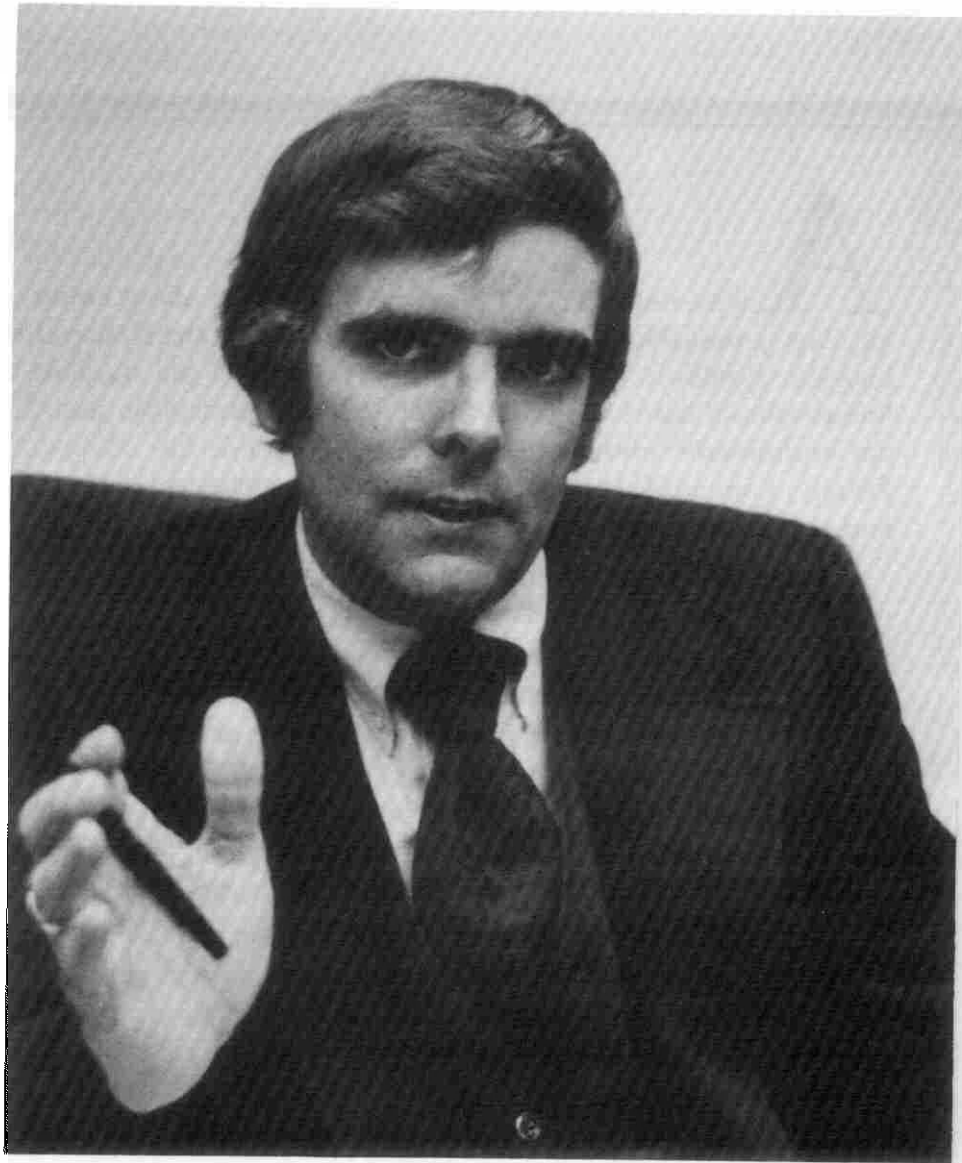

an interview with
Kevin O'Sullivan,
ASTD's new executive
vice president

the new ASTD: 1975 and beyond...



Journal: You've described our Society as the "New ASTD." Why?

Kevin O'Sullivan: "The New ASTD" began late in 1974. For the first time in recent history, the Board, Staff and Membership were in a position to look back at their record of accomplishments as a Society, to analyze present operations and to plan for the future with fresh perspective and philosophy.

Journal: What did they discover?

