

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

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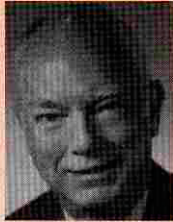
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Snapshot



Thomas F. Gilbert

In place of the usual profile, we offer a memorial to performance pioneer Thomas F. Gilbert, who died last October.

Contributed by Dave Ferguson, GE Information Services, Rockville, Maryland, and Edith Allen, ASTD Information Center Director.

Regarded by many as the consummate performance engineer, Gilbert—whose work history includes a stint in the 1950s at Harvard as director of B.F. Skinner's learning lab—made significant contributions to the area of instructional design and to the idea of accomplishments as the starting

place for performance improvement.

Among Gilbert's visionary beliefs were that human competence is inversely related to knowledge, hard work, and motivation—and that the most incompetent person might also be the most efficient.

Gilbert was voted the

first Honorary Life Member of the National Society for Performance and Instruction. In his book *Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance* (McGraw-Hill, 1978), Gilbert offered a behavioral model for creating incompetence, including such "anti-advice" as, "Give pep talks instead of incentives."

opment without considering the diverse nature of each group. Even when participants are all Anglo, they bring different educations, personalities, cultural backgrounds, and experience. The nature of team building is bringing together diverse people to improve performance.

The title implies that the authors have a new view of teambuilding that is unique. The reality is that the article talks mostly about tested team-development techniques most of us who have worked with teams have been using for years.

*James L. Ramsey
Sathers Inc.*

Round Lake, Minnesota

DON'T CASH OUT

I ENJOYED ANN MEIER'S article, "Job-Loss Survival" (October, 1995). The subject is timely and of interest to many people who are

experiencing job loss for the first time in their careers. Surveys show that the trauma is almost equal to losing a loved one. Helping people manage job loss is important.

But I must take major exception to Meier's recommendation that people negotiate for a cash settlement in lieu of outplacement services, if they don't feel the need for such services. In addition, Meier's list of services that an outplacement firm can provide is incomplete. An outplacement firm will coach people on what to tell others about the job loss, conduct a career assessment on appropriate career options and work environments, and help create an effective career campaign for landing the ideal position, instead of just finding a new job. Those services make for a quality program that shouldn't be bypassed just to add a few dollars to the severance

check. And the Internal Revenue Service doesn't tax outplacement services.

It's true that I'm in the outplacement profession. But I've personally observed and experienced the downside when people choose the cash route. Most people aren't in the frame of mind to make this decision when dealing with the trauma of job loss.

*David C. Miles
Miles/LeHane Group
Leesburg, Virginia*

KEEP THE DIFFERENCE IN DIVERSITY

I FOUND "The Pitfalls of Diversity Training" to be a big disappointment. The author took one dated example and tried to bash the whole business, albeit with cool rationalism and a hint of restraint.

I'm bugged by the people who keep wringing their hands about the so-