Practicum

Hold the Disk Drive

Fast food means fast innovation, and industry giant Burger King keeps pace by testing and evaluating innovations via a computer simulation of the official Burger King production area. In a recent issue of *Productivity Improvement Bulletin*, William W. Swart, the restaurant chain's vice-president of operation systems, explained how computer simulation has helped streamline operations and realize a savings of more than one percent of the company's multi-billion-dollar annual sales revenues.

Burger King's rapid growth and increasingly complex labor demands require frequent changes in its production system. The goals are to maintain quality, speed of service and cleanliness without exceeding cost limits. The solution was the computerized model restaurant, housed in the Miami headquarters.

The model simulates a room of counters, shelves, appliances and other equipment that can be arranged according to any of Burger King's 25 production configurations, or in new patterns. While operations staff experiments with new processes and equipment, the computer detects and suggests solutions to potential productivity bottlenecks.

The computer model also addresses labor productivity. "Most manufacturing companies have labor standards to determine how many widgets employees should make during an eight-hour shift," said Swart. "But with our product, we need a different system. We can't use slack periods to build up our sandwich inventory; we can keep our product for only 10 to 15 minutes. Our labor needs fluctuate as our sales fluctuate, and about 18 percent of our daily sales occur in one hour—between noon and 1 p.m."

Burger King managers must estimate how many employees are needed to meet any projected sales volume in half-hour increments throughout the day, balancing sales, speed and labor levels. The computer simulation not only determines how many employees are needed for any level of sales, it also delineates which tasks each employee should perform.

Now if they can just put the model to work on that special sauce...

Computers for Blind People

Blind people can now use personal computers for the same applications as sighted people, reports *Computers in Training* newsletter. Versabraille, a briefcase-sized, battery-operated system with a Braille keyboard and a memory unit, can be carried to meetings and used to take notes.

When attached to the standard output connector of most personal computers, the system converts the Braille text to standard, on-screen characters so that sighted people can share the information. The machine also converts screen text into Braille so that a blind person can read what's on someone else's screen.

Computers in Training calls the development "liberating," saying it removes the logistical barriers that have prevented many blind people from fully entering the information age. *Computers in Training* is published by Dr. Karl Albrecht & Associates, San Diego.

Hot Writing

Kimberly Edwards takes training so seriously that she devotes one full page of her eight-page publication to a "Trainer's Resource." Edwards is publisher of *Writer's Update*, a monthly summary of issues, events and resources of interest to professionals who consider good writing an important part of their job.

Each newsletter features short, snappy, practical items on scores of topics, from fact-finding strategies and tips for writing more clearly, to using a personal computer for writing and advice on how to be published. A recent "Trainer's Resource" page offered steps for preparing effective overheads; a list of relevant new media; tips for those who train people how to write; a break-the-ice meeting strategy; and an item warning about vanity publishers.

The same issue offered this tidbit: "What's hotter than sex (in publishing, anyway)?...Business management. Some call it the new self-help discipline. Instead of bouncing their thighs, readers will be spot-reducing their business life."

For information, write to *Writer's Update*, 4812 Folsom Boulevard, #250, Sacramento, CA 95819. A 12-month subscription costs $8.95.

Staying New

Companies working to stimulate organizational innovation share a growing recognition that having innovation is not merely a function of having "creative people."

In a recent article in *Goodmeasure .Notes*, Barry A. Stein declared, "The amount of innovation that organizations have, and the nature of those innovations, depends critically on the overall character and culture of the organization. Thus, increasing innovation in an organization isn't a routine matter. Innovation itself needs to be considered and encouraged in innovative ways."

Goodmeasure has been working with organizations to help them become more consistently innovative, using some of the ideas Rosabeth Moss Kanter articulated in her book *The Change Masters* (Simon & Schuster, 1983—see *Training &*

Development Journal, April 1984). The following are among the activities these companies have been implementing to support innovation.

■ Some organizations have begun holding regular idea exchanges, working conferences involving several levels and departments, in which opportunities for innovation, venture development and cooperative efforts are discussed and pursued.

■ The management of one diversified company decided to encourage joint ventures between divisions. New performance measures, distinct from the measures in place to appraise individual divisions' results, were developed so that short-term operating results wouldn't be a factor in venture investment decisions.

■ A large and prestigious organization gave local facilities' managers the opportunity to be innovative and act as entrepreneurs in determining how best to maximize the potential of their own "business." In one instance a plant manager, discovering a source of supplies that could be purchased cheaply in large quantities, proposed that the surplus be sold outside the company as a separate venture. He took advantage of the plant's location on a deep-water pier that hadn't been used in 14 years, importing foreign raw materials and selling the excess locally at a profit.