Mr. O'Sullivan: Well, *first*, that ASTD is essentially *a community of professionals dedicated to the development of human potential.*

Once largely an organization of industrial training directors, ASTD is in the process of expanding its outreach to include *all* professionals in human resource development. Through diversity comes the strength of shared knowledge in many disciplines – and ultimately the opportunity to grow in stature and influence in the multiple areas of our profession.

I personally believe that such growth is essential to the Society's overall progress. *With* growth and an expanding membership, the Society can offer an ever-widening spectrum of services, with a parallel reduction in per-member cost. Our plans project just such a pat-

tern of growth – and corresponding development of the responsive organizational services which will make it happen.

Journal: What steps have been taken so far?

Mr. O'Sullivan: We began by revitalizing *positive* communication between the Society's Officers, Membership, and Staff through correspondence, face-to-face dialogue, and mailings from Madison. We travelled the circuit. And we *listened*.

We reorganized Madison Headquarters to build a team of professionals fully responsive to membership needs. We established MBO programs for headquarters staff

achievement and perpetual programs of goal-oriented interviews and reviews. We designed an ongoing professional development program for all staff members. And we hired two outstanding professional trainer/communicators in the vitally important executive roles of Director of Communications and Director of Member Services (including Chapters, Divisions, S.I.G.'s, Caucuses, and the general membership.

The two individuals, Bob Craig and Brad Mintener, represent more than 44 years of combined experience in the training profession. The assignment of former *Journal* Editor Joel Bradtke as Marketing Consultant rounded out the immediate staffing requirements for actualizing the plans of the "New ASTD." We're now confident that we have the people, the skills, and the requisite *attitude* to make 1975 the most successful and fruitful year of growth in the Society's history.

Journal: What's your overall action plan for 1975?

Mr. O'Sullivan: Putting it succinctly, *our total and ONLY purpose is to serve the membership.* To provide products and communications which help *all* members grow in their professional competence and recognition. To the extent we succeed in making each dues invoice more than worth its cost, we shall succeed as an organization. Our objective is to sharply cut member attrition, those "drop-outs" who simply do not feel the Society provides sufficient benefits for them to renew their membership. And in 1975, our goal is to reduce that attrition through meaningful service — and the building of a growing professional resource and information center which will make membership attractive and productive for all members of ASTD.

Journal: What specific plans do

you have for 1975?

Mr. O'Sullivan: A 13-point plan is on the drawing board . . . but please bear in mind that each project area I'll mention is subject to ASTD Board approval after you go to press.

Journal: O.K. But tell us at least what's under consideration.

Mr. O'Sullivan: Here's the proposal:

1. Training and Development Journal

A primary objective is to build higher member interest in the *Journal*. To do this, we've already instituted an aggressive editorial policy of seeking out high-interest articles using a "consulting editorial network" to help us identify and procure timely, *practical* manuscripts. We're also reviewing overall format and design; production economies; and new means of attracting advertising revenues.

2. "Best of Journal" Monographs

As an additional publishing service to the membership, we plan to publish a series of collected reprints of high-interest articles which have appeared in the *Journal* through the years. President Don Kirkpatrick has already assembled such an anthology on "Evaluation of Training" which will soon be released. We'll be asking the Sales, OD and Community Development Divisions to select similar outstanding articles which have appeared in past *Journals* in their own area of special interest. Other panels of members will make selections in additional special interest areas. And as with other publication services, the monographs will be offered to members *at cost*. Charges to non-members, naturally, will be substantially higher.

3. National Institute Series

A streamlined schedule of Institutes has been booked for 1975, featuring the three most highly-

rated seminars offered in recent years:

"Determining Training Needs and Measuring Results" (March 10-12 and October 20-22)

"Training Function" (April 20-25 and July 13-18 and October 12-17)

"Designing Effective Training and Selecting Appropriate Methods" (July 21-25 and October 6-10)

Member registration fees have been substantially reduced and the differential between member and non-member fees has been increased.

