



THE RIGHT-FIT TRAINING PARTNER CHECKLIST

10 questions to ask before hiring an outside training provider

Before you hire an outside training partner, can you answer **YES** to these questions?

- ☐ **Is the business outcome clear?**
Do we know what should be different after the training?
- ☐ **Does the provider have genuine subject-matter expertise?**
Look beyond topic knowledge for relevant experience, credibility and current expertise.
- ☐ **Can they demonstrate strong facilitation skills?**
Being an expert and being able to engage and teach people are two different things.
- ☐ **Do they understand our industry and audience?**
Will they be credible with the people in the room and understand our environment?
- ☐ **Will they customize the solution?**
Can they adapt the content, examples and approach to our needs rather than simply deliver an off-the-shelf program?
- ☐ **Are they the right cultural and personality fit?**
Expertise matters, but the right fit with your people and organization matters too.
- ☐ **Can they provide strong references and evidence of results?**
Ask what changed for previous clients and whether they would hire the provider again.
- ☐ **Are expectations clear?**
Confirm scope, deliverables, timing, responsibilities, availability and budget before the project begins.
- ☐ **How will success be measured?**
Agree on what will tell you the training made a meaningful difference.
- ☐ **Would we feel confident putting this provider in front of our people and leadership team?**
Trust your final test: are you confident this is the right person to represent the initiative?

Don't have time to do all this yourself? That's where Athena comes in.

For more than 22 years, Athena Training & Consulting has helped HR and L&D professionals find the right outside expertise - carefully matched for experience, credentials, facilitation ability, personality, availability and organizational fit.

Tell us what you need. We'll help you find the right fit.

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5 RED FLAGS WHEN CHOOSING A TRAINING PROVIDER

Great credentials are only part of the decision. Watch for these warning signs.

1. Impressive expertise, but little evidence they can facilitate.	A strong resume does not automatically translate into an engaging learning experience. Ask how they involve participants, handle different learning needs and keep a group engaged.
2. They recommend a solution before really understanding the need.	A strong provider should ask thoughtful questions about your goals, audience, culture, challenges and desired outcomes before proposing a program.
3. The program is one-size-fits-all.	If the examples, exercises and content cannot be adapted to your organization, participants may struggle to connect the learning to their real work.
4. References are vague - or hard to obtain.	Look for evidence of successful work with comparable audiences and ask previous clients whether they would hire the provider again.
5. There is no clear conversation about outcomes.	Training should be connected to a business or performance need. If no one can explain what success should look like, it will be difficult to know whether the investment worked.

Athena does the vetting so you don't have to.

One call gives you access to a carefully vetted network of specialists across leadership, sales, AI, project management, communication, coaching and other organizational needs.

For more than 22 years, Athena has helped organizations save sourcing time, reduce risk and find the right fit.

Have a training, coaching or consulting need on your list?
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