

News You Can Use

by Haidee Allerton

TRAINING FROM A TO Z

YOU WON'T FIND the Republic of Z on any map. It is a fictional country created by the U.S. State Department to train diplomats.

At the Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia, foreign service officers learn their trade. To make the training realistic, the State Department has given the Republic of Z a set of particulars. For instance, Z is located somewhere in the South Pacific, inhabited by more than 14 million Zians, and bordered by countries X and Y—with which it maintains proper, though sometimes strained, diplomatic relations.

In role-play exercises, consuls-to-be examine Zian passports and visas, and go head-to-toe with Zian authorities, played by other trainees. The course includes a visit to a Washington, D.C. hospital morgue where trainees learn the steps in shipping the remains of Americans who die abroad back home.

About 6,000 American tourists per year die overseas.

Trainees also deal with



fictional U.S. citizens who have met with trouble while traveling abroad. (About 2,500 end up in foreign jails each year.) For example, backpacker "Nathan Naive" takes a few pictures and finds himself arrested for spying and terrorism.

But the goofiest stories are the real ones from the field—such as, the tourists in Mexico City who checked into a hotel, went sightseeing, and then forgot the name and location of their hotel. Naturally, they called the American consulate.

So, if you have ever wondered what a diplomat does, now you know.

HOW-TO

MISSING @WORK? The former NYCU Website section is now its own column. In its place, we offer How-To—how to do a certain something. Such as, how to find a contract trainer, how to introduce a speaker, or how to find a good diner on the road.

This month, we have

some practical advice for every presenter's nightmare: You are about to go on, and you just spilled coffee, tea, or perhaps cherry Danish on your shirt or blouse.

Rub some club soda gently on the stain, using a cloth, not a paper towel or napkin; those leave lint.

QUICK TIPS

HERE ARE SOME pointers from Personnel Decisions that can help prove your worth at work, demonstrate your value, and ensure your job:

- ▶ **Learn your company's business.** Know what it does and how it does it.
- ▶ **Think strategically.** Link your expertise to your organization's overall goals and customers' needs.
- ▶ **Rethink what you do.**

Don't perpetuate administrative tasks that no longer make sense—such as giving 10-year awards when most companies no longer guarantee long-term employment. Instead, recognize the star team of the month.

- ▶ **Be flexible.** Think less about being an expert and more about developing listening skills, building relationships, and creating partnerships with business-unit managers.
- ▶ **Demonstrate bottom-**



line impact. Connect your recommendations to your company's initiatives.

NET-WORKING

SO, HOW DOES one go about job searching on the Internet? The *Five O'Clock News* magazine (March/April 1996) says that the best place to start is with Meta-List, a guide that links Internet job-search resources so that they're accessible from one place. They include Job Hunt (<http://rescomp.stanford.edu/jobs>), The Catalyst (<http://www.wm.edu/catpult>), and Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com/Business/Employment>).

Newsgroups and online forums offer networking contacts while e-mail serves as a communication mechanism replacing phone, fax, and postal delivery.

BUT WHAT IS IT?

IN RECENT MONTHS, sexual harassment made front-page news—this time at the Mitsubishi plant in Normal, Illinois. As of press time, there has been no ruling regarding the harassment complaints and suits brought by women who work in the plant. But the media's accounts of alleged incidents again raises the question: What constitutes sexual harassment?

EEOC guidelines point to two types of sexual harassment: quid pro quo and hostile environment. Quid pro quo involves making submission to sexual advances a basis for employment decisions; a

hostile work environment is one that interferes with a person's work performance through intimidation of a sexual nature.

Just Management reports that the U.S. Supreme Court has held that whether a work environment is hostile depends on the frequency of the conduct and its severity, and whether the conduct is physically threatening or humiliating. A "mere offensive utterance" is not sexual harassment.

Here are several cases in which no harassment was found:

- ▶ A woman received an obscene drawing with her name on it from coworkers.
- ▶ A sales manager made eight sexual innuendoes to his assistant over seven months and daily called her a "pretty girl."
- ▶ A male coworker said that women in the lab area were "inferior."

Of 13 federal cases in the past two years that hinged on whether conduct was sufficiently severe or pervasive, eight were ruled sexual harassment. The conduct ranged from rape and stalking to daily abuse with extreme vulgar language and repeated propositions by the victims' managers.

Last year, in the first EEOC trial involving a male complain-

ant of sexual harassment by a female, the court ordered Domino's Pizza to pay the defendant (harassed by his immediate supervisor) \$237,000 in damages.

GLOBAL HR

COLGATE-Palmolive's global human resource strategy of training initiatives, begun in 1992, has led to a finding of best practices that contribute to customer satisfaction:

- ▶ effective problem solving
- ▶ attention to customer needs
- ▶ competence in all areas affecting customers
- ▶ timeliness of visits
- ▶ product and category expertise.

QUICK QUIZ

ARE YOU an effective facilitator? Would you make an effective facilitator?

Here are some questions to ask, from the Self-Management Institute of Salt Lake City, Utah.

- ▶ Do I have a large repertoire of techniques for brainstorming, problem solving, and consensus building?
- ▶ Am I good at using agendas in order to focus people on the appropriate issues for the appropriate

Trend Watch

- ▶ **SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS** are optimistic about their companies' prospects, according to a survey by Dun & Bradstreet Information Services. Nearly 60 percent said that they expect the number of their customers and their revenues to grow during the next year; 53 percent expect an increase in profits.
- ▶ **THE MOST SAVVY CAREER** strategy is multipreneuring, says Tom Gorman, author of...what else?..*Multipreneuring* (Fireside/Simon & Schuster, 1996). Multipreneuring involves simultaneously developing multiple skills, multiple sources of income, and multiple careers. Gorman says that the multi approach is essential in order to succeed in the current mixed-up world of work.
- ▶ Gorman says that he coined the term multipreneuring (meaning "many undertakings"), but he gives credit to workers for inventing the career strategy by developing their interests and translating them into business opportunities.
- ▶ **THE INTERNET IS A GREAT**—and under-used—place to find a job, says Drake Beam Morin. In a recent DBM survey, only 19 percent of 500 job seekers logged onto the Internet in their job searches. But those that did found an average of five job leads and secured on average more than one interview.

amount of time?

- ▶ Do I know how to use visuals effectively?
- ▶ Can I handle disruptive behavior, conflict, and personal problems within a group?
- ▶ Am I a good listener? Do I know how to help others become good listeners?
- ▶ Do I know how to engage people who speak too little and control people who dominate discussion?
- ▶ Do I follow up on meetings and ensure that agreed-to actions have been taken?

If you answered "yes" to those questions, you are well on your way to being an effective facilitator.

QUICK TAKE

SEVENTY PERCENT OF CEOs are introverts, though their colleagues perceive them as sociable—according to a 13-year

study by Hagberg Consulting Group of Foster City, California.

A PARTING PREDICTION

BY 2000, there will be a massive shortage of knowledge workers across industries, according to Christian & Timbers—a Cleveland-based, executive-search firm working with information-technology companies. Twenty percent of jobs will go unfilled if industrial workers aren't trained to become knowledge workers. Knowledge workers are people who have the ability to gather, analyze, and disseminate information.

Sources include the Washington Post, Corporate University Xchange, and ViaFedEx.

SURVEY SAYS

- ▶ Employees gain a 16 percent increase in productivity when they work at home, according to the Institute for Distributed Work.
- ▶ Building a learning organization holds the most promise for sustained business results, say more than 70 percent of 300 senior executives polled by Arthur D. Little consultants and *Chief Executive* magazine.

