

# A Philosophy Of Training . . . Revisited

*twelve years ago and now;  
a comparison*

**Rex F. Sheets**

Education is the process of which man evolves. It includes all growth, all experience, all development. What is the difference between education and training? In the dictionary we find that the two terms may be used interchangeably and that there is very little, if any, difference in their specific meaning. However, much has been said and written in an attempt to separate the two terms. Education has been interpreted to involve a broad over-all acquisition of knowledge usually connected with educational institutions; whereas training has been interpreted to involve a change in knowledge, skill, attitude or behavior through practice, usually thought of in an industrial or business situation. But can we really have education without training or training without education? I say no!

In the October 1961 *Journal of the American Society of Training Directors* I wrote "A Philosophy of Training." With "change" as the byword of today's industry, I thought it would be interesting to revisit that philosophy to see how my thinking might have changed. A philosophy is a personal thing based on one's own experiences, observations and assumptions. Just as it happened 12 years ago, many will read this article and find themselves nodding in agreement — others will disagree. The object is not to secure the reader's agreement, but to share ideas and convictions.

Hopefully, some will take a closer look at their own philosophy by thinking about where they have been and, more importantly, where they are going. This is a *must*. If we don't know where we are or where we are going, it is as someone once said, "Any road will get us there." The boxed-in material on the left is the original (1961 philosophy); on the right are the 1973 comments.

Today, it seems, we have a third dimension entering into the over-all learning process - organization development. This is a term that means different things to different people. To me it means developing the most effective organization through the maximum utilization of our human resources toward the achievement of financial and social objectives. Education and training remain interchangeable in the final analysis. But, more than ever before, the organization's

growth must be seen as a synthesis of the growth of its members.

## **A Great Lag**

As is usually the case, there is a great lag between a conceptual change and the specific activities it engenders. W. Warner Burke put it this way at the 31st Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, "If as much organization development (OD) were occurring as is claimed by people who say they are doing OD, we would have much more evidence of change in organizations than I believe presently exists."

In my opinion, we have made great improvements in our methods and techniques. But, the biggest shift has been our rethinking of the whole industrial education process. There is deep concern not about education - training and development programs - but about corporate citizenship and full utilization of human resources as a means for the corporation to meet its full responsibility to society.

Today, the question is bigger than "Can we have training without education?"

It is "Can we survive in the world without fully considering our human resources and accepting our full social responsibility?" This enlargement of our goals is accompanied by increased interest and concern at a higher power-base than we have experienced previously. In many companies, it is now the chairman of the board who asks, "What is being done to develop our people?"

Training has always been an integral part of business and industry. Training goes on whether it is formalized and directed or not. Everyone is acquiring new information, skills, habits and attitudes daily; when left unorganized and undirected, the result is often a dis-service to the company. Training for the sole sake of having a training program is worse than not having any formalized training. Training must be based on a need and contribute to the mutual well-being of employee and employer.

Training is a management responsibility. The training of hourly workers is the responsibility of their foremen; the training of foremen is the responsibility of general foremen; the training of general foremen the responsibility of superintendents; and so on up through the organization. Line people are in the best position to evaluate the amount or type of training needed to meet operating problems effectively. It is usually a training staff function to aid in the formalization of training needs and the development of the most effective method of their fulfillment.

### Training Not an "End"

Training is a technique and a process to attain results. It is not an end in itself. There is no question that training/development/education must be based on a need. This is something that all training people have stated through the years.

However, in years past, wasn't this need talked about much more than it was really responded to? Remember some of the training articles in the past - "How to Sell your Training Programs," "Why Programs Fail" (usually had to do with not being in tune with company objectives), "The One Man Training Department," and many others? The titles themselves reveal that we had a tendency to be a peddler of programs rather than a change agent; a conductor of isolated

workshops rather than a utilizer of people and processes with an overall picture in mind.

### An Individual Responsibility

Is training really a management responsibility? No!! We used to think so. Today I think it has been proved that training and development is the responsibility of the individual - it is management's responsibility to provide an environment and an opportunity. Galileo summed it up very well when he said, "You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him to find it within himself." In recent years, our behavioral scientists have made a great contribution in helping us to really understand this. Is not this what McGregor - Maslow - Herzberg - Gellerman - Myers - Blake and a host of others really saying?

This I believe —

1. Training is an important and essential facet of modern business.
2. Training must be based on a sound foundation—technically, educationally and morally.
3. Training includes any procedure which accomplishes these ends:
  - a. to prepare the new employee to the point where he can perform a job;
  - b. to make the individual more efficient and productive;
  - c. to prepare the employee for advancement to a more responsible position.
4. A training program, regardless of how effective, should not relieve line supervision of its normal responsibility for day-to-day training of employees.
5. Management must believe in training as an important and essential

1. Training is an important and essential facet of modern business. However, we must consider training and development as an integral part of the person's working life, and not as a program with a beginning and an end.
2. I believe this statement is as true today as it ever was. The idea here is commitment rather than just agreement.
3. Training does accomplish these ends. However, the work

itself must be organized to meet people's needs. The achievement of organizational requirements will depend upon how we can help people satisfy the organization by satisfying themselves.

4. Today, to carry forward ideas expressed earlier, I would say "training activity" rather than "program." And, again, we must be aware of the need to integrate the organization's

facet of the normal business structure and recognize it as a tool of management.

6. All training should maintain and strengthen good employee-employer relations and attitudes.
7. Training must be constantly evaluated, revised and updated; Also it must be kept flexible so new techniques, methods and materials can be utilized as they are developed.
8. Training itself is neither good nor bad; it is what is done with training that determines whether its results are good or bad.
9. We can stop training programs but we can never stop training.
10. Training can augment and supplement but it cannot substitute for the individual's efforts toward self-improvement.

objectives with the growth needs of its people.

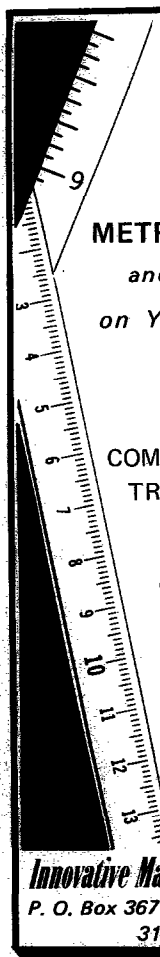
5. Training is a management tool and, as any carpenter will tell you, there is no one tool that will build a complete house.
6. All training should be developed and designed around, and with, the individual.
7. Today, I believe the answer is constant feedback - evaluation and responsive action.
8. Training must have a purpose for the individual and the company.
9. Individuals are constantly in a state of learning - when they are not, they are in a state of dying (at least mentally).
10. The whole process must be based on the combined needs of the individuals and group goals.

#### Summary, Conclusions

The entire training process, as we have known it in the past, has changed. The whole attitude toward and for this process, has gained in importance and need. New approaches have been developed, utilizing the need for openness and trust and placing importance on the individual versus the human relations approach that was so popular during the 50's. The overall managing job definitely seems to be moving toward a more participative endeavor, thus creating a development need for decision making and feedback from all employees. Or as Scott Myers states it, *Every Employee a Manager*.

I believe the development field has grown, changed and progressed in the past 12 years; and, I think those that have been dedicated to the field have grown as well. Today the development area is fast becoming a profession. Those who perform best in this profession are likely to see themselves as the agents of change for our organizational way of life and for the fulfillment of the organization's responsibility to society.


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