■ Some organizations have added the search for innovation to their training and development activities. To help increase interdepartmental collaboration and shared knowledge, one company "seeds" interfunctional projects within the formal course work, while simultaneously teaching project management and teamwork skills.

"The worker participation movement is very much alive, because there's a sense that managing in the 1980s is managing to get employee commitment, not merely compliance."

Richard Balzer, labor-management consultant, in "Why Recovery Isn't Getting Cooperation in the Workplace," Business Week, *February 20, 1984*

Train'n Ain't for Everybody
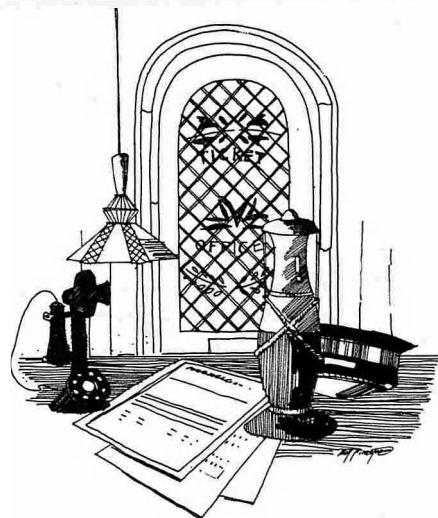
Setting—A railroad station ticket booth. It is mid-morning, and the ticket agent is busy filling out reports and counting money. The morning rush is over, and the agent is absorbed in getting reorganized.

A prospective passenger approaches the ticket booth. The agent suddenly looks up and is startled by the presence of the customer.

Agent: May I help you?

Customer: I'd like a train ticket, please.

Agent: Where to?

Customer: Oh, I don't know. I'd just like to take a train for a while.

Agent: But I can't sell tickets without being told the destination!

Customer: Well, what's available?

Agent: I beg your pardon!

Customer: What's available? Where do all the trains go?

Agent: Well, trains can help you get to almost any place you want. Our company alone has direct routes to more than 50 cities. By making a few connections with other railroads, we can help you get to more than 10,000 cities in the United States.

So, where would you like to go?

Customer: (With a touch of confusion) I never expected this to be so hard. I just wanted to get some train'n experience. I've heard it's a lot of fun.

Agent: (Sighs with frustration) So that's what you want! You want one of those luxury liners.

Well, we don't have that kind of train here. This company is in the transportation business. We help people get where they want to go.

(*The agent settles back in his chair while the customer begins to fidget uncomfortably. The agent resumes with self-assurance.*)

We're no cattle-car operation, though. We offer all of the conveniences necessary to make your travel comfortable and stimulating. There's nothing worse than a boring train ride, you know.

But if you just want to get away from where you are and don't have any place to go, talk to one of those "vacation train" outfits. They'll be glad to sell you a ticket without knowing where you're going.

Customer: That sounds great! Put me on a train to one of their stations.

Agent: I suppose I could do that. You realize, of course, that your "vacation train" will cost anywhere from $500 to $1,000 or more.

Customer: You're kidding! I can't afford that much. Don't they have one that is just one day, for maybe $100?

Agent: (Leans across the counter and speaks in a reflective tone) Sounds like you need to see a transportation consultant, or somebody like that. Or, you could take our train to Bethel, Maine. I'm told they have folks there who help people discover where they've been and where they're going.

Customer: No, that's not for me. I don't want to get into that kind of thing. I just want some train'n.

Agent: OK, but *where* do you want to go?

Customer: All right! All right! Give me a ticket to "Idon'treallyneedtobehereville."

Agent: O.K., but most train passengers make that into a two-day trip.

Customer: Well, how about a one-day trip to "Unaccountableville"?

(Pause)

Yes, that might be nice. I think that's where I want to go for awhile.

Agent: It's a great place, all right. Everybody should visit that town every now and then. But really, you don't need a train for that.

Look, from what you've said, you don't have the time or money for a "vacation train." And no bona fide train will get you to Unaccountableville. It's a nice place, mind you, but this railroad is in the transportation business. We help people get to places where other forms of transportation are too slow, inconvenient, expensive or not available.

(Leans forward and continues.)

Please, I have customers waiting. I don't think a train is for you. Not at the moment, anyway.

Customer: (Resigned, and then with bewilderment) Maybe you're right. Thanks for your help. This train'n business is interesting, but there are more things to consider than I thought.

(The customer begins to walk away, pauses and turns to ask...)

By the way, where's the bus station?

Agent: Across the street. But if you decide to do that, don't forget to buy a round-trip ticket!

The scene closes, and a new character, the conductor, walks on stage.

