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Issues

Foreign Attraction

Since I came on board at Alvis House I always take time to read the *Training & Development Journal* cover to cover. I usually pay more attention to training tips and issues.

Your February 1988 issue is just loaded with superb materials. The topic "Getting an HRD Job Abroad" is excellent. It provides readers with fresh information on "WIIFM" (what's in it for me) abroad and how best to get there. The authors presented a formula that is clear, direct, and simple. As a matter of fact, I just rewrote my resume. I find this very helpful.

Congratulations to authors Michael J. Marquardt and Howard Schuman. And more power to ASTD!

Herminia Carbon
Ralph W. Alvis House
Columbus, Ohio

A Skilled Assessment

After reading "Beyond Assessment Centers," (March 1988) I had to share my own experience because this article was right on target in its usefulness for many, many organizations.

A couple of years ago, while employed as a corporate manager of management and organization development for a mid-sized manufacturer, I was asked to develop a process to aid in promoting and selecting supervisors, managers, and many professional people. My initial plan was to institute an assessment center, based on its history and valid research. As I investigated the possibility, however, it became apparent that the company was too small and geographically spread to institute a center.

The process I created and implemented was, as discussed in the arti-

cle, not an actual assessment center per se, but instead utilized the technology and research findings of the assessment center. In creating the process I employed local line managers in each step. I used them to do a job analysis and then guided them in the creation of some of the material, such as the in-basket and simulations. Seeing the end result, based on their defined position functions and input, certainly aided the ownership and support of the process. Using this routine at various locations avoided the "not invented here" comments, although the actual result was usually very similar.

In implementation local management and individuals were trained as assessors and were involved in the procedures. The typical process involved tests, interviews, and simulations, all job related. All the evaluations were performed by decision makers. For the supervisory positions in smaller facilities some trained assessors were actually involved in the simulation as "workers" performing for the candidate, while other assessors were "typical" observers. A skill assessment by all followed.

In looking back on this experience, there were many benefits which would not have been realized had a normal assessment center been proposed. All management agreed that better decisions were being made, and a six-month follow-up in one location indicated that highly rated candidates were subsequently the highest rated supervisors.

Other benefits were also realized. By focusing the evaluation on behavior in standardized simulations, long-time managers avoid certain built-in biases. It became apparent that the assessor managers became better managers, based on their evaluations, in their interactions with subordinates and through performance appraisals.

In sum, for smaller organizations and those decentralized situations

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where local management needs or wants autonomy, going "beyond the assessment center" is a great idea. Certainly it costs money, but, in the long run, how much does it cost to make the wrong "people" decisions in terms of lowered productivity, efficiency, morale, attendance, and the like?

Michael A. Raphael
M.A. Raphael & Associates
Windsor, Connecticut

Perfect Timing

Congratulations on Steven Phillips's article "The New Time Management" (April 1988). I've just discovered a new, surprisingly fresh, and practical resource in that area. *Taming the Paper Tiger* by Barbara Hemphill gave me ideas to use immediately. One favorite organizing principle she covers is: "Clutter is postponed decisions." The book includes discussions, whimsical illustrations, tools, and checklists. It's available in bookstores or by calling publishers Dodd, Mead & Co. at 202/387-8007.

This book is high on my list of recommendations to clients and colleagues!

Maggie Bedrosian
Synergy Group
Rockville, Maryland

And in This Corner. . .

In "The New Time Management" (April 1988) author Steven Phillips contrasts what he sees as the traditional time management, which stresses goal setting and to-do lists, with a "new" time management driven by the force of "values clarification." He proposes that a "goal" must be something that is possessive. A "value," however, is more a state of being. He includes a list of popular books which favor the new

approach to time management as contrasted with books on the so-called "old" approach, Alan Lakein's *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life* and R. Alec Mackenzie's *The Time Trap*.

When reading the popular new ideas that grab the immediate attention of the masses, it is important to read not only the content written on the lines but also to consider what is between the lines. The written word tends to date people because it is fixed in the time that it is written. Living tradition does not date people. To compare today's ideas about management with what was written years ago does not take into account how we got to where we are. It merely contrasts two points in time. If we only look at fixed points in history, and not at the living traditions which evolve through the process of history, we would probably say that the Bible and the U.S. Constitution do not stand up to today's new theories!

The fact remains today, as it did years ago, that you can't manage anything well without first being in control of your time. Time is constant; people are variable. No one would argue that today's goals and values may be different and seem more in line with the times. Work that is satisfying to the individual must be work that can be aligned with the values of the group or organization, or it won't be personally satisfying.

