

THE INCOME DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

a vehicle for generating income opportunities and renewed hope

One of the most pressing issues facing American industry, especially defense-oriented industry, is that of professional unemployment. Technical people with education and specialized training are finding themselves out of work. Over 400,000 defense-oriented personnel have lost jobs and it is estimated that an additional 600,000 to 700,000 will be out of work by June 30, 1971. The professional labor market is tight, especially on the West Coast. No longer are defense-oriented engineers in demand. No longer do they enjoy job security and a marketplace with several job alternatives available. Many now face several critical issues:

- 1 How do I, as an engineer, generate income to support myself and my family?
- 2 How can I utilize my training and education when there are few marketplace demands?
- 3 How can I turn my high anxiety and despair about myself and my career into hope and renewed vigor?

Many organizations are concerned about what can be done to help individuals cope with the above questions. Organizations are becoming more skilled in developing job opportunities, others are hiring consulting firms to dehire, some are working shorter weeks and cutting salaries, others are creating temporary jobs and special task forces, and still others are developing rather unique compensation benefits and arrangements. Yet, the reality of the marketplace still exists. More innovative and experimental approaches are needed. A rather important step was taken by TRW Systems Group, a step which helps individuals cope with the above issues. The experiment, an Income Development Workshop, is described in this article.

PURPOSES

The Income Development Workshop was conducted for individuals on layoff status but with time remaining with the company. The primary purpose was to assist technically-trained individuals in

exploring ways of generating income not necessarily involving their specialty. The primary focus was not on career development, but on the development of income opportunities in the immediate future. Income opportunities refer to ideas for making money and a plan of action--the creative and necessary steps required to make the idea operational. The thrust is therefore action-oriented. Secondary purposes related to attitudes about oneself and his style of coping with the rather difficult issues facing him:

- a To help individuals cope with emotional shock of suddenly being unemployed and shift their highly anxious condition into one of hope about the future.
- b To help individuals, in this moment of freedom from their job, reassess some life goals, some employment directions and ways of enhancing satisfactions in their work.

BACKGROUND

With the above purposes in mind, the authors explored all facets of the problem and potential consequences of different courses of action. One key issue revolved around the nature of participants. It was decided to invite individuals currently on layoff status but with time remaining in the company. The pilot group would consist of eight to ten participants who were interested, motivated and not cynical toward themselves, the company or life. After deciding to conduct a three-day workshop, the nature of participants and some administrative details, the concept was tested out with a few individuals who were typical of potential attendees. Enthusiastic response and interest resulted. The workshop concept was then reviewed with relevant general managers and line managers in order to: (a) gain their support and (b) establish any necessary groundrules or parameters. Since the participants could develop ideas which might require TRW support (financial, materials, facilities, etc.), we felt a need for groundrules which placed

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a reality framework around the ideas. The management discussions resulted in no parameters but that participants should be made aware of *very* limited company funds. Therefore the probability of funding any proposal, however attractive, would be very small. However, management personnel were interested and wanted to hear any proposal which might be beneficial to the company and to the participants.

Invitations were then extended to individuals from several divisions. Volunteerism in attendance was emphasized. Individuals were free to leave the workshop for job interviews, phone calls, etc. All individuals contacted were interested in attending, however some had conflicts which meant missing a substantial part of the three days. Interest was so high that others, who had heard about the workshop (some still on the payroll), called to ask if they could attend. The final participant list was ten people, ranging over several disciplines and covering several organizational levels. It was truly a heterogeneous group, professionally and hierarchically.

An orientation session was held to (a) become clearer on the basic purposes and general design, (b) discuss organizational realities and administrative details and (c) meet each other and briefly explore individual expectations.

WORKSHOP PROCESS

Normal working hours were used for all three days. Two trainers, skilled in small group dynamics and creativity techniques, functioned as *active* consultants. The trainers were also knowledgeable about small business enterprises and had a basic action orientation—a major workshop thrust. With such an individually-oriented workshop, energy and skill were required to translate ideas into reality. Group resources were used to best serve the needs and aspirations of the individual participants. The individual focus facilitated a task orientation coupled with spontaneity and a quality of “realness” throughout the work sessions.

Discussions, whether in subgroups or large groups, focused around three general areas

1. What have others done that we know or have heard about to generate income in ways other than their usual job?
2. What *can* I do to generate income?
3. What *would* I like to do?

