

IF I HAD IT TO DO AGAIN

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Do you sometimes wish you had done your training differently when you look back over the years? Perhaps we can profit from what the author has learned in this way.

The human animal seems infinitely capable of wishing things otherwise. In hindsight appears the wisdom we needed in foresight. Sometimes it is simply the problem that little decisions along the way each seemed wise enough, but time proves that each decision led toward an unseen and undesired goal.

Training directors are no less immune to this tendency than any other group of individuals—but the regrets are multiplied by the lives of others who were short-changed along with the training director while he was making the wrong decisions.

If I had it to do again I'd try to get the boss to assign a title other than Training Director—even though I would want to handle the same pattern of assignments.

Most trainers feel that their work is made more difficult and less effective because the word "training" smacks too much of the mandatory and too little of the permissive. Psychology confirms that none of us are very responsive to the things we are told we *must* do, but much more likely to react in a positive manner to proper motivation.

Some firms use the title Educational Director. Although some of the sting is removed when this title is used, it is still too obvious for its own good.

In many phases of business it has been found smarter to use titles which are not too obvious. Thus Complaint Departments have been renamed Customer Service Departments. Efficiency Experts have changed over to being Methods Men. Public Relations Directors were hampered because their assignments were too obvious to the outsiders with whom they had to work.

In many firms the training man reports directly to the president so the title of vice president might be in order, but the title of assistant to the president would be my choice. Vice president sounds too much like a line job, whereas assistant to the president sounds like the staff position it should be.

Training people are successful only in so far as they are an extension of the boss's aims and ambitions for the people in the firm. The expressed philosophy is that the trainer is only doing what the boss would like to do and knows he should do—but just doesn't have the time to give, so he takes on another right hand—another assistant to be his trainer.

The successful boss is continually coaching those under him as a means of training them, but time makes necessary the use of someone who can be an extension of his personality and do much of the actual coaching.

Another good thing about the title of assistant to the president is that it indicates an identification with the president and his interests. Such an assistant cannot represent himself as having any aims, desires, or program other than that of the president, whereas the training director obviously has the aims and desires of that title but there is always the unspoken question as to whether in any specific part of his program he is in agreement with the President and has his approval.

So I would choose to be Assistant to the President—if I had it to do again.

If I had it to do again I'd guard more against having the kind of a training program that sounds terrific to other trainers, but may not be as well tailored to the people and the firm as it should be.

I find it hard to respect training people who do not associate themselves with other training people in such organizations as ASTD and the various local chapters. But when one is constantly talking shop in such groups it is hard not to begin to tailor your own program so it will gain the plaudits of this group. I dare say most trainers are more anxious to gain the approval of other trainers than they are to gain the approval of their own top management. In a sense this is amusing since trainers give such lip service to believing that their programs must be individually

tailored—yet in that tailoring they apparently cannot forget those other trainers before whom they must justify themselves.

In a recent magazine article I read of an actor who has had difficulty in being really appreciated by the public since he was more of an actors' actor. Then there is one of our top comedians who has with difficulty gained public recognition because he was funny in such subtle ways that he was really a comedians' comedian.

So I would guard against being a trainers' trainer—if I had it to do again.

If I had it to do again I'd work even harder to keep training from being anything but a staff agency.

Personnel managers had to find this out so it is somewhat surprising that we could not have gained more from their experience. In most firms personnel now insists on operating as a top-level staff agency. Training is going to have to insist on the same thing. Personnel has been indoctrinating that every supervisor is 100% a personnel manager. Training must likewise indoctrinate that every supervisor is 100% a training director.

Training must be done in the line organization if it is going to be effective. But it is so easy in our impatience to develop and expand a training program that we begin only on our own behalf. What we must hold ourselves to is the staff servicing of the line—and on occasion accepting assignments from the line to do specific programs under their direct supervision.

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So there, as we see it, is a tremendous challenge that is put to you who create the conditions of the work-life for other human beings. There is so much we can't do; but these things perhaps we can do. At least we can be aware of the needs and be ingenious in trying to satisfy them: the need to feel that one belongs; that one is valued as a person; that one is a part of something as a person; the need to be growing in competence and therefore in self confidence; the need to be a responsible sharer in things. Here is the configuration of inner satisfactions that contribute to outward productiveness and cooperativeness.

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So I would try to be more effective by being a top-level staff training man only—if I had it to do again.

I am convinced that if I could profit by my own experience and operate on the basis of the three changes indicated above, when developing a new training program—I'm confident I would have a much more effective program.

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(How about if you had it to do again? If you've learned something when you've looked back in this way, send it in for the *Journal* in a few paragraphs or a longer article . . . Ed.)

RINGS FOUND at Boston Conference

If you lost 2 rings at the ASTD Conference please write identifying them to George Gorman, Sales Manager, Sheraton Plaza Hotel, Boston, Mass.

Chapter Changes Name

On May 28, 1953, at the regular May Meeting of the Training Association of Southern California, the Chapter officially decided to change its name to *Los Angeles Chapter—ASTD*. The new officers of the Los Angeles Chapter will be found in the listing of ASTD Affiliates and Chapter Officers in this issue of the *Journal*.

POSITION WANTED

Graduate seeks opportunity in industrial training, preferably training supervisory personnel.

Specialized in foremanship development at graduate school. Master's dissertation: vitalizing the role of the foreman. B.S. and M.S. in industrial management. Nine years of industrial experience in production control. Age 29, married. To contact, notify Box 115, *The Journal of Industrial Training*, 160 East 48th Street, New York 17, New York.

POSITION WANTED

Training and Personnel Position desired by Training Supervisor, female, age 40, M.A. in science and education. Experienced in interviewing, personnel research, methods improvement, procedures, merit rating, organization and teaching of development programs for employees, trainers, supervisors. Practical experience in communications including organizational manual and reference handbooks. To contact, notify Box 116, *The Journal of Industrial Training*, 160 East 48th Street, New York 17, New York.

POSITION WANTED

Career training man desires challenging position, preferably as training director. B.A. in Education U. of Maryland. Four years instructional experience. Skilled in conference method. Effective public speaker. Veteran WW II. Married. Age: 33. To contact, write Box No. 120, *The Journal of Industrial Training*, 160 East 48th Street, New York 17, N. Y.