4. Newsletter Series

The new *ASTD National Report: Training and Development* will serve to build increased contact and communications with the membership, on a twice-a-month basis. The *National Report* will include: Society news, activities and people; current legislative affairs; newsworthy events in the training and development field, results and successes; personnel changes; Position Referral Service listings; announcements of available reprints from SIG's and Divisions; advances in the technology and other business press type news of interest to the membership.

5. Audio Cassette Series

A new series of audio cassettes is planned for "at cost" distribution to members. Proposed titles include:

"Conference Highlights" (which will be a twin-cassette condensation of the major annual Conference presentations, edited for relaxed at-home or in-the-car listening).

"An Interview With . . ." series which will be a variety of interviews with leading authorities in the field of Human Resource Development and Communications Technology.

6. Membership Inquiry Service (MIS)



Early in 1975, Headquarters staff members will elect "Flex-time" work schedules, permitting expansion of telephone inquiry coverage from the current eight hours to a new total of 9½ hours. The resultant "effective response" period for member calls will significantly increase the real-time access to Headquarters via telephone.

Additionally, the Staff is compiling an annotated index notebook of "Most Frequently-Asked Questions" — complete with researched answers, referrals, and when required, letter responses for written follow-up to inquiries. In short, when a member calls with a "burning question," we're going to do our best to be ready *before* the phone rings.

7. National Slide Library of Human Resources Development

The proposed indexed collection of 75-100 2x2 slides will include "stock shot" visual resources for creating a wide variety of presentations within the topic areas encompassed by the field of Human Resource Development. Pictorials will include: action shots of various training techniques, from

seminars to simulators; the ASTD logo; "people" portraits of instructors and students in different work environments; modern training rooms; generalized graphic representations of learning curves and other common symbology; and conceptual visualizations of words like "Communications," "Technology," and "Learning."

8. A "National Presence" in Washington

It's clear, after several years of debate and frequent spirited feedback from the membership, that *some* form of ASTD representation in the Nation's Capital is both desirable and necessary. The benefits: (1) positive input for legislation which directly or indirectly affects the profession's growth and research; (2) inter-communications with other societies and associations with common goals and principles; (3) direct physical access to agencies and foundations as sources for grants and cooperative projects; (4) liaison with international training societies through the Department of State and Commerce, etc.; and (5) continuing on-site "intelligence reports" to the membership regarding Congressional activities which would impact on the Society's purposes at National, State and Local levels.

We're planning on a concerted effort to establish ASTD's "presence" in Washington during calendar year 1975. Because the cost of creating an independent office in the D.C. area is high, the following options are indicated:

(1) The pursuit of a grant or contract from an appropriate agency or foundation for the creation of permanent facilities for both international and domestic communications and liaison, or

(2) Joint funding of a Government Relations Office with cooperative or coalition groups with allied interests.

9. Slide - Tape Presentation:

"This Is ASTD"

The program will describe ASTD — its goals, philosophy, and objectives — and emphasize the multiple opportunities that National members have to participate in local chapter activities, SIG's, Divisions, etc.

The presentation will be generalized to permit its equal usefulness for a chapter meeting, Rotary Club luncheon, individual viewing by new members during orientation and elsewhere. The slide-tape format will make the program easily "customizable" — through the substitution of local-interest slides when appropriate. And we hope to make the presentation — along with a variety of other materials — available for free loan from Headquarters . . . not later than mid-1975.

10. Special Interest Group (SIG) Services

SIG members will be asked to nominate outstanding published articles, short speeches, and case histories they've run across in special interest fields. These selected materials will then be reprinted and made available on request at cost from Headquarters. An index of titles maintained in the "SIG Reprint Library" — grouped by category — will be summarized frequently in ASTD's *National Report*.

11. Chapter Services

We will continue and expand the open dialogue between Headquarters/Regional Vice Presidents/Chapters which was established in late 1974. Among specific activities:

- Maximum responsiveness to Chapter calls for representation by National Officers and Staff at local meetings

- The continuing offers by Staff to serve as consultants and advisors in such critical areas of Chapter administration as finances, programming, and new member re-

cruitment

●The cross-exchange of information between Chapters on new programming ideas, innovative local service programs, and other notes of practical interest — published regularly in a special “Chapter Crossroads” section of the *National Report*

●The continuing search for off-the-shelf program materials (mini-workshop guides, films, texts) which could be offered to the membership at a “national discount”

●National agreements with film companies and workshop consultants for special rates to conduct programs at the local level

●Re-publication and packaging of effective programs and materials produced by Chapters on the local level — made available for at-cost purchase or loan at the national level

Much of the Chapter-support activity I've mentioned will be in a formative stage during 1975. Our initial activities will stress concern for the well-being and growth of the Chapter concept — and a dedication to help that concept grow in the years to come.