Conductor: This has been one of the many stories that gets repeated day after day in the training industry. But unlike our ticket agent, most agents are eager to sell tickets without regard to the customer's destination or needs.

If we sell tickets to people who really don't need a train, or who don't know where they're going, they just get upset and complain. They report they've been *railroaded* rather than trained.

That gives all trains a bad name, and everybody stops using them. Peo-

ple who really need them forget that trains offer an effective means of transportation.

If we would let only those people who really need train'n on to the train, we would all be better off.

Submitted by David E. Morris
Organizational Effectiveness Advisor
Communications and Computer Sciences
 Dept.
Exxon Corporation
Florham Park, N.J.

Paneling

Most HRD professionals are experienced in speaking solo and in participating in team presentations. But not everyone has served on panels, and this kind of speaking requires special skills. The following tips for panel moderators and members are from *Presentations for Decision Makers*, by Marya W. Holcombe and Judith K. Stein, Lifetime Learning Publications, 1983.

Moderators

■ *Pay attention to panelists' names.* Learn how to pronounce them correctly, and memorize them. It's wise to have the names written down in a convenient place, but don't read off cards. This signals to the audience that you don't find the panel members particularly important.

■ *Introduce yourself and the panelists.* In your concern for others, it's easy to forget yourself. A simple, "Good afternoon, I'm Harry Newsom, the moderator of our panel on changes in corporate planning policies," is usually enough. When introducing the panelists, don't get carried away with

their credentials; confine your remarks to their expertise on the subject of discussion.

■ *Set the stage.* Create the proper environment from the beginning by telling the audience what the discussion will be about, why it is important and what the format will be. Your tone, manner and professionalism will set the standard for the panelists and the audience.

■ *Set time limits.* It's wise to mention in the beginning the importance of staying on schedule. Set up, in advance, a system for cuing the participants that their time is up. If a panelist does start to run over, intervene tactfully.

It is usually best to take questions from the audience after each panelist's remarks. Again, limit the time spent on questions and answers.

■ *Maintain a sense of dignity.* Even if you know all the panelists well, the audience does not. In-jokes and other informal remarks can devalue the worth of the discussion.

■ *Provide transitions.* Transition statements link the presentations in the audience's mind and help the next speaker get started. Be specific. Rather than saying, "Ms. Anthony will now talk about the financial implications," say, "Ms. Anthony will now explain how this proposal will affect the standard of living of most Americans."

■ *Know how to close.* If a controversy is raging at the end of a discussion, start "decompressing" the participants about five minutes before the time is up by switching to a less controversial topic or by starting to summarize each person's view on the issue. Allow yourself time to make a general summary and a concluding statement, and thank the panelists for their participation.

Panelists

■ *Remember that you are on stage at all times.* When panel members are not speaking, their attention can lapse and wander. This is disconcerting to the audience and the speaker. Be an active listener. Look at the speaker, nod or smile at appropriate points, maintain an open, easy expression and take occasional notes to show your attentiveness.

■ *Avoid sending negative messages.* Don't show boredom by acting restless or sleepy. If you disagree with the speaker, don't show your hostility with

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flashing eyes, rigid posture or poisonous glares. Such lack of control reflects poorly on you.

■ *Create your own transition.* Be prepared if the moderator fails to provide a transition. You can usually draw upon some thread in the previous speaker's remarks and show how it relates to what you're going to say.

■ *Be neat.* Decline coffee, especially if it is offered in foam or paper cups. They're easy to tip over, and the embarrassment isn't worth it. An audience interprets smoking as a sign of nervousness or mental fatigue, and many people resent smoking.

Women on Film

Films on women's achievement in nontraditional roles are valuable because they reflect women's increased participation in the work force and because they inspire other women.

Catalyst, a national organization that helps companies achieve maximum human resource productivity through the full use of women's potential, has published a resource list of audiovisuals that highlight the achievements of contemporary women. The 12-page publication lists and briefly describes more than 75 films, videotapes and filmstrips, with information on length, type, production date and rental costs plus an index of distributors.

For more information, or to order *Women's Achievements: A Resource List of Audiovisual Materials,* write to Kathleen Weir, Media Specialist, Catalyst, 14 East 60th Street, New York, NY 10022. The price is $3.00.

The ASTD Competency Study...A Year Later

This month marks the first anniversary of the appearance of *Models for Excellence: The Conclusions and Recommendations of the ASTD Training and Development Competency Study.* The publication has been very successful: The first printing sold out within six months, and well into the second printing, sales continue to increase each month. It is clear that the competency study and its products are filling an erstwhile void in the field's professional development.

