

# IDEAS THAT WORK

*In each issue, the Journal will carry one or more fresh ideas that have been successfully applied to the human resource development environment, and, in most cases, have saved organizations money and valuable time through increased productivity. If you would like to share a working "idea" with other members of the profession, please submit it to: Training and Development Journal, P.O. Box 5307, Madison, WI 53705.*

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## USING FILM RECAPS

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Every trainer faces the question of getting effective use from a carefully selected film. During the film-selection process, trainers usually preview a number of prospective films, then select the film that fits a training session best. Then the trainer comes to grips with the question of how to get maximum mileage from the film. Should it be run twice, should it be stopped during a run, and how should it be introduced and followed up? Those questions and others can be properly answered only in terms of the objectives the trainer has in mind for the film as defined by the needs of the trainees who will be the viewers.

Yet trainers often lose sight of reality as they proceed through the above planning processes. A key reality is trainees' hyperconditioning to film viewing. Typical American adults are bombarded by films. They devote 12 hours or more each week to viewing TV films, and most adults under 30 years of age have been viewing films all of their lives with approximately the above frequency.

One of the rather massive aversions adults develop as a result of

that conditioning is a highly negative attitude toward "reruns." This reality forces every trainer to give serious thought to the question of scheduling multiple screenings of a film for any group of trainees. The practice should be avoided, except in those cases where the film is the heart of the training program — and if that condition prevails with high frequency, one is forced to wonder why a trainer requires professional credentials.

But how can a trainer get something approaching maximum mileage from a film viewed only one time by trainees? One solution is through the use of concise, printed recaps of the film's highlights — with the recaps serving as a catalyst for postscreening discussion by trainees. Such discussion usually brings out the bulk of the film's content in an attention-demanding manner through trainee participation.

But the secret to the above approach rests with the care that is taken in developing the printed recap of film highlights. An effective recap must be short; preferably a one-page production, and never more than a two-page production.

Secondly, the recap must contain the film's prime concepts — since these are the items the trainer expects trainees to really learn. Preparation of such recaps requires multiple viewing of the film by the *trainer*, plus the definition of an effective design to guide the use of the recap by trainees — e.g., division of trainees into small groups, whole group discussion, role-play of key concepts, etc.

Finally, in cases where the film is only a part of a broader program that will take place at the session where the film is used, care needs to be taken to provide an effective, natural transition from the film to

the balance of the program. Such programs are cumulative affairs, and the film is only one piece of the action. But at the close of the program, trainees should have no difficulty recalling the film's contribution to the total program. Where that condition does not prevail, either the film-selection process or the film-utilization process was faulty.

Conclusion? Effective films facilitate attainment of learning objectives. But whether a film is effective or not hinges heavily on the preparation a trainer executes in planning the film's utilization. Films do not relieve a trainer from the need to systematically plan a program in a manner that taps his/her best knowledge of androgogical concepts. Films, used effectively, facilitate the trainer's application of effective learning principles in cost-effective fashion. — *Lou Bare, Director, Training & Development, Quality Farm & Fleet, Inc.*

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## CHOOSING AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT

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Choosing the right audio-visual equipment, says Burton Hall, "can be a maze, frustrating and misleading to the unsuspecting. To avoid this trap, you need a simplified selection process to identify the demands to be made rather than first reviewing the qualities of the various units."

Hall, a training programs specialist in the United States for a major European manufacturer, offers 20 steps to identifying your needs and choosing the right equipment in an article appearing in *Audio-Visual Communications* (July 1978).

• Equipment must complement the training program design, with

the capability to achieve the specific learning objectives with a minimum of frills.

- Equipment should be durable.
- Units should be capable of enough audio and visual fidelity to get the information across without unnecessary "glamour" features.
- Costs should be calculated based on maximum flexibility and quality at a reasonable price.
- Equipment must in many cases be able to function in environments exposed to dirt and grease.
- Units should be easy to operate, even by people with no special training.
- Equipment should be usable for audiences of varying sizes.
- Equipment should have a "professional" look to be acceptable among AV technicians.
- Units should be portable.

