

New Training Tools

Getting More Out of Managers

Can playing games make people better managers? Can software solve managers' problems? Can management meetings be constructive? Read on...

Soft problem solving

BreakThrough! is a new software package from Profit Technology for training and motivating managers to higher levels of productivity. The software is designed to maximize managers' problem-solving effectiveness by stimulating their thought processes to produce innovative solutions and creative ideas.

A typical *BreakThrough!* user might be a marketing manager who must determine how best to launch a new product. Various features of the software can be used to develop product positioning strategies, develop innovative sales and marketing plans, and recognize new business opportunities. The software systematically helps users generate and organize solutions, think through issues, and make decisions. It enables managers to overcome mental blocks and stimulate mental abilities.

The software incorporates 60 business data bases that pose questions to stimulate the user's learning, decision making, and creativity with a variety of aids including graphics and "flashing windows." The software is divided into four major components: "Interface and Work;" "Thought Triggering and Amplification;" "BreakThrough! Tools;" and "Utilities."

In the "Interface and Work" section, the user can employ up to eight different idea management environments for pursuing multiple problems or projects. Once engaged in a project, the user can call up "Thought Triggering and Amplification." In this mode the user selects, displays, and chooses key words, concepts, and insights from the program's business knowledge library. These prompts act on both conscious and subconscious levels, progressively defining an issue or broadening the study of a problem. The "Break-Through! Tools" enable users to generate reports. The "Utilities" seg-

ment enables users to create and merge files and projects.

The nine floppy disks included in the *BreakThrough!* package are DOS-compatible. For further information, contact **Profit Technology, Inc.**, 39 Broadway, New York, NY 10006; 212/809-3500.

Roll the dice

What can one learn from *Waffling*? According to Instruct Inc., the producer of this new game, players can develop into more skillful, systems-minded managers of people, things, and tasks. In *Waffling* players sense situations,

AVOID THE POTHOLES.

Unfortunately, the road to success is rarely well-paved.

The key—for both individuals and organizations—is to look ahead and avoid the potholes.

Performax's Third Annual Training Institute—"Personal and Organization Well-Being"—helps human resource people understand their role in this process.

At the Performax Training Institute, you'll receive practical information from noted professionals. The program contains much more than theory on human behavior—it includes real-world case histories and special workshops in which you use tools developed at the Institute to solve specific problems facing you or your organization.

The Institute takes place at two locations: February 12-14 in Orlando, Florida; and February 16-18 in Anaheim, California. For a registration brochure or more information, please call (612) 559-6327 before February 1.

The Performax Third Annual Training Institute. It's designed to help you pave the way on the road to success.

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weigh alternatives, take risks, make decisions, act appropriately, and evaluate results. Such experience and awareness can help people to cognitively think, feel, and act more appropriately in real-life situations.

Waffling integrates management, sports, and automation in its play practices and objectives. The game board is structured with a central goal, a central fine-control zone, and four domains with four tracks each. Unlike other games, spaces and directions are numbered away from the central goal. Focusing on the goal and numbered differences, the object of the game is to skillfully "waffle"—shuffle back and forth, as in sporting events—your four pawns onto the goal line by reducing the differences. Special symbolized dice offer a choice of moves, upon which players decide according to the situation and risk involved. With experience and feedback, moves soon become automatic; players don't have to count spaces. One simple algebraic equation covers any move. As in a sporting event, players compete to reach and control a goal.

Waffling is priced at \$24.95. For further information, contact **Instruct Inc.**, P. O. Box 1177, Ridgewood, NJ 07450.

Learn about leadership and more

Alessandra and Associates introduces a 12-program video or album package, *Speaking of Success*. Management experts speak about the following:

- "How to Read People"—motivating through individual ideals;
- "Achieving Personal Excellence"—depth of knowledge, breadth of knowledge, and Gestalt focus;
- "Leadership—Maximizing People Potential"—handling change, leading by example, building professionalism;
- "The Psychology of Self Management"—how to manage yourself;
- "Stress, Success, and the Type A Report Card"—how to maximize productivity by eliminating stress;
- "How to Develop Top Performers"—the making of goal achievers;
- "How to Build a Success Attitude"—programming the subconscious, perceiving importance;

■ "Memory—What's in It for Me?"—the power of memory, enriching personal and professional success;

■ "How to Listen Effectively"—concentrating, acknowledging, and participating;

■ "Selling With Service"—marketing as a philosophy, not a department;

■ "Time Management"—getting organized, staying organized;

■ "Motivating Four American Generations"—how to capitalize on market differences between generation value systems.

The programs may be purchased individually in VHS or Beta video formats or as a package on videotapes or albums. Also available is the *Speaking of Success Anthology*, an edited presentation of all 12 programs in synopsis form. For further information, contact **Alessandra and Associates Inc.**, P. O. Box 2767, La Jolla, CA 92038.

Meaningful meetings

Why do meetings fail? What makes them succeed? The answers might save many companies much wasted time and money. AIMS Media takes a crack at these questions with its new film, *Management: Conducting Effective Meetings*. The 18-minute program offers practical suggestions for making meetings efficient and productive. Effective meeting techniques are described and enacted. Managers learn that for every meeting, they have the following three areas to attend to:

- *The task*—working on items on the agenda;
- *Maintenance*—controlling and attending to the needs of individuals and anticipating things that can go wrong;
- *Team building*—performing activities that will strengthen the group.

Suggestions on how to attend successfully to these areas include taking time to plan and prepare an agenda, being clear about your purpose, starting and ending on time, allowing no interruptions, establishing a regular meeting time, sticking to the subject, and sending out a written summary with plans and assignments afterwards. Also covered are how to keep control of the meeting and how to conduct brainstorming.

Purchase price for the 16mm film is \$420. The program is also available on videocassette for \$315. Rental is \$75. Free preview available for purchase consideration. For further information, contact **AIMS Media**, 6901 Woodley Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406-4878; (toll free) 800/367-2467, (in California, Alaska, and Hawaii, call collect) 818/785-4111.

Beyond Basic Writing

Business, technical, and professional writers who need to go beyond the basics may benefit from *Writing for the Information Age*. This video-print training package covers a four-phase writing process: culture analysis, information mapping, drafting, and revising. Basic tools of writing are presented in terms of reading strategies and the writer's need to inform and influence readers. The program also covers grammar and the psychology of word choice.

The program opens by introducing a manager whose underdeveloped writing skill is interfering with his job performance. Throughout the seven program modules, viewers watch this manager apply methods that improve his writing.

The videotapes are available in 1/2-inch VHS, Beta, and 3/4-inch U-Matic formats. A 170-page reading-reference handbook is included; a teaching guide is optional. The handbook and teaching guide explain how to present the course to individuals and small groups on a self-study basis or to larger groups as a trainer-led seminar. Three workbook breaks per half-hour videotape allow for application to students' on-the-job writing. Total viewing time is 3½ hours; total training time is 18 to 24 hours.

For further information, contact **Practical Communications, Inc.**, Box 4335, St. Paul, MN 55104; 612/291-2997.

Send items of interest to: Tools, Training & Development Journal, 1630 Duke St., Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.