The following are some ways different segments of the training and development population are using the competency study results.

An organizational application

Penrose Hospitals, Colorado Springs, Colo., use the competency study in two ways. As a self-analysis tool, training department members use the models to assess their competency levels. The department uses the competency models and outputs to determine functional roles and write accurate job descriptions.

The self-analysis involved a process of six weekly meetings in which training department staffers analyzed the roles played in the department and identified duplications of effort. Each person examined the critical outputs and behavior anchors of relevant competencies and ranked himself or herself as basic, intermediate or advanced in each area. Then each person determined his or her overall percentage of competence in each role by comparing the list of personal competencies with the competencies identified in *Models for Excellence* as critical to each role.

Now the department's projects are assigned according to who possesses the requisite competencies. Other staff members are encouraged to develop new skills by playing subordinate roles on a project. The project experts vary with each assignment, and each staff member is involved in several projects at one time.

The hospitals' training staff enjoys and appreciates using the competency study criteria to understand their competencies, roles and outputs. Functional roles and critical outputs are now integrated into job descriptions.

For more information on these applications of the competency study results, write to Charlene Ballance, Assistant Director of Education and Training, Penrose Hospitals, Box 7021, Colorado Springs, CO 80933.

Submitted by Charlene Ballance
Assistant Director of Education and
Training
Penrose Hospitals
Colorado Springs, Colo.
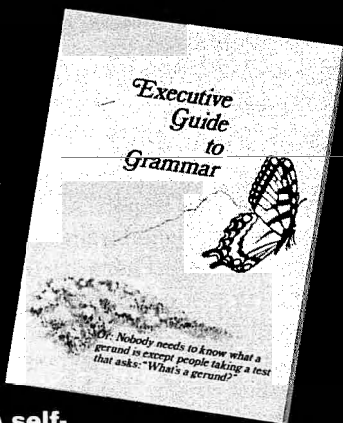
An application for academia

The ASTD competency study told the training and development profession what its practitioners should know and be able to do. The next question is: Where can the training and development specialist go to learn the roles and competencies specified by the ASTD competency study? The following study was conducted in order to answer this question.

■ *Questionnaire*—A questionnaire was designed to identify the types of university programs being offered to prepare students for careers in training and development. It focused on how well the programs prepared students

in each of the 15 roles and 31 competencies specified in the ASTD study. Definitions of the key roles and competencies were included with each questionnaire.

■ *Population*—One hundred forty-eight questionnaires were mailed to colleges and universities listed in the 1983 ASTD Directory of Academic Programs.

■ *Questions*—Respondents were asked to indicate the department or division offering the academic program in training and development; the specific title of the program; its characteristics; and the number of full-time faculty members in the program.

Each respondent rank ordered the 15 competency study roles according to their degree of emphasis in the program and listed the specific courses that focus on each role. They also rated the four role clusters according to their emphasis.

Finally, respondents identified each competency for which course work is included in their programs. A copy of descriptive literature from the university catalog or departmental brochure was also requested.

■ *Response*—At this time, approximately 65 percent of the questionnaires have been returned. We will present the study results at the ASTD National Conference in Dallas this May, in the session, "Taking the Leadership: Preparing T&D Professionals to Perform Roles and Competencies." Copies of the study and its results will be available at the conference, and after June 1, they can be obtained by writing to us at Brigham Young University, College of Fine Arts and Communications, Provo, UT 84602.

Submitted by R. Wayne Pace, Professor, and Brent D. Peterson, Associate Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communications Brigham Young University Provo, Utah

ASTD chapter applications

Local ASTD chapters have been using the competency study results in a number of professional development activities.

■ *Profiling membership*—The Lake Superior Chapter, Duluth, Minn., conducted its own competency study modeled on the larger ASTD study. Its purposes were to develop network-

ing matrices and to provide chapter leaders with data for selecting program topics. The study produced three products: a profile of membership's representation in nine human resource areas; a profile of their training and development roles; and a list of the training and development competencies in which members demonstrate expertise and in which they need further development.

■ *Self-assessment*—The Golden Gate Chapter, in cooperation with the University of San Francisco's Division of Administrative and Organizational Studies, held a full-day workshop, "Models for Excellence: A Guide to Self-Development for the T&D Professional." The workshop covered the training and development roles and their competencies and outputs, plus seven major forces expected to influence the T&D profession over the next five years. It concentrated on using those criteria for participant self-assessment, career planning and application of the competency models in a variety of work settings.

■ *Targeting programming*—The Central Ohio Chapter developed a detailed member questionnaire, centered around the 31 skill areas identified in *Models for Excellence*. Members indicated in which skills they needed training; wanted training; considered themselves a valuable resource; and had resource materials to share. The questionnaire not only helped chapter leaders plan programming to meet professional development needs; it also pointed out which members could serve as speakers and provide other resources.