Question 1 above was intended to help individuals recall and share all the information available that reflected and described what others had done, what they had achieved, what incomes were generated, what new directions were pioneered—in short, to develop a kind of “success inventory.” This inventory, while used as a comfortable way to get started, also served to facilitate an initial positive thrust. Several money-making ventures were presented and discussed. Through these discussions, areas of interest evolved in which participants wanted more information and understanding. To satisfy this need, several skilled people in the specialized areas were invited to attend and give presentations in their areas of expertise. One speaker was successfully pursuing a land syndication program, another was well versed in small business franchises, and another had expertise in the Indian exportation marketplace. Utilizing specialized resources was another way in which the design evolved to meet the needs of the individual members.

The exploration of the “success inventory” discussion and the presentations led naturally into the next phase of the workshop, namely, “What can I do to generate income?” The majority of time was devoted to this area, as defined by the primary workshop purpose. The main vehicles for generating ideas were basically brainstorming, prioritizing, discussion and strategic planning. As one might imagine, numerous ideas were explored. To mention just a few

1. Put the wife to work.
2. Marketing color movies of weddings and other family occasions

3. Different uses of cassettes
4. Developing import and export possibilities for specialized minority and foreign groupings.
5. Expanding specific existing kinds of mail order businesses
6. Establishing geographical service personnel in order to lower travel costs and provide efficient travel service.
7. Developing “protection kits” and other security ideas

The brainstorming process resulted in numerous other ideas, several of which were closely allied to current professions. For this section of the workshop additional resource persons were invited to attend. An expert was invited in the area of patents and technology application. Another was skilled in travel bureaus, and another was experienced in the distribution field. All speakers were relevant to the needs of the group members. Most of the workshop was devoted to this area, exploring ideas, examining alternative strategies and tactics, and creating useful data gathering tools and techniques.

The remainder of the session was focused on the question, “What would I like to do?” The intent was to explore this issue in conjunction with the last question, to deal with overlaps, examine trade-offs and really concentrate on developing a plan of action which would optimize the real and ideal worlds. This area received little attention, in comparison, due to the sense of urgency about making money in the immediate future.

PARTICIPANT REACTIONS AND ACTIONS

Interest was extremely high throughout the sessions, in fact so high that individuals didn’t take breaks. Attendance and participation were excellent even though several individuals needed to follow-through on job interviews, take phone calls and so forth. General reactions were positive, enthusiastic and very helpful for future planning. Exam-

ples of such attitudinal reactions include:

- "I have a lot more ideas for what I might do for a new job or second job—ideas I never had before "
- "I discovered many synergistic relationships."
- "We have new stimulation and new ideas and I've gained a lot "
- "I see the future less bleak now than I did before."
- "I wonder if we might make a meeting of this kind available to persons who have not received layoff notices?"
- "I already have a job with another company and I'm going to take it. But before this workshop I was quite depressed about myself and the aerospace industry. I now feel much less dependent. I can do things on my own "

Such comments indicate that the secondary purposes, revolving around attitudes toward oneself and one's potential, were achieved. Participants were better able to cope with the world, money-making opportunities and themselves as a result of the workshop. As far as tangible actions were concerned, in terms of immediate followup on ideas and strategies, the following are the major results

1. Large-Scale Security Systems Project

Over one-half of the participants have been pursuing security systems as a high potential project. They plan to get involved with consulting, manufacturing and marketing of security systems for homes, schools, industry, refineries, service organizations, etc. The group is meeting at least once a week to explore issues, with several actions resulting. Several individuals are currently preparing briefings and proposals to test out with school systems, building contractors, etc. Another individual has found a small manufacturing facility to build the systems and to receive technical support. Others are reading extensively and engaging in market research. There appears to be a core group which will probably stay with this

project as a full-time, money-making and exciting opportunity.

The group feels extremely optimistic but is also realistic and somewhat cautious. While the hope is to develop a small business enterprise, the project is being pursued on the basis of getting all the necessary information before formalizing a small business venture

2 Job Extensions

Two individuals have been transferred to other parts of the company for a period of time. Both realize the projects are short-term and are actively pursuing other interests in preparation for the future. One individual is preparing to establish a very specialized consulting organization with a close friend.