12. ASTD Book Club

As another member service, we are planning that ASTD sponsor or operate a book club type activity to expose members to carefully-selected books and other materials important to the training and development field and to provide members with a convenient means for obtaining these materials at reduced prices. National staff is now analyzing various relationships with existing book club operations and publishers to design an optimal arrangement for control, economy and effectiveness. An Advisory Board of prominent ASTD members will assure professional integrity in selection of these materials. Offerings will include both newly-published ma-

terials and “classics” in the field.

13. Professional Development

The Professional Development Task Force will be asked to conduct a field survey to identify schools of higher education which offer programs related to the training and development field at all levels: undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education. The information will be assembled and published in a comprehensive Directory to be distributed annually. Data will include: institution and location; curriculum areas; entry requirements; on-site requirements; acceptable transfer credits for previous education/experience; tuition; etc.

We expect that the Directory will be only the first phase of a continuing project to establish a consortium of listed institutions, with ASTD providing counsel and administrative coordination, toward the goals of improved shared communications, liberal transfer credit policies, realistic on-site requirements, and a curriculum which is practical and reflective of “real world” needs and trends.

Journal: It sounds like an exciting year ahead, even if all programs don't get the green light for 1975. How does the long range picture look?

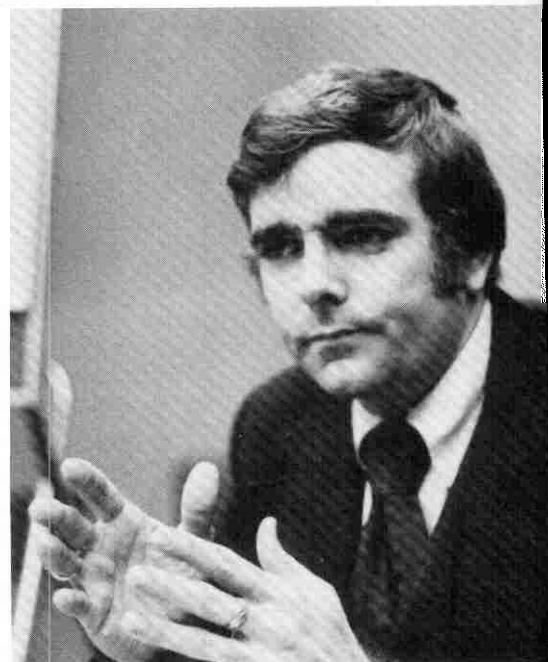
Mr. O'Sullivan: Momentum is important. As the Society's leadership increasingly communicates the New ASTD's vitality and promise, the membership will respond in kind. New volunteers will seek to become involved. Recruitment for national support will draw fresh response. Many “veterans” who grew weary in recent years may be willing to become evolved through the classic cycle from cynicism . . . to constructive skepticism . . . guarded optimism . . . and finally open support and positivism about the Society's future goals and purposes. The concurrent result, in turn, will generate new people,

new programs, and new organizational responsiveness to the cause.

We've written an operational plan for 1976-79, which I'll look forward to sharing with *Journal* readers in the months ahead, once it's been reviewed and approved by the various committees which are studying it now.

Journal: Any final comments?

Mr. O'Sullivan: Just this: 1974



was a year of historic appraisal, self-assessment, and some hard decision-making. 1975 is a year of consolidation and rededication to the purposes and promises of the Society and its future. And 1976 and beyond will herald the increasing momentum, energy, and spirit of an organization which is both mature (we were founded in 1944) and yet still very young and dynamic. The future is up to all of us. And it looks very promising indeed.

We have a great heritage . . . but we've launched a renewal with great new perspectives and goals . . . and we've only just begun to achieve the aspirations of human resource development.