

Industry's Need for Training

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Training needs and problems are, generally speaking, similar throughout industry. I think it's likely that management everywhere sees this matter in much the same light and that your own management would subscribe to most of the things I say this evening. I hope it is significant that one representing the management of companies like your own has been asked to discuss the need for training, for training is of such importance that it is a basic management principle. It is an essential and integral part of the philosophy of business management rather than a course, a program or a formalized procedure.

I am told that during the past two or three years a feature of most training seminars, conferences and management courses has been discussion of such topics as "How to sell top management on the need for supervisory training," "How to sell top management on executive development," and "Enlisting the support of top management for the training department." If this is true it implies that industrial management is either unaware of the need for training its people or is unwilling to appropriate the necessary time and money for training. Whereas this may, of course, be true in a few specific instances, it has been my experience that management is

far more sensitive to the need than is generally understood.

The men in management, already convinced of the value of training, are in fact looking to their training specialists to design, build and sharpen the tools needed to train people at all levels of responsibility from operating personnel to the chief executive in their respective companies. One of management's principal responsibilities is for building a capable, effective, harmonious and enduring production, sales and service team. Management is looking to *you* and all its training people for support and assistance in fulfilling this recognized obligation. You are the specialists on whom we rely.

In considering how I might express management's attitude toward the general matter of training in industry, it seemed obvious that the subject could be divided into two equally important parts.

A. Industry's need for training.

B. The *kind of training* industry needs.

Let me lead off by asking the question, "Why does industry need training?"

Productivity has been regarded by many economists and business leaders as the most important single factor in America's economic progress. If current

trends continue, it appears that increased productivity represents the principal means by which higher standards of living can be achieved—both at home and abroad. In this situation,

1. Training can provide knowledge and skills that enable individuals, hence groups, to produce more things people want, of a higher quality and at lower cost. This involves training in manual skills, trained factory leadership, thoroughly trained technical minds, and trained management.

2. Scientific and technological advances have contributed immeasurably to increased productivity. Training develops alertness to needs, and helps to provide methods for solving problems.

3. To attain full productivity, and the benefits productivity can provide, the operating groups, the scientists, the supervision, must all understand the basis of our economic system, the characteristics of our present economy and the roles of labor, management, capital and consumer groups. Suitable training classes should be available to develop this understanding.

4. Training is needed to provide the esprit de corps, the tone—if you wish—of the institution.

It is not generally recognized how interested top management is in the character training programs of the company. Satisfactory industrial and community relations mean successful companies and these are not obtained without conscious and relentless effort. Happy relationships amongst the employees and

in the community derive, as you folks know better than others, from day to day sincere, friendly, uninhibited contacts. But these contacts are not always easy to obtain particularly amongst new employees or newly created supervision. Your training staffs can do a tremendous amount towards the development of a happy "ship."

In taking stock of the economic problems in your specific industries and in your own companies, I am sure that you recognize the various factors at work to make greater productivity possible and the need for training more obvious.

1. Industry has become more and more complex. It is more technical in all its phases from machine operation to management—whether the business is textiles, oil refining, candy making—or any other. Training is necessary to teach knowledge and skills never before required.

2. Industry is more competitive—competing nationally and internationally for customers, for labor, for capital—and the premium is on greater effectiveness, lower cost, higher quality.

While the economist stresses the matter of productivity, management understands clearly its responsibility for providing working conditions, opportunity, and satisfaction for the men on the job in keeping with fundamental religious and democratic principles. A man's job ranks with his religion and his family as an important thing in his life. Unless we provide every one of our people—at every level of organization—satisfaction in his job and the opportunity to progress to the highest responsibility of which he is capable, we are denying

him what we recognize as his basic rights. Indeed, we have an obligation to create the opportunity.

1. If training is geared to meet specific needs of individuals themselves or as members of working groups, it is of great value in assisting management to meet this obligation. The widely accepted policy of promotion from within can only be effective if there is adequate practical training for all employees. It is shortsighted to train only one group or one level.

2. Properly designed training can help all levels of management meet human relations problems with understanding and skill. Management is sensitive to the close relationship between business and industry and the community. In the final analysis the character of those employed in a company determines the character of the organization; and the character of the same men and women likewise sets the tone of the communities in which we live. This age of great specialization has focused attention on technical and scientific matters. We need broader development of people not only to acquaint them with world and community problems but to motivate them to play their parts in civic groups with confidence and clear perspective.

What kind of training is required to meet the needs for greater productivity and satisfaction on all jobs?

Thus far I have spoken of training only in very general terms—not of training programs or any specific kind of training. As background for some com-

ments about types of training I believe to be necessary, I'd like to tell you how I feel about the respective roles of management and staff groups in training matters.

1. The responsibility for the training of people is a part of the management job—at all levels of company organization. In fact, on-the-job coaching by the individual's immediate supervisor is the most important of all forms of training. We might say, therefore, that the development of people is one of the management accountability factors—one of the factors to be considered along with cost, quality of product, etc. in determining how well a management man is meeting his responsibility. Viewed in this light training is part of a company's way of doing business, or a management philosophy of which any single course, program or technique is a part.

2. Those who are engaged in training work as staff specialists can be of maximum value to their management if they will accept it as their responsibility to help management meet its needs for various types of training. Training people need to be alert to new and better teaching methods. They should recognize areas in which training might profitably be applied and they should develop new techniques. The staff needs to keep the management well informed on training matters so that the management will be able intelligently to discharge its responsibility. But if their own knowledge and skill is to be applied effectively

the final decision on training needs and program content must be left in the hands of the supervision for whom the training is being conducted. Only under these circumstances can training be a successful joint effort, line and staff supporting each other.