The other individual, in addition to being actively involved with the security project, is working with his wife to set her up in the travel business. While they had done some work in this prior to the workshop, they are now more committed and have more specific actions to implement

3 Others

One individual has done nothing except actively follow the job market. He has been thinking about ideas from the workshop but has not pursued any as yet. He feels that his more positive view about himself will help him find a job

The other individual had hopes of teaming up with others in the workshop in any one of several ventures. Nothing has materialized as yet. He feels that individuals would not commit their resources (money, time, skills) to enterprises with risk elements involved.

IMPROVEMENTS, IMPLICATIONS

It seems clear that the Income Development Workshop, in only three days, went a long way toward attaining the stated purposes. However, a thorough critique and review indicated that sever-

al improvements could be incorporated to improve the design for future workshops.

1. More carefully structure the discussion sequence so that significant time and energy are devoted to developing specific individual action plans. In part this will be accomplished by building in planned presentations in such areas as establishing small businesses, franchises and "How to Approach the Job Market "
2. Distribute basic information about areas most likely to be discussed prior to the workshop. This could be achieved through a readings book, bibliography, key question sheets, additional pre-meetings, resources list, etc. Such prework would help individuals acquire a fundamental understanding of different businesses so that the workshop could be almost totally devoted to ideas and strategies
3. Develop a roster of resource persons to be called upon in assisting the group when and if requested
4. Design in more vehicles (theory inputs, counseling, self-made entrepreneurs, etc.) to help individuals shift from the "dependent" employee mode to a more "independent" mode of thinking and acting

Many of these suggestions have been incorporated into later workshops. Future workshops will also include presentations on personal financial management, the world of the consulting engineer and more discussion on the realities of the job market. We are also planning to involve the wives in the process, recognizing the multiple pressures on the unemployed engineer. Each critique generates more improvements, but the major changes have been pretty well incorporated into the design. A specific design is shown at the end of this article

Implications for this kind of workshop are vast. Individuals out of work obviously benefit. Under-utilized individuals can find such a workshop very useful in pursuing either avocations or perhaps

new career directions to become more fully functioning and productive. With minor modification it could be incorporated into career planning programs. Income generating workshops are a relevant tool for many minority groups and for individuals who are working primarily for money. With some modifications it could be used as a vehicle for

groups of individuals with similar interests to develop proposals to management (assuming management would take on more of a finance company posture and use their resources to support small business enterprises). Development of the workshop concept could easily lead to an organization vehicle designed to help create more of an

“entrepreneurial spirit” within large organizations—a spirit which tends to be thwarted in large complex systems. This implication list is just a start. Making money and “Doing Your Thing” are such cornerstones of our Western culture that this workshop could probably be adapted to meet a variety of needs and problems.

INCOME DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP AGENDA

DAY 1

8 30 - 9 00
9 00 - 12 00
9 00 - 9 30
9 30 - 12 00

Introduction
Career Wants Inventory
Who Am I (trios)
Self-Inventory (trios with rotating roles)
1 Peak experience I've had
2 Things I do well
3 Things I'd like to do well
4 Peak experience I'd like to have
5 Two to three things I most WANT NOW

12 00 - 1 00
1 00 - 1 30
1 30 - 3 30

3 30 - 4 30
4 30 - 5 30

Lunch
Share NOW WANTS (within groups)
What Can I Do To Generate Income and Satisfy My NOW WANTS (within group)
Sharing Across Groups and Open Discussion
The Present Job Market
(a company industrial relations expert on the aerospace employment scene)

DAY 2

8 30 - 10 30

10 30 - 12 00

12 00 - 1 30
1 30 - 3 00
3 00 - 3 30
3 30 - 5 30

The Franchise Business
(a vice president of a large franchise company)
Converting Ideas into Marketable Products
(a TRW engineer who has successfully licensed an invention)
Lunch (within group)
McGregor (continued)
Open
Marketing Existing Products
(a UCLA lecturer and expert in marketing ideas who has been highly successful)

DAY 3

9 00 - 12 00

12 00 - 1 00
1 00 - 3 00
3 00 - 5.00
5 00 - 5 30

How to Make Money
(a successful businessman and lecturer on marketing ideas to make money)
Lunch
Action Planning (trios - original or by interest)
Action Planning (within groups)
Critique

Pework 1 “Who Am I” exercise
2 Bring resumes