When it comes time to choose the equipment itself, Hall suggests criteria that fit closely with the nine steps to determine need. In other words, equipment should have a good service and durability record, be easy to operate, have professional and aesthetic appeal, low related-production costs, good image visibility, portability, acceptable sound quality, convenience of shipping and storage, reasonable unit cost and necessary special features. — *Government Training News*

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### "PEAK EXPERIENCES"

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Much of the training and development literature and activities these days is filled with discussion of the amount of stress in our daily and work lives and what to do about it. One of the most frequently mentioned ways to cope with highly stressful situations has been the old adage to "get away from it all." Studies have indicated that withdrawal from the situation is a common response to high levels of stress. Obviously, withdrawal can take many forms: some people withdraw physically, by being absent from work, arriving late and leaving early, quitting, taking vacations, etc. Others absent themselves mentally, by daydreaming, being "retired-on-the-job," spending all their work time on nitty-

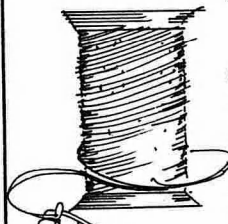


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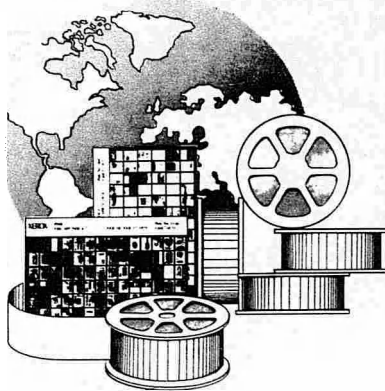
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gritty, unimportant, daily activities, losing track of the "big picture," etc. And others withdraw with alcohol, drugs, too much sleep, too much food.

But not just any form of withdrawal serves a useful purpose for dealing with stressful situations. Those who remember how many fights occurred on their last family vacation know that just "getting away from it all" doesn't necessarily recharge your batteries. And those of us who realize the additional mistakes we made when we mentally withdrew from our jobs (because we missed valuable information about what was going on or needed doing), appreciate that this form of withdrawal doesn't often help, either.

There is a way to identify a particular type of "getting away" that is almost guaranteed to help you rekindle your spirits so that you can go back to your work or daily lives with renewed vigor and perspective. It won't help the problems go away, but it will help you deal with them more effectively and strongly.

I call this important experience a *peak experience*. Most of us have such experience(s). And they become particularly useful when we are under stress. There are a number of important characteristics of a peak experience. And all of them contribute to this type of experience being a true recharger for you.

1. *Plenty of energy*. You will find that while participating in this kind of experience you have an unlimited amount of energy. You can keep doing it for long periods of time. (In contrast to this, we all know how quickly we get tired and fatigued doing things we don't like.)

2. *Loss of time and space perspective*. A second characteristic of this type of experience is the losing track of where you are and how long you've been at it. When time passes without your notice — all of a sudden it's much later than you thought — and you aren't really aware of what is going on around you — such as standing in a freezing cold stream or being in

the middle of a lot of people activity — then you may well be having a peak experience.

3. *Optimal powers of concentration and attention*. If the activity is a true peak experience, you will find yourself at your mental best. You will be better able to concentrate and pay attention to the activity than is true for probably any other activity.

4. *Lack of attention to external rewards*. You don't do this thing because of the rewards or external benefits. You do it because you enjoy it. It is entirely an internal or intrinsic thing.

5. *Desire for repetition*. Your peak experience is so enjoyable that you want to keep doing it, whenever you have to stop. You may not know whether you would like to do it all the time, but you would sure like to find out.

Given these characteristics of a peak experience, what is yours? I sure hope you've got one (or more). It doesn't make any difference whether it is stamp-collecting or snow-skiing. In today's work and social world, such opportunities to recharge are not only important to our personal well-being, but they are obviously also valuable to our work performance and thus to the well-being of our organizations.

One last thought: If you have been saying to yourself, "My job fits these characteristics," than I say, "fantastic!" Hold on to that job. And maybe figure out how to make other peoples' jobs like yours. Obviously, if we can recharge on-the-job, our performance and personal well-being will be tremendously enhanced. There is nothing more satisfying than to be charged up about one's work (or to supervise charged-up employees).

So . . . if you are feeling particularly pressured and stressed, and experiencing "hurtful" consequences from that, it may be time for you to get away from it all and spend time on your peak experience — *Dennis R. Briscoe, School of Business, University of San Diego, Alcalá Park/San Diego, CA.*