

Management Training via Television

The First Four Years At Pittsburgh's WQEX

William T. Gladmon

We've all heard the cliché, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." Like many clichés, it is simply untrue, of course, because it overlooks the fact that teaching *is* doing. Indeed, teaching is doing one of the most important jobs in our world today. Those of us in educational television know this, but sometimes we are so busy "doing" (creating instructional programming) that we don't take time out to "teach" (that is, to tell each other of our profitable experience in this vital and ever-expanding field).

For about four years WQEX, sister station to WQED, Pittsburgh has been so busy establishing, organizing and

operating a successful industrial training program that time hasn't been spared to pass along information on what has been learned. In the belief that the experiences at WQEX may be helpful to others, I would briefly retrace my efforts in making this service a reality.

It all began when I arranged for an interested group of industrial representatives to meet and talk about the possibilities of supervisory or management training over educational television. There was little precedent in this area to draw upon, so I undertook the task of determining whether it could be done. We held exploratory talks with business and industrial leaders

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to discover how widespread the need for such training actually was. The word "need" should be especially noted because it may be the single most important element in setting up a training program.

Training Directors Involved

Discussion with industrial representatives led to the establishment of the WQEX Industrial Training Committee. The committee is comprised of training directors who are faced with the need (that word again!) for keeping their people up-to-date. It took almost a year of work by this committee to develop a format or approach by which our task could be accomplished over WQEX. In setting up such a committee, it is imperative to find at least one person who is a leader and who can exert great influence in making training directors and business leaders aware of the great potential of ETV. WQEX had such a man in Jesse C. McKeon, director, Training and Development Department at Westinghouse Electric Corporation, who was our first chairman. We found it wise to have all-size companies represented in order to insure an understanding of the training needs in each area.

The WQEX Industrial Training Committee held many meetings on such subjects as cost, program content, teachers and other important phases. The committee was the sounding board for the needs on management training over WQEX. After agreeing on the direction in which to go, the next step consisted of searching the entire country for pre-recorded programs of excellent content and good production. Here I encountered a dismaying surprise. It took me almost six months to find programs that were related to management training. Of all the programs I located, there were only six that could possibly be

developed into a course and of the six only one had content of which the committee approved.

First Attempts

Technically, the production quality was not good. It was a half-hour series called "Business of Supervision" from a Western university. Its ten installments were run beginning in September, 1964, and to our great pleasure 57 corporate locations and more than 1,500 supervisory personnel were enrolled.

"Business of Supervision" was repeated in February along with a new program, "Dynamics of Leadership." By the close of the first year, the participation had grown to 70 companies and 2,230 managers for these two courses. This response unquestionably demonstrated the great need for what we were doing. And, it has grown with the program to where it now totals more than 5,000 people enrolled from 140 companies.

Tailored to Area

This total enrollment figure or company participation does not exactly tell the story of all communities. The Pittsburgh area certainly is not in competition with Boston or South Carolina or any other area when it comes to the kind of service we are giving. If you want to make a comparison between areas, as to the way management training is being accepted, you first must know the type of training community you are dealing with. Pittsburgh happens to be an extremely sophisticated training community. Pittsburgh is the location of 24 of the country's largest corporations and has some of the finest training programs in the world.

Other areas of the country, such as the South, Southwest, or maybe California, might find enrollment figures in *one* course to be, say, 5,000 persons.

I am certain you can see that the population growth in these areas has been highly stimulated and thus the job of establishing training programs has not kept pace with the tremendous industrial growth. The educational television station which is located in the rapidly expanding population area may find a surprising need and a ready market for specialized adult education.

Thus far, I think you can recognize the three elements with which such a program must begin:

1. A need in the community for this type of training.
2. An outstanding leader in a management area who can get people to listen and who can coordinate the project.
3. Good live or pre-recorded programs with accurate content and top-rate production quality.

Programming

In the beginning, we were not in the financial position to produce our own programs, but we now do so. We have recently created a seven-part series on "Marketing Management" with Mr. Eugene B. Mapel, vice president of Chase Manhattan Bank. A series on "Managerial Accounting" with Mr. John Harvey of Arthur Young and Company is now in process. We have learned much from our experience and some tips which may help others wishing to undertake such a project can be passed along.

The programs are broadcast on company time, repeating several times weekly, but avoiding Fridays because of heavy travel requirements in major corporations. The current schedule for WQEX is Monday at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday at 4:00 p.m., and Thursday at 2:30 p.m.

The cost for broadcasting a series will not be the same for any two stations. However, these expenses must

be considered: engineering, promotion literature, discussion leaders' and participants' guides in book form, pre-view session so that training people can see some of the programs, administration of the course, phone calls (there are many of these), checking of signals for plant or office, travel costs to meet with various companies.