Time management is as much a skill as it is a choice. Phillips is not wrong in espousing a time management system that is much broader and richer in scope than a to-do list. But effectively using a time management system and staying with it in the long run involves more than a values clarification; it requires skill.

My argument with the new time management is not that we shouldn't evolve, improve, renew, rediscover, or even invent. Rather, it's that what may seem new is usually contained in the old. It's not a new discovery,

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but a facet that had not necessarily been articulated before.

In the fifties and sixties much was written about the social obligations of organizations toward employees, customers, and the population at large. Values clarification is nothing new. It is popular terminology in current literature. Mr. Phillips has missed the attention Mackenzie paid toward values in life. Both *The Time Trap* and *Managing Your Time* have sections devoted to the philosophy of time. Additionally, since 1972 Dr. Mackenzie has authored over 60 articles and delivered seminars in over 40 countries. One article was actually titled: "Is Your To-Do List Obsolete?" To understand Mackenzie only in terms of goal setting and a to-do list is like trying to understand Martin Luther King only in terms of his "I Have a Dream" speech.

Mackenzie was the first to show time as a fundamental resource that drives management in general. In doing this he showed us that without time management, none of our goals can be achieved no matter how value driven they may be. The tone for a fundamental management process that has perennial worth was set when Mackenzie published "The Chart of the Management Process" in the *Harvard Business Review* in 1969 and revised it in 1982. Over a million copies have been sold, and it has been translated into 12 languages. This process grapples with the basic elements underlying all management theories.

Mackenzie also was one of the first to see the need for a comprehensive time management system that went well beyond the to-do list, and his vision led him to develop the popular "Time Tactics" system. This system not only helps people clarify their values with regard to their own time, it helps them skillfully control their time once they decide what their values are. Phillips apparently is unaware that "Time Tactics" was developed in 1981. It provides all six elements espoused by Phillips.

The contribution Mackenzie has made to management in general and time management in particular vastly exceeds what was written in *The Time Trap*. Mackenzie realized that time is but one of the resources available to an individual or an organization. In his "Chart of the Management Process" he shows how these resources are channeled through seven managerial skills. These skills are required to convert these resources into both personal and professional results. Finally, the output reflects the productive targets of the individual or organization—the sum of goals and values, if you will. This really says more than all of the new theories combined. The model should be seen at once as an expression, as a process, and as a clay to be manipulated. This is what makes it perennial and applicable in any age.

The new, the current, and the popular always vie for our immediate attention. Because they are so demanding, they can lull us into thinking they will solve all our problems in some sort of miraculous way. But we will only win the management season by sticking to the fundamentals and working with them.

The corporate world is striving to be sensitive to customers' values, employees' values, management's values, the board of director's values, and the values of the public at large. Yes, we are becoming more service and information oriented and less hard-product oriented. We live in the Information Age, the Technological Age, the Biotech Age, the New Age, and we are marching ever more swiftly toward the twenty-first century. We must continue to evolve and grow. But we still need some fundamentals to manage the transition. Yes, we need commitment, but we need skill to make our commitments work.

Dennis McCartin
Alec Mackenzie and Associates, Inc.
Greenwich, New York

(continued)

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Facing The Facts

[The following is in response to April's "Tell Us What You Think" question on the importance of competitiveness.]

In the computer industry, competition is fierce. Almost daily a new product is announced that is better, faster, and less expensive than the "competition's" product.

How does that affect the training department's responsibility? For internal training of employees, we have to prepare courses that are available on shorter notice to meet rapid delivery schedules. The training must prepare service people to be able to install, troubleshoot, and repair equipment in shorter time frames, thus improving individual productivity and reducing the cost of training to the corporation.

Customers also are interested in being able to fully utilize their systems quickly, expanding the capabilities of their operators, and spending less money. Let's face the facts: As the price of computing power comes down, the cost of training the people who use the systems must be reduced as well. The training department's responsibilities are the same as the corporation; we all have to provide our products and services faster, better, and less expensively. Why? Because if we don't, someone else will. Who? The competition!

