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Voice Mail

Thing One and Thing Two (With Apologies to Dr. Seuss)

The following letter is in response to James Georges's letter, "Is It Really Training?" in "Voice Mail" (January 1993). (See the June 1993 edition of "Voice Mail" for a different view on the issue of training versus education.)

I was very pleased that *Training & Development* published a clear distinction between "training" and "education" in Georges's letter. But I was let down by the fact that all of the feature articles in the issue describe educational experiences, even though the word "training" is used.

What's in a word or a name? For *T&D* and the American Society for Training and Development, I'd say that training is a word that has meaning. Which do you want it to be? Training—making people more skillful and proficient? Or education—enlightening people and making them more aware?

— **Georgia L. Roberts**
Atlanta, Georgia

You're Now Entering Another Dimension

The following letter is in response to a request for quirky office policies in "Tell Us What You Think" (December 1993).

I work in a very nice, new building. Our offices are divided into cubicles. The cubicle walls for "worker bees" (professional technical people) are about 5 feet, 10 inches high. Coordinators get walls that are 18 inches higher. They also get side tables and extra chairs.

Unit managers get table extensions for their desks, and four-

drawer filing cabinets. Area managers get the same office equipment as unit managers, but they get phones that beep melodiously instead of merely ringing. They also get hanging file cabinets and cherry trim around the edges of their desks.

If one is a director, one gets a roof on one's cubicle. (At last, the cubicle door finally does some good.) At this point, one is moving toward the get-art-on-your-wall level.

Vice-presidents all get to work together on one floor. They're each given a roof, a door, artwork, and a view. The president of the company works in a luxury suite, protected by a bullet-proof glass wall, behind which you can see his secretary and the door leading to his office.

I wish we had offices with views and that we could dress comfortably in the office. I work much better in casual clothes than I do in panty hose. Lately, I've rebelled by wearing slacks. So far, I haven't had my cubicle walls lowered.

— **Kimberly H. Freeman**
affiliation withheld by request

Timing Is Everything

When we come to the United States to attend conferences sponsored by the American Society for Training and Development, we'd also like to participate in one or two training courses other than those offered by the conferences—to kill two birds with one stone, so to speak. But we can't seem to find American companies that hold courses at the same times as the conferences.

How about helping us out?

— **Gregory Gray**
Gray Training, Florida Hills 17156
South Africa

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

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Voice Mail

Money-Back Guarantee

“Get the Most Out of Conferences” (“In Practice,” May 1993) left out a very important tip.

The piece said not to be afraid to walk out of a session if it doesn't meet your expectations. If a session doesn't match the promotional description, I think you have a right to ask for your money back.

When we're all trying to cut costs, we need to get certain information. If we don't get it, we should be able to get our money back in a reasonable, rational way. I've had to do that only twice in 10 years. I wrote a letter to the people who ran the conferences and showed them how the promotional material didn't match the sessions given. I got my money back.

Of course, the principle doesn't apply in cases in which a session is substituted because the presenter is ill, for example.

— Rose Jakubazak

Bellcore

Piscataway, New Jersey

Don't Forget Staring at the Walls

The following fax message is in response to FaxForum (March 1993), which asked, “Are You Overworked?”

Before you figure the number of net hours you work, be sure to subtract the number of minutes you spend on the following:

- ▶ extended lunch breaks
 - ▶ trips to the water fountain
 - ▶ smoke and coffee breaks
 - ▶ non-job-related conversation
 - ▶ thinking about your significant other
 - ▶ checking your pay voucher
 - ▶ thinking about your next vacation
 - ▶ reminiscing about your last vacation
 - ▶ conducting personal business on the phone and running personal errands
 - ▶ rehashing what you should have said in a confrontation
 - ▶ engaging in horseplay
 - ▶ fantasizing and daydreaming
 - ▶ planning your next career move.
- Though I offer those scenarios

tongue-in-cheek, I think people realize that an appreciable amount of time in an 8- to 10-hour workday is spent on some of the activities described.

— William R. Tracey

Human Resources

Enterprises of Cape Cod

South Yarmouth, Massachusetts

Simulations Are Good

Kim Slack's article, “Training for the Real Thing,” (May 1993) reinforces the growing use of simulations as learning tools.

As Peter Senge writes in his book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, simulations provide the environments or practice fields in which teams learn how to learn together while engaging in important business tasks.

In many industries, simulations offer workers opportunities to reach or sustain skill levels that couldn't be attained through more conventional means because of cost and safety considerations. For the purpose of managerial development, simulations provide “micro-worlds” (Senge's term) in which managers can model, test, and analyze various business strategies, without the risks and constraints imposed by real-world business environments.

As business conditions change and as complexity places a premium on knowledge-based workers, simulations will increasingly be seen as valuable tools in accelerating Senge's vision of the learning organization.

— Dick Gaughan

Cincinnati, Ohio

“Voice Mail” is compiled and edited by Haidee Allerton. “Voice Mail” welcomes your views. Send your letters and comments to “Voice Mail,” Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043; fax them to Allerton at 703/683-9203; or call them in on the “Voice Mail” line, 703/683-9590.