

Who Does the Training?

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I feel that all of us are searching for ways and means to increase the effectiveness of the whole training job. Industry is spending increasing sums of money on training courses every year.

IN all probability the most important courses are for the benefit of supervisory personnel. However, we are confronted with the questions: Are these courses doing the job that management expects? Is there any way to do a better job of training?

Let the Boss do the training! Today our industry's main goal is to produce quantity and quality at the lowest possible cost. This is a "must" to meet competition. The more ability and skill the employees have the closer industry approaches this goal. There is no question that training is necessary to strengthen the ability and sharpen the skill of an employee. It is the chief responsibility of the boss to see that quality is maintained when producing the quantity while keeping his eye on the cost factor.

Now let me explain the "Boss." The "Boss" to which I refer may be a leadman over 6 people, or he may be the assistant foreman over 25 or 30 people, foreman over 200, or the project superintendent who has 200 under his jurisdiction. The problem remains the same—to get people to produce quality products in quantity, at a minimum cost.

The seasoned supervisor realizes that in order for a business to be successful there must be co-operation. He knows this means that he, as well as his employees, and his superior, has to build a good team to win. The best football coach in the business cannot build a winning team unless the members of that team are willing and anxious to work together.

Team work is the key to successful training, when the Boss gives instructions he knows what he wants to accomplish. He instructs his employees in such a manner that they also know the final result he expects and the steps which are necessary to accomplish it.

Good instruction is like a rifleman—it has to be in the right position, it has to aim properly, it has to hit the right spot. *This is the position of the Boss in training.*

THE question which you are most likely to ask at this point is why should the Boss do the training? He has too many other matters on his mind. The answer to this is not a simple one, yet it is an important one. The Boss is leader of his team and as leader, his leadership must be felt through his employees. He is the one who can develop team work. Team work and industrial training go hand in hand.

Cash consideration is still an important factor in developing the holding power of jobs, but the factors relating to *good working conditions* are assuming more importance all of the time. The function of training does not end when an employee has sufficient job knowledge to do the *work*. This is particularly true when training supervisory personnel. The feeling which a shop has is a direct result of the feelings which the Boss holds in relation to his personnel.

WHEN a Boss has developed the feeling within his employees that "this is a good place to work" and promotes a feeling of self competition, he has begun to achieve effective training. This does not automatically happen. It is the result of direct effort on his part. When this feeling is achieved the Boss can turn it to his advantage as well as to the advantage of his employees. A well functioning team produces; this is the function of the training program. Let me repeat, *the Boss should do the training because it is up to him to develop teamwork.*

Through training the Boss is able to get directly to his men and give them the consideration that each demands. If every employee in the plant had a sign "*I want consideration*" tagged to him, it would not be out of order. Therefore, by spreading authority, each employee is given consideration by his Boss. This has a double importance. Personal consideration coming directly from the Boss means much, but it also provides the employee with an opportunity to know what his boss expects from him. Since he speaks with authority the learner

knows that the information is important and that it is up to date.

The Boss can also gain coverage of his training job in less time when doing his own training. By doing the training, the Boss can put over the subject matter since it is the responsibility of the employee to follow the instructions of his Boss. I think the phrase that might summarize this reason that the Boss should do his own training is *words that stick*. When directions come from the Boss they stick.

This training also affects the Boss while it is going on. The Boss is also learning. He may not be increasing his technical skill at as fast a pace, but he is learning how to work through people. He is learning about his people; how they think, what they think about, and why they think that way. He is also learning how to conduct himself before people.

Conference leading cannot be taught wholly from a book. It has to be experienced. This opportunity presents itself not in an artificial way but in a real situation. He gains poise, he is better able to talk with people and learns to express himself more clearly so that he is understood. And further he learns how jobs and people must be brought together. In doing his own training then, the *Boss learns while training others.*

WHEN the Boss speaks with an employee he will speak a language that the employee will understand. You no doubt have heard of what Art Secord said in a speech at the American Airlines Man-

agement Club, but I think it is worth repeating.

