

How to Select an Outstanding Fiber Optics Training Company

It is important to keep in mind that since the beginning of data transfer time, there is and always has been network training companies each with their own individual attributes. Some claim to provide certified training but are reluctant or incapable of providing an explanation as to what that exactly means. Some of these organizations teach a specific manufacture-created curriculum designed only for that manufacturer's product line. This brief education period, in most cases, consists of an assortment of sales pitches presented by individuals with little or no actual hands-on, in the field, experience. The result of this "training" is a so-called certification in nothing more than how to listen intently to sales pitches and offers absolutely nothing to actually help a technician install, test, troubleshoot, or certify an actual working fiber optics network. Yet there are others that teach from a curriculum written and created by individuals who have never installed, terminated, tested, or otherwise been in physical contact with any fiber optics tools, cable, or test equipment at any time during their data-related lives. This should be a concern to all that are seeking fiber optics network training or any other type of technical training for that matter.

When searching for a fiber optics training organization, and before you spend all of that money, it is a good idea to speak with the owners of these companies as well as the instructors who will be sharing their vast knowledge and experience with you or your employees. You may be surprised to find out that many of these individuals have never installed or tested the first fiber optics cable network. You will also want to know exactly what hands-on activities will be available during class. Will you or your employees be ushered around to various training stations to watch "helper trainers" demonstrate Fusion Splicers, Power Source & Light Meters, and OTDRs? Will you be required to terminate fiber optics connectors many of which are unpopular in the networking industry? Finally, at the end of the day, will you as a student do a lot of watching instead of doing?

You will find, in many cases, these "helper trainers" are not demonstrating procedures, but unfortunately are providing their own opinions on how something should be done. Not surprisingly, most of these "helper trainers" cannot answer basic fiber optics networking questions.

Many years ago, I had the opportunity to observe some of this "training" in action. The room was full of 40-50 students, 5-6 "helper trainers", and one senior instructor/presenter. There were many apparent maladies in this training approach. First, the instructor/presenter could not answer basic fiber optics networking questions. Second, the "helper trainers" had little or no actual in the field experience. Third, these "helper trainers" offered numerous and confusing opinions on how to do basic procedures that, in the end, not only confused but also confounded the attending students. The overall atmosphere in this classroom could have been considered organized chaos.

Be sure to investigate these schools thoroughly. If they advertise that they have been around since the 80's they could be teaching old and outdated techniques. Further, these same schools may be over charging you, the unsuspecting student, to help pay for the numerous "helper trainers" and freight charges to transport their expensive equipment to and from the makeshift training facilities set up in hotel/motel conference rooms. Your fee paid to these companies could also be paying for the use of these "training facilities". This same company could be SPAMING on the internet which is a sure sign the company is possibly in danger of going out of business. This advertising practice could very well be the last resort for those companies trying to drum up business.

The fiber optics training company you choose should have been involved in recent major fiber optics networking projects and offer a curriculum that is comprehensive and easy to understand. This company should provide a program whose fee is appropriate and not overly inflated. Further, the company you choose should offer the student the opportunity to install, terminate, and test their own fiber optics network replicating actual field experiences and environment. Also, the instructor whom is sharing his/her knowledge and experience should present a verifiable history of recent experience supported by student and customer testimonials. And most importantly, the curriculum should be sanctioned by an organization recognized and respected throughout the fiber optics networking industry world-wide. The Fiber Optics Association is an example of such an organization and we at BDI DataLynk are proud to be a part of this well-known organization. ---- *Bob Ballard, RCDD, CFOI, Owner*