

New Training Tools

Ready-Made Newsletters

Upper management liked your idea about broadening communication throughout the company. You had said that a newsletter would improve morale and productivity by making employees more aware of the business and giving them a fuller sense of participation. It also would give management a vehicle for following up on directives, testing new ideas, and getting feedback.

But you may have put yourself into a hole. Management wants not only a company-wide newsletter, but also one for sales, one for computer services, and one for production. You have some terminals with Xerox's Ventura Publisher; each department, however, has varying amounts of information and wants to set up that information to suit its needs. No one, not even you, has enough experience on Ventura to whip up a newsletter format efficiently. What do you do?

New Riders Publishing has published its latest book/disk product, *Style Sheets for Newsletters: A Guide to Advanced Designs for Xerox Ventura Publisher*, by Martha Lubow and Polly Pattison. The disk includes 21 ready-to-use newsletter templates—users simply load a template into their Ventura program and input their own text and graphics.

The 21 designs are organized into three categories—basic, intermediate, and advanced—and each category contains a selection of formats for nameplates, mastheads, tables of contents, column headings, photo layouts, and one-, two-, three-, four-, and five-column grids.

The 320-page book describes each layout and includes design terminology, layout and production guidelines, and tips for customizing style sheets.

The *Style Sheets for Newsletters* book contains more than 100 illustrations and is 7 by 9 inches. The suggested retail price for the set—

the book and the disk—is \$39.95. For more information, contact New Riders Publishing, 31125 Via Colinas, Suite 902, Westlake Village, CA 91362; 818/991-5392. *Circle No. 187 on Reader Service Card.*

New from Prentice Hall

Two different arms of Prentice Hall have tools to help trainers.

Hear ye

Prentice Hall Business & Professional Publishing produces books and manuals for practitioners in a wide variety of industries. It has come out with a new line of audio-cassette programs for business executives and professionals who want to improve their effectiveness.

Alec Mackenzie on Time is a five-cassette package by the internationally known author and consultant. The package includes a 64-page workbook and provides strategies for keeping managerial productivity high. In fact, it promises to add two hours a day to your time at work and at play. The price is \$59.95.

Mastering the Art of Verbal Self-Defense, by Suzette Haden Elgin, is a six-cassette program with a 112-page workbook. It shows you how to recognize language "victim" patterns in yourself and others, and demonstrates tactics for protecting yourself against verbal assaults. The price for the package is \$69.95.

John Wolfe's Workshop for Sales Professionals includes six audiocassettes and a 56-page workbook. The author covers the whole sales process, from prospecting and grabbing attention to closing effectively and beating the competition. The package costs \$69.95.

Other subjects in the audiocassette series include creative-thinking techniques, improving memory, and effective managerial skills.

For more information, contact

Prentice Hall Business & Professional Publishing, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

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The trenches

The Bureau of Business Practice has a new publication for first-level supervisors: *Front Line Supervisor's Bulletin*. Operating on the somewhat self-fulfilling principle that "training is most effective when given in small, regular increments," this four-page, semi-monthly newsletter is designed to instruct and motivate supervisors to develop their leadership potential. Some of the topics covered in the first issue are

- enforcing company rules fairly and consistently;
- giving instructions effectively;
- making the best use of time;
- enhancing listening skills.

The newsletter's regular features include columns such as "Quality Clinic," "Safety Spotlight," and "You Be the Judge," which provides a supervisory problem and then offers a solution in another part of the newsletter.

A year's subscription (24 issues) of *Front Line Supervisor's Bulletin* costs \$48, plus \$10.80 for postage and handling. For more information, contact Bureau of Business Practice, a division of Prentice Hall, 24 Rope Ferry Road, Waterford, CT 06386; 800/243-0876 (in Connecticut, 203/442-4365).

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Let's Ask Dr. Computer

The therapist in your employee assistance program is supposed to help an employee deal with personal problems, whether they are job-related or come from outside the workplace. In most cases, the therapist acts as a confidential

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sounding board, an objective, even neutral, party. He or she listens to the employee's problems and asks questions that are designed to elicit information rather than challenge; theoretically, the human interaction is not as important as what the employee has to say. The therapist hopes to gain enough information to direct the employee toward the right path; if your EAP doesn't have a licensed therapist, then the employee is referred to one.

The therapeutic process seems straightforward. In fact, its basic structure can be transferred easily to a computer. "Heaven help us!" you say, especially if you make your living as a therapist. But if you think about it, you'll see that therapy indeed has some of the characteristics of computer interaction: logic, impassivity, and the gathering of information through simple queries. For many people who are uncomfortable baring their souls to a near stranger, the computer might provide an unthreatening outlet.

The Therapeutic Learning Program (TLP), developed by Interactive Health Systems, is a computer therapist designed for EAPs. In its industrial version (created for licensed therapists in healthcare facilities) TLP is made up of 10 one-hour sessions and requires the supervision of a therapist. A smaller version—using the first two sessions—is for companies that do not employ licensed therapists and that want basic diagnoses of problems or simple problem-solving.

TLP is interactive and completely confidential. An employee uses a computer at his or her leisure and responds to the program's questions. TLP

- identifies an employee's personal problem;
- evaluates it;
- "talks" it through with the employee;
- discovers what prevents the employee from solving it.

The program then prints out an

interpretation of the problem; the employee, of course, keeps the disk. TLP does not provide an involved medical diagnosis, and the EAP staff may refer the employee to a "non-computer" professional. Also, TLP is not appropriate for employees with personality disorders—an academic point, in that many standard EAPs are not equipped for such people either.

Admittedly, the idea of using a computer for such an intimate purpose is a little disturbing. But many people who have used the program report lowered stress levels and agree that the program was responsible for their increased ability to solve problems. And after interacting with the computer, most employees did not feel that they needed a professional referral.

A site license for the 10-session TLP is \$10,000 (with a yearly renewal fee of \$8,000) and requires that the company use a licensed therapist. The shorter version, used for basic diagnosis and referral purposes, costs \$5,000 (with a yearly renewal fee of \$1 per employee at the company); Interactive Health Systems provides you with a list of locations that have the complete program. Included in the package are a disk for each session, a training manual, one day of training by Interactive Health Systems, updates, and customization of the package for your company. For more information on TLP, contact Interactive Health Systems, 1333 Ocean Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90405; 213/451-8111.

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Climbing the Ladder

Time ladders help HRD professionals develop work standards for employees who have a variety of job

tasks. Such standards enable an organization to increase productivity and allow employees to make better use of time. Creating time ladders is an involved process, however. Employees measure the work they do by breaking down their tasks into hours—a half-hour here to create the product, three hours a day or week to do this to support that. They generate forms that define their time, and HRD people use those forms to analyze processes and create effective time-management systems. It's hard enough to produce the time ladders, and even harder to compile the data and make sense of it.

The MTM Association for Standards and Research has developed a software system, *Time Ladder Techniques*, to streamline the process. It arranges data in three files—specific task, work analysis time data, and standard element—and can generate seven types of reports. The package includes an operating disk, a system manual, and a training manual, and operates on IBM computers and compatibles that have 10-megabyte hard drives.

The cost for the software and support material is \$695; training services for the system are also available. For more information, contact MTM Association for Standards and Research, 16-01 Broadway, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410; 201/791-7720. *Circle No. 191 on Reader Service Card.*



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