

LET THEM LEARN TWICE

*a tale of how a
training program grew*

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"Don't look at me!" Hunt Bradford told his boss. "It's not *my* fault the training program fell flat on its face."

"You set it up," Jerry Crandell said laconically. Jerry was superintendent of the supply storage section.

"And no one paid any attention to it," Hunt added. "Oh, each section goes through the motions one hour a week. But it's only lip service. I think we should chuck the whole business."

"We can't," Jerry reminded. "Remember the big thing Industrial Relations made about a training program?"

"After the union complained," Hunt said. "Right? They sold, we bought. It's our baby."

"O.K.," Jerry said. "It's our job either to make it work or convince Industrial Relations it's no good. Which do you want to do?"

IS THERE A NEED?

"Thanks for nothing," Hunt laughed. "It's a cinch I couldn't change *their* minds. It's part of the contract."

"Well," Jerry said, "you were selected as one of the training directors to put it across."

"I can't understand why the company would let themselves be sold such a bill of goods," Hunt said. "We need training like we need a hole in the head."

"It's not a bill of goods," Jerry argued. "What company is going to say it doesn't need a formal training program? Especially if the union makes it a part of the bargaining agreement?"

"I can't see a great need for it with our supply operation," Hunt said. "The procedures don't change that much, and the labor turnover has been almost nil for the past eighteen months. A few briefing sessions along are actually all we need."

The superintendent shrugged. "The department says we need a training program. Unfortunately, you were appointed to head it up in this section. You don't want to let the manager down, do you?"

GETTING INVOLVEMENT

Hunt glared at his boss. "You'd better get the unit supervisors to humping then," he warned. "People believe to the extent they participate, someone said. And we ain't participatin' a-tall."

On the way back to his own office Hunt reflected on the vagaries of employee training. When he got to his desk he put in a call to Tom Faber, one of the shipping clerks, and an old fishing buddy.

"Sure," Tom agreed. "I'll be glad to tell you what *I* think of the training program. Come on down."

Hunt checked in with Buford Duncan, the supervisor of shipping. "You made a good choice," Duncan said. "Tom's taken more interest than the rest. He's up for promotion on the next management vacancy. Good kid, Tom."

Hunt found Tom and they went to a quiet corner of the building away from the roar of forklifts and the rattle of conveyors.

WHY ATTEND?

"It's like going through the fourth grade twice," Tom said. "There's not a whole lot you can teach these guys about their jobs. They figure what the heck, it's an hour free time they can sit on their cans. We've got what — sixteen weeks of classes? And after that? Hell," he laughed, "you don't even get a diploma!"

Back in the office, Hunt mulled the situation. Two weak points were glaringly obvious. One, the subject matter was old hat, and two, there was no reward at the end, no goal to work toward. But how to cancel the program with the company committed? Hunt shook his head sadly and began to cast about for a way out.

"You mean we know *everything* there is to know about supply?" Jerry Crandell exclaimed when next they met. "I just don't believe it."

"We know our jobs," Hunt retorted flatly. He was getting tired of the impasse. Jerry dismissed his subordinate's taci-

turnity with a laugh. "Then teach them someone else's," he suggested. "No one ever said *what* our training program would be on, just that we'd train."

Hunt wasn't sure whether Jerry was jesting or whether he meant what he said about teaching one employee another employee's job. But anything would beat what he had to contend with at the moment.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A week later, Jerry Crandell looked up from his desk to see Fred Braden, supervisor of the document audit unit. "Hey, Fred!" he greeted, "what brings you out of the paperwork jungle?"

"I came up to fill your people in on what the document audit bunch does with your paperwork once you're finished with it. I understand that next week you'll be down at our place for a lecture on storage and release methods."

"I'll what---?"

"You heard me," Fred grinned. "Where's your conference room? I'm running late."

"Don't sit there grinning like an idiot," Jerry snapped. He'd finally run down his special projects analyst. "What have you cooked up in that one-watt brain of yours?"

"The revised training program," Hunt announced. He waved a sheaf of papers in his boss' face. "If you'd read your mail you'd know."

Still later, when the manager phoned, Jerry had the answers. "Yessir, Mr. Stone," he said. "We call it the interdepartmental cross training course. We figured since each department is reasonably well acquainted with its *own* operation that we'd start a familiarization course so employees could learn about the other guy's operation. The supervisors from each area visit all the other

areas and lecture and then hold a question-and-answer session."

ATTITUDES CHANGE

"Now *that* makes sense," the manager said. "Who came up with this brainstorm?"

"I'll have to give Hunt Bradford the credit," Jerry admitted. "At least he says I gave him the idea."

"It's a damned good one, I'd say."

"I agree," Jerry laughed, "and besides, if I don't take part in the program, I won't get a certificate later on."

"A certificate?"

"Yeah. Industrial Relations is having them drafted up to hand out later. Incidentally, they'll be signed by the vice-president."

"A good point," said the manager. "By the way. If Hunt needs a guest speaker"



INDIANA STANDARD NAMES BELCHER MANAGER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

ASTD President Forrest R. Belcher has been named manager, training and development, for Standard Oil Company (Indiana), Chicago.

Formerly, Mr. Belcher was training and development consultant for Pan American Petroleum Corporation, a subsidiary of Indiana Standard.

A native of Tulsa, Belcher received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in psychology from the University of Tulsa and joined Pan Am in Tulsa in 1947. He moved to Houston as salary and wage analyst in 1949, advancing through various positions to division industrial relations supervisor in 1955. Returning to Tulsa as industrial relations assistant in 1957, he became training and development consultant in 1965.