3. Training needs to be continuous and long term. One exposure will not last—it must be repeated from time to time—with varying emphasis to meet the needs that develop.

Let's take a look at some of the specific phases of the well rounded training essential if an industry, large or small, is to meet its objectives of productivity, job satisfaction and organizational continuity.

Orientation comes first. The principal purpose of orientation programs is to acquaint people with their new surroundings—the company—its processes—products—customer relationships, basic industrial relations policies, and the importance of the contribution of each of these to the total company effort. Proper orientation of a new member of the organization makes him feel he is a part of a productive team and lets him know right at the start that the management is interested in him.

Attitude Building

Orientation is the attitude building part of training. It helps the man or woman take the big step from school room or household tasks to industrial employment. Some orientation can be done centrally, particularly those aspects dealing with over-all company operations. The individual supervisor should share

in orientation by covering, according to a plan closely coordinated with the centrally conducted orientation, those items pertaining to his particular department and job. Orientation is a continuous process not just a matter for attention during the first few days of employment.

Skills Next

Skill training comes next. It includes all job training for operations such as machining, assembly and inspection in the plants; also many office and clerical skills. The need and time required for skill training are, of course, in proportion to the complexity of the operation and such relevant factors as job methods, incentive pay and quality control. It is difficult to generalize on the problem of where such training can be given to best advantage, but certainly training people can make a valuable contribution by providing techniques, materials and other instruction aids if it is not practical for them actually to conduct the instruction.

A third consideration is apprentice training. This method for providing opportunities for capable young men to learn skilled trades has been developed to such a degree that it now includes not only manual skill training and the related factual information, but also consideration of the important factors of understanding and attitude.

Another field of endeavor is technical training. Colleges and universities provide students with fine training in fundamentals of science and engineering. However, young folks going into industry need assistance, through training, in relating this basic knowledge to the requirements of the specialized industries

in which they are employed. Needs in the photographic industry are examples. Formalized programs can help scientific and management people keep abreast of technical developments within their own and related companies and areas of activity.

Integrated Program

While this is an age of increasing scientific specialization, we cannot afford to isolate scientific and engineering personnel from management problems, for many of these newer employees are future managers. Technical training must be coupled with training in good business and human relations practices and provision must be made for the opportunity for technical men to develop an understanding of these factors.

And now another most important program—supervisory development. The need in this area is for teaching methods and materials that will influence the supervisor's behavior when unusual situations arise in his own department, in addition to teaching him principles of good supervision. Techniques must be developed that will motivate and enable the supervisor to transfer the skill and apply the knowledge he develops in the class or conference room to meet the day to day situations in the shop. It is altogether too easy to obscure objectives of training by the use of techniques such as role playing and case studies. Sometimes it seems to management that techniques are stressed more than the goals to be achieved.

And so we come to executive development. This is an important factor and one that has received increasing attention in industry over the past several years. Some companies are just now

awakening to the need. For others, the recent emphasis represents an opportunity for reappraisal of previous efforts and an attempt to improve them. Much of the discussion seems to center around responsibility for executive development and how it relates to training generally. I personally believe that the concept of executive development is only a part—an integral part—of the larger training function. If training is a management principle rather than a course, program or procedure, then executive development differs only in degree and emphasis from all other kinds of training.

Training people—if their thinking is broad and flexible—can supply the tools and methods with which higher levels of management can direct the development of its people, just as logically as they can provide tools for first line or middle management's use in training. Again, I would stress the importance of developing methods and techniques in cooperation with the line organization.

Executive Development

An executive development program formulated and superimposed on a line organization either by the chief executive or training staff, independent of those who must make it effective in the line, will surely have a struggle for survival. Top management is well aware of the need and looks to its specialists to work with the operating management to develop acceptable methods that can be incorporated in the day to day operation of the company.

Executive development naturally becomes more and more an individual matter the higher one goes in the organization. Just as departments within a com-

pany turn to the training department for centralized instruction when there are too few people to justify complete programs of their own, companies must often turn to outside sources for help when there are individuals with specific needs that cannot be met economically within the company. I refer to such aids as use of college management courses at Harvard, Cornell, Columbia, Wharton School, and others.

Management, of course, needs to remind itself of the great responsibility it places on its training people—and that they too should have opportunities to develop skills and acquire knowledge other than that which rubs off on them during their work. Adequate facilities for refresher courses at recognized institutions should be maintained and used.

As a practical indication of the importance we place on training in my company I give you a few relevant figures.

1. There are 74 people classified as instructors, training staff assistants, and supervisors of training activities in Kodak factories and offices in Rochester. In addition to these, there are numerous clerical personnel and some 10 people engaged in such activities as the production of visual aids for training purposes. The total is over 100.
2. Of the 74 instructors and supervisors, 28 are associated with training departments, while 46 are members of the line organization serving solely as job trainers.
3. There are also, of course, a great many personnel supervisors, particularly in the production departments,

who devote part of their time to training matters.

Let me summarize what I've tried to say:

A. Forward thinking management fully recognizes the need for training and is looking to you folks to help them do it effectively.

B. Training in industry is a necessary factor in management performance. It assists management people by

1. stimulating production
2. helping maintain quality standards
3. developing the proper spirit in the organization

C. Training should be administered by the line organization and should cover

1. Orientation
2. Skill training
3. Apprentice training
4. Technical training
5. Supervisory development
6. Executive development

A single training course or even a program is not enough to solve the problems of productivity and job satisfaction. The development of human resources needs to be one of the guiding principles by which a business is operated. Only if all levels of management and staff clearly understand their relationships and work together can training be successful in the richest sense.