"You have to speak the other fellow's language. Now obviously that doesn't mean just that the man who understands only French, or Polish must receive his instructions in French or Polish. It goes much deeper than that. A plumber in the Middle West noticed that every time he used hydrochloric acid to clean out metal pipe he couldn't find the pipe any more. Being an intelligent plumber he wrote a prominent chemical research laboratory in New York City and stated his case.

"They wrote him, 'Dear Sir: The efficacy of hydrochloric acid is indisputable but the corrosive residue is incompatible with metallic permanence.' About a week went by and the research laboratory received a letter from the plumber thanking them for their letter and stating that he was glad they approved of what he was doing—but he still wanted to know what happened to the pipe. They turned the matter over to another chemist and said, 'In heaven's name get the idea across.' So this fellow wrote the plumber this concise note: 'Dear Sir: Don't use hydrochloric acid. It eats the hell out of the pipe.'"

Then he got the idea—this is the most important objective in training. The slogan of the "J" programs still applies, "If the learner hasn't learned; the teacher hasn't taught," Communicating with a person in the language he understands is one of the real problems in instruction of employees. Instruction is essentially good communication. Training in shop language to a shop man gets the right idea across simply and easily. The shop

Boss is the logical one to get these ideas over to employees.

There is another reason that the Boss should do the training. *The Boss can follow-through and follow-up.* By its placement in the *Why* the Boss should do the training, don't think that it is least important. The reverse is the case. Since the Boss is there while the training is going on and since he is there when the training is put into practice—what better follow-up can you get? He knows what has been said and shown, and if the instruction is not put into practice, he can take the necessary action. He can reorganize the instructional program or his department set-up. What more could the Boss ask?

FROM what I have said up to this point you may ask—*Are you going to eliminate the Training Department?* My answer to this is an emphatic *no.* The organization of the training facility becomes changed but its importance to *producing quality and quantity* becomes more tangible and practical. The functions of the Training Department become those of an advisory group which serve to *help the Boss* directly.

The problems of the Boss become the problems of the Training Department. The first service which can be offered to the Boss is the clarifying of his training problem in relation to his particular department. Even though the Boss may be familiar with the problems of production, he may not be able to translate these problems into training activities. This is where the Training Department is needed. Once the Boss begins to see his problem in terms of training, the

Training Department lends further assistance by suggesting several forms by which this training can be handled.

Another service which the Training Department offers is to *propose and suggest training routes to the Boss*. I would like to emphasize that the training function is a service function and as such, the form that the training takes is worked out cooperatively between Boss and the Training Department. The Boss must feel the need and express a desire for such training. In this way *he* is the one initiating the action and "that action" reflects *his* desires and *his* thinking. Since he is the one who will carry out the training, it will better serve his problem and meet the need which he feels.

Of course, the Boss is probably not familiar with training methods and techniques. Being an organization with a staff equipped to handle problems of instruction, the Training Department assists the Boss in the development of instruction for his training problem. Let us assume that a supervisor comes to the Training Department with the problem of getting his first line supervisors to give better instructions to employees. This is one of the original "J's" in Industrial Training. Chances are that most of the supervisors have had one or all of the "J" courses somewhere along the line, but their performance is still not up to what might be expected.

The Training Department is called to make a review of the *training need* as expressed by the Boss. Certain action is suggested and the development of a course of instruction is begun. The Boss

must finally decide what method he will use. The method is then developed by the Training Department. This may consist of formal conference type training, on the job training or group participation meetings, etc. The course with its special aids is then devised within the Training Department assisted by the *needs* as expressed by the Boss.

The next function of the Training Department is that of preparing the Boss to conduct the training. This may be in the form of special conference with the Boss himself or it may be in a more formal type of conference. The Training Department carries out its function of *training the trainer*. These teacher institutes are designed to give the Boss help in getting his material over to his supervisors.

TO summarize, the Boss should do the training of his first line supervision, because he knows where the need exists, and can get the material over to his employees. This also provides an opportunity for him to further his own ability to handle people and their problems. The function of the Training Department in relation to the Boss is that of service facility and should be designed to help him handle the training problems as they exist. These functions are:

1. Clarify and focus the training problem of the Boss.
2. Propose and suggest route of training to be taken.
3. Assist the Boss in the development of the *method of instruction*.
4. *Train the Trainer* in "How to Train."