John Marohl
NCR Corporation
Dayton, Ohio

Thanks from a Fan

Thank you, John Humphrey, for sharing your views in "Challenging Views of Training from a Top Professional" (March 1988). Although I

agree with many of your views, there were three points I strongly agree with:

- the importance of reading materials from outside the training field;
 - the importance of cultural literacy;
 - your immersion in the world of people through community service.
- But I strongly disagree with your contention that "return on investment (ROI) in training is a sham." Every investment made by today's bottom-line-oriented company must be evaluated. And one aspect of that evaluation process is the calculation of the ROI. Failure to calculate the ROI is like hoping to get to the Final Four at the NCAA championships without an effective scouting network.

Scott Carpenter
Instructional Design Group, Inc.
Morristown, New Jersey

Another Alternative

As a publisher in the HRD field, I read "What Editors Want—How to Get Published in HRD" (March 1988) with great interest. We are the only publication in our field that provides critical product reviews, and I was struck that most of the journals listed

- were not directly relevant to the profession.
- were generally pedantic and esoteric, except for a few.
- required serious, costly, and time-consuming research that many of us in an ordinary work situation could not provide.

So where do thinking HRD professionals with little time go to get published?

I feel proud that in our six years of publishing every one of our hundreds of reviews have been written

by regular, on-the-job people in real situations and work environments related to HRD, not by journalists, academics, theoreticians, or others lacking the experience received only by a practitioner fighting in the daily wars.

We encourage and request our readers to become reviewers. There are no committee process or unreadable and boring charts in *The Review*, just pure peer reviews. This is one source to which HRD pros can submit reviews. I suggest anyone who wants to review videotapes, books, and software to call me directly at 201/445-2288 during business hours. Other folks of good taste seeking a *free issue* can also call or write.

To the *Journal*, I wish continued great success. Each issue is a much needed pearl.

George Khoury
The HRD Review
Glen Rock, New Jersey

Now Hear This

[The following is in response to January's "Tell Us What You Think" question on AIDS.]

I cannot emphasize enough what an issue AIDS in the workplace is! As a trainer and a health-care professional involved with AIDS education for over five years, I can testify that we must address this problem *now*.

Trainers must educate themselves about AIDS and rely on outside resources for technical information and support. AIDS education is a training responsibility. This responsibility is *not* met by showing a video and handing out a brochure. These are merely support tools.

Trainers must provide up-to-date, concise information about AIDS and organize group question-and-answer sessions. Most trainers are not quali-

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fied counselors, but should acquaint themselves with such support services in their area.

AIDS is not going away. AIDS education must be continuing education for us all.

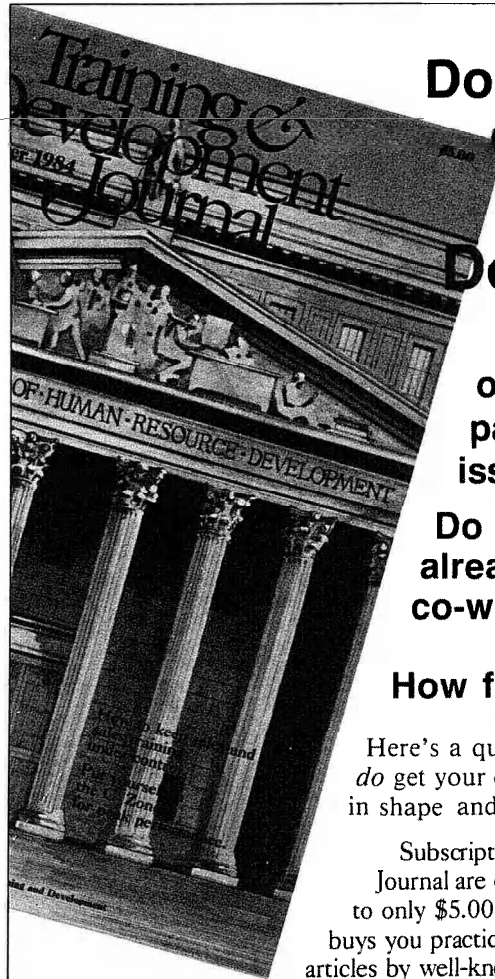
Jo McKelvey
McH Associates
Garland, Texas

Tell Us What You Think

Every morning you roll out of bed, stumble into the bathroom, and take a bleary look at yourself in the mirror. What do you see? Is that a training practitioner staring back at you or an HRD professional?

Similar to a never-ending volley in a tennis match, the debate over professional identity in this field continues. How do you view yourself: as a trainer or as an HRD professional? Why? We'd like to hear your opinions. Send your viewpoints to "Issues," *Training & Development Journal*, 1630 Duke St., Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.

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