

SKO 2024 : HOW TO PLAN & LEAD IT



WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND

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SKOs are like weddings. Everyone has strong opinions & huge expectations, and everyone wants to pay as little as possible for it.

Then, 98% of what goes into producing it doesn't last beyond the event and what remains is what people heard & saw & did and how it made them feel.

Those who plan and lead SKOs have to generate massive business value from a temporary experience, and then, through reinforcement, transform 2-3 days of learning and practice into reformed global revenue operations. It's an extremely tall order.

However, also like weddings, SKOs can be among the most joyful, fulfilling and profound professional experiences of our lives. I offer the tips in this guide to help you be less overwhelmed by the work and more available for the joy.

-Phil

1.

Align on expected outcomes with every BU that has a material stake in your SKO.

WHY THIS MATTERS:

This timeless best practice is more important than ever with SKO, because SKO probably has more stakeholders attached to it than almost anything else you'll touch during a fiscal year. Many of those stakeholders have power. A few of them will provide budget.

Regardless of what they want, **a 2-3 day experience can not deliver all the outcomes stakeholders will expect it to**, so clearly defining, negotiating and ruthlessly prioritizing those expected outcomes is essential to your SKO being seen as valuable for your business.

TOP TACTICS:

- * Position SKO as an element of the larger revenue & enablement strategy, rather than a capsule unto itself. This will make it easier to prioritize desired outcomes and keep the scope manageable.
- * Negotiate on expectations that are not supported by the budget, timeframe or sound business reasoning. Do NOT agree to deliver things that are not truly feasible.
- * Not all stakeholders are equal, which means only some of them get to be approvers. Keep the approvers list as short as possible and prioritize those whose BUs are providing budget.

Make gaining & guiding attention the top priority of planning and execution.

2.

WHY THIS MATTERS:

SKO's are expected to drive improved revenue results by increasing Revenue teams' readiness to sell and win. This requires knowledge acquisition and skills growth through active learning, and **the best learning and skills growth experiences in the world are useless if you can't grab and hold your audience's attention.**

World-class attention management accounts for what happens both inside and outside of learning sessions, and addresses intellectual, emotional and biological needs.

TOP TACTICS:

- * Plan 15-30 min breaks (or longer) in between sessions. This will allow people to expend their social energy outside of learning sessions and have more attention to give during learning sessions.
- * Variety & fun are vital. Be willing to be entertaining, memorable, and active. And if you have teaches in your sessions, make them no more than 1/3 of the total session run time. Make the rest of the session active learning and discussion.
- * Pick compelling presenters to lead learning sessions. This may require some tough conversations, but boring leaders lead boring sessions and limit growth.

3.

Be the most organized person in the universe before, during and after your SKO.

WHY THIS MATTERS:

Given the massive amount of work you'll need to do with minimal lead time and evolving requirements, **organization will be as essential to your survival & success as oxygen & coffee.** Structure, process, chain of command, clearly defined roles, detailed timelines and effective communication will greatly enhance the chances of a sensational SKO.

TOP TACTICS:



BEFORE:

- Identify learning session content approvers far in advance, and keep the list short.
- Establish one digital location as the official source of SKO info and materials.



DURING:

- Post the agenda, session attendee lists, food menu, FAQs, etc all over the place.
- If something can be answered by self-service, make them self-serve the answer.



AFTER:

- Integrate SKO content into your standard program materials & locations.
- Set a date to shut down the SKO site, communicate it out multiple times beforehand, and then shut it down when the date comes.

Rehearse. Especially technical rehearsal. Especially if it's an all-virtual SKO.

4.

WHY THIS MATTERS:

TIME & MONEY: SKO time costs more than normal time. To illustrate, here's a rough estimate of the hourly cost of SKO based on industry averages (\$100/hour salary + \$41.50/hour travel & food cost x 250 people):

\$35,375/hour, \$589.58/minute

Camera/mic issues, low bandwidth quality, flat screens that won't turn on, not enough chairs/tables: these all have a very high cost when they occur during a learning session.

QUALITY: the technology element makes virtual delivery more complex than in-person, and it requires more rehearsal to make it a compelling audience experience.

TOP TACTICS:



For in-person SKOs: sweat the "small" stuff. Inform presenters of the cords/adapters/laptops/etc they will need to provide and ensure that they have them ahead of time.



For hybrid or virtual SKOs: when using breakout rooms in a session, pre-plan and pre-load each room's attendees into the meeting tool, AND practice the process of beginning and ending breakout rooms in the tool ahead of time.

5.

Make SKO the beginning of the next 6+ months of your excellence & productivity programming.

WHY THIS MATTERS:

The highest-impact SKOs are the start of something and not a capsule unto themselves. They introduce business-critical vision, strategies, tactics, skills and knowledge that are the essential elements of revenue success for an entire fiscal year.

When your SKO introduces these elements and then is followed by months of reinforcement and adoption efforts, **you have the greatest chance of having fresh learning become updated operations and consistent execution.**

TOP TACTICS:

- * Plan out your post-SKO implementation & adoption efforts all the way back at the beginning of your pre-SKO planning.
- * More is not better. Teach the few key things needed for 2024 success at SKO, and then reinforce them for several months afterward.
- * Continue to heavily utilize active learning in your reinforcement & adoption efforts. Bonus points for continually using the active learning formats you used at SKO.

Want to dig deeper into work/life balance and career satisfaction, both during and beyond SKO?

I'd love to help you with that.

Click [here](#) to book a free call and we'll make it happen.

-Phil

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