discussions involve “meeting them where they are” - trying to be sensitive to their schedules, and not getting in the way. Also, if the content is relevant and engaging, you can engage your learners. Make sure your training doesn't *make* people tired!

Q. What's in higher demand these days ... self-paced virtual or in person training? Do people want in-depth videos or quick how-tos?

- A. I love this question because it frustrates me so much. I'm not a fan when people say, “We need a 1-minute video” or, “It has to be fast, people don't want to watch or read something long” as though in the 1950's or 1980's people loved long things, and that's suddenly changed now. Who, ever, has wanted training that was longer than it needed to be? It's not a false statement that, “People want quick things” but it's a mis-directing statement. Haven't you ever watched a 1-minute video that you thought was a waste of your time? I have! Here's my response to this question: people don't want short things, or long things, or intro things, or in-depth things – they want good things. If your content is good, people will consume it, and it won't matter how long or short it was – because it was precisely as long as it needed to be. You'll know through analyzing your target audience and your goals what kind of thing you need to make, how much it has to cover, and how long it might be, and then it's your job to make the experience of that thing as eloquent as possible. If you thought it would be 5 minutes long, and it's 15, but it's good, you don't have anything to worry about, people will watch it. To anyone who ever tells you, “We need a training that's _____”, if the word in that blank is not “good” they're either wrong, or it's not training. I better stop here.

Q. Are any of your training/education videos available to be included on our external website to assist in training our partners?

- A. Yes! All of our videos are on YouTube, which means the link can easily be shared or embedded on your web site. When you're watching a video, look for the “Share” text or icon. There you can copy the link, or the web code to embed it. Then paste it on your web site, and you're done. You may need some help from your IT or web administrator, but we love it when our videos are shared, and YouTube fully supports doing it this way. Be sure that you don't download the video and upload it to your site or YouTube channel – this is bad for a couple reasons. It's a violation of the YouTube terms of service, and our company's copyright. Second, having the actual video file on your web site means that your site is responsible for streaming it. YouTube is the streaming king right now, and they have some of the best IT infrastructure on the planet to deliver high quality videos to many devices, over many connections, to many places. It's best when we leave it to them to do the streaming work. If you have any questions, or have a need for the video files (because YouTube causes issues for you), reach out to your sales rep, or customer service, or me, for help.