Training Methods

One of the most important elements in these courses is the follow-up discussion. With assistance from the American Society for Training and Development, a two-day class is held in September to train discussion leaders to carry on profitable discussions of program content before and/or after viewing each program. They can relate the material to the thinking and practices of their individual corporations.

Each participant (about 20 in each company group) is given a guide and the discussion leader has a more expanded version of the same book. The discussion period after the television session may run from a half-hour to an hour and a half in length.

In our program, each company location pays approximately \$200 to \$350 per course, plus the cost of each book, which may run from \$1.50 to \$12. If a corporation enrolls three of its factories, it counts as three companies.

Other obvious needs are a conference room in the plant and VHF or UHF receivers. All the elements of good discussion leadership should be adhered to in order to up-grade people. Heavy promotion in newspapers, among chambers of commerce, and through direct mailings to company presidents and training directors is important to the development of the entire program.

Program Improvements

In order to round out the entire pic-

ture of the complete development of management training, I think I should give you our latest reorganizational plan which I feel will give greater control and involvement to the building of more elaborate television training programs.

Mr. Buell Whitehill, director of personnel for The Rust Engineering Company, our past chairman, and Mr. Richard Johnson, director of development and organization planning for Consolidated Natural Gas Service Company, our present chairman, have reorganized the WQEX Industrial Training Committee into the WQEX Industrial Training Council. This move was brought about so that committees could be set up within the council which would work on providing a greater insight into the needs of the community. Generally, it is felt that this new approach will enhance the efficiency of the organization.

Program Benefits

The over-all benefits of such programming are numerous and are realized by both the community and the station. ETV provides a method for many companies, hospitals, government agencies, service agencies, etc., to keep their people up-to-date; a necessity if these organizations are going to be effective developers of human resources. Too often these organizations have little funds or time to organize such a training program for their people. ETV provides important saving points for such groups.

1. It is economical. We need only compare the cost of the charge for a local college course for 15 people and multiply it by the number of half-hours.
2. Access to top-level instruction from leaders in business, industrial and academic worlds. It brings leading professors or speakers, by way of television, into the plants which

could never afford the time to possibly cover all the engagements that would be required.

3. It reduces the costs of sending large groups of employees out of the office or plant to special seminars.
4. It saves thousands of hours in developing courses by the training department.
5. It gives a company a training medium that may presently have none.
6. It makes the community more aware of keeping people better trained and up-to-date.
7. Television acts as a springboard for active discussion.
8. The inter-exchange of group or department ideas. This may be one of the most important reasons mentioned because we found departments of both large and small com-

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panies that had never sat down together to discuss their problems.

9. A television production studio can lend itself for excellent presentations which may not be available to individual firms because of a lack of teaching and visual aids.

But, while helping the community and the company, on the other hand, it also helps your station. It puts the entire community in a better relationship with your station. You are supplying the community with a needed service, and doing it in a more economical way. Furthermore, a benefit not to be overlooked is that it puts your station in a better financial position. Your income can benefit.

Other Potentials

This article has been basically directing itself to industrial or management training, but I hasten to point out that there are other forms of specialized training that are presently being accomplished over educational television. We at WQEX have formed a hospital Administrators Planning Committee which is in the stages of designing a series of hospital management programs. WQEX has been broadcasting a once-a-week post-graduate medical program to some seventy hospitals for the past four years. This is a highly successful program and is meeting a desperate community need. WQEX is also broadcasting a once-a-month nursing program. Presently under development are police and fire training, law programs, secretarial programs, and post-graduate dental programs.

I have had a number of requests from various states, service organizations, and educational television stations asking for administrative guidance in setting up such a program and a list of available series of programs. I certainly would be willing to offer any assistance in developing this move-

ment throughout the country.

Resources

This article would not be complete without mentioning a few people who are now producing and developing this concept in other areas of the country. Persons interested in obtaining program information should write to the below mentioned.

Mr. Daniel C. Cady, director, Media Development, American Management Association, 135 West 50th Street, New York, N. Y. 10020. Mr. Cady was one of the first persons to encourage this development and offer funds to produce management programs. The American Management Association now has several series of programs which have been produced by WQED.

Mr. Campbell Sanders, executive director, Educational Resources Foundation, 1315 Pickens Street, Columbia, South Carolina. Mr. Sanders has established a foundation which produces management programs and is working to expand this entire concept.

Dr. W. W. Kemmerer of KCTA in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has also produced a number of programs in the field of management training.

The Future

The potential of specialized adult education has barely been scratched by the field of educational television. In the not too distant future, I am sure there will be whole organizations set up that will do nothing but produce and develop programs in various adult fields. Even while we are learning and growing there has been a marked increase in the number of stations which are utilizing and developing specialized adult educational programs. The station coming on the air now, or entering this specialized field, will find a greater selection of courses and guidance than we had four or five years ago.