National ASTD applications

ASTD has used the competency study results to reevaluate existing products and services and to identify new high-priority projects to serve ASTD members and the field at large. Among the applications:

■ *The National Conference T&D Competencies Matrix*—This programming track, introduced at the 1983 conference, is a direct outgrowth of the competency study. Its activities focus on the training and development roles and their outputs, and how to gain competence.

■ *Professional publishing*—ASTD's Professional Publishing Committee uses

the study results to identify gaps in the subjects covered by ASTD Press titles, and to assess titles under consideration.

■ *Academic relations*—ASTD is preparing for an October 1984 professors' conference on the academic preparation of training and development and human resource development practitioners. The framework for the discussion will be the competency study results, and the participants will begin work on explaining theoretical underpinnings of the roles and competencies, and building a model curriculum.

■ *Self-assessment instrument*—ASTD's New Products Task Force identified the field's desire and need for a self-assessment tool based on the competency study results, and proposals have been solicited for the development of this tool.

■ *HRD competency study*—Due to the response to the training and development competency study, ASTD has formed an HRD Competencies Committee to examine the requisite competencies of the larger human resource arena.

Our Favorite Course Title

"Jobs in High Tech for Non-Engineers and Other Smart People" is one in a three-evening series of career planning workshops offered monthly by Georgia State University, Atlanta. "Overcoming Computer Anxiety" and "The High-Tech Industry: Where It Is and Who It's Hiring" are the less whimsical titles of the other highly successful workshops developed in conjunction with several area high-tech firms.

According to the program's developers, the major challenge in conducting high-tech career workshops is keeping information current and accurate. Local companies and boards of trade and the area's Private Industry Council have served as valuable resources for monitoring high-tech trends and issues, and provide speakers, equipment and instructional materials.

Please send items of interest for Practicum to Elizabeth Lean, Training & Development Journal, Suite 305, 600 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20024.

The Next Step: Exploring Professional Standards and Evaluating Certification

Is the next major step following ASTD's Training and Development Competency Study an ASTD certification program for training and development? Some respond with an enthusiastic "Yes," others with a vehement "No." Still others straddle the fence. But most agree that certification is an important issue for our profession, and an issue that's time has come.

Are those who speak out for or against certification focusing on a solution before the problem is analyzed, or even identified? What, precisely, is the problem for which certification may be a solution? Are there alternatives? Can certification models used by other professions work for training and development? Must we decide now?

ASTD's 1983 Board of Directors decided to explore the issues of professional standards and certification in a broad context. The Board established the Professional Standards Task Force and charged them with "investigating the issue of professional standards and making recommendations regarding the implementation of a professional standards program."

To accomplish this, the Board suggested that the task force "reach agreement on what is meant by professional standards for this profession(s) and identify what developmental/credentialling process should be reviewed." Recommendations are due to the Board by the end of 1984.

The Professional Standards Task Force is approaching its mandate from several directions. For example, data from the field reveal an increase in the number of training and development degrees and certificate programs offered. This phenomenon, and an increase in the practice of individual organizations setting standards for performance, indicate that the field is already moving in the direction of standards-setting.

What are the implications of professional standards measurement and certification for people considering entering the training field? While some argue that formal standards are not needed because most training and

development practitioners strive continually for competence, what about those practitioners who do not—who don't belong to a professional society, who don't read the literature, who don't practice in a professional manner?

How can we determine and measure competence? If we decide not to, then how can we expect trainers to model goal setting, motivation, management by objectives and other related processes? Don't trainers, as well as those we train, need a reward and recognition process?

ASTD's Professional Standards Task Force seeks to learn the thoughts, values, experiences and concerns of training and development professionals, and those in related professions, concerning professional standards and certification. At ASTD's National Conference in Dallas, May 20-25, the task force will conduct several discussion and debate sessions that are open to all who wish to observe or participate (details will be in the on-site program book). Comments will be recorded and used in preparing the task force's recommendations.

If you are interested in offering a written or oral statement, please write for statement guidelines to: Professional Standards, c/o Ruth Gentilman, Professional Development Coordinator, ASTD, Suite 305, 600 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20024. Oral statements will be scheduled during the ASTD National Conference in Dallas. Written statements must be received no later than June 30, 1984.

A list of task force members, representing a broad cross-section of the training and development field, may be obtained by writing to the same address.

Submitted by Julie O'Mara
Chair, ASTD Professional Standards
Task Force
President
Response and Associates
Castro Valley, Calif.