

Training and Development Clinic

Training and Development Clinic, another ASTD member service, invites training and development questions of general interest from readers. Address questions to: Training and Development Clinic ASTD, P.O. Box 5307, Madison, Wis. 53705. Only questions chosen for publication can be answered.

Q.-- We have large clerical operations in several of our divisions. Once new employees complete our basic two week clerical skills training, they are turned over to their divisions for specific familiarization on division operations and are then put to work. This familiarization is accomplished by the division supervisors. Lately, we have been getting complaints to the effect that familiarization sessions do not prepare trainees to be productive in their divisions soon enough. We, in the training function, will not take over the division familiarization sessions, but have been asked for recommendations on their improvement. Any suggestions?

FAMILIARIZATION SESSION PROBLEMS

A. -- It is quite likely that your division supervisors have considerable experience and seniority. If they do, they are *not* in the best position to do the familiarizations.

When employees have been in particular positions for a number of years, they overlook the *routine but essential* aspects of their operations. If these same employees are conducting familiarization sessions, they are likely overlooking some of the procedural efficiencies that are not necessarily in the "books," operating procedures or written office instructions. These little efficiencies are often the keys to quicker productivity for new

employees. You might recommend that relatively new hires who are articulate enough to make a presentation be allowed to do the familiarizations because the efficiencies are fresh in their minds. If that is not politically feasible, you might at least get some of the recent hires to sit in on the familiarizations, with instructions to note how they can be improved by inclusion of the "efficiencies" essential to early productivity. If you can get the division supervisors to incorporate the observations made into future familiarization sessions, improvement should follow.

Q.-- I'm trying to arrange for classroom-style training sessions for field personnel in various locations. In my negotiations for rental space, I've been given dimensions of hotel and motel meeting rooms, but I'm not sure if they will accommodate my group classroom-style. What are the ground rules for figuring seating for such arrangements?

CLASSROOM SEATING DIMENSIONS

A. -- You will need at least 10 feet between the front wall and the first classroom-style table. A common width for classroom-style tables is 24 inches. You should allow 30 inches between tables and 30 inches between the back table and the rear wall.

If the room is wide enough for a center aisle, the aisle should be a minimum of 36 inches.

Classroom-style table lengths vary. If your supplier has four- or five-foot tables, they will seat two persons. Six-foot tables will seat three, and eight-foot tables will seat four.

A rule of thumb for estimating classroom-style seating capacity is to divide the square feet of training area by eight. **USEFSTC**

Letter to the Clinic

Training and Development Clinic:

I always look forward to the *Training and Development Clinic* department of your *Journal*; however, at times I don't completely agree with the answers given.

For example, in the January, 1973 issue, the Clinic advised *against* rewriting case studies to make them more applicable. While I agree that the answer given is probably generally correct — right more often than wrong — I have experienced good results in *two*

recent situations in which I rewrote the case studies.

If a case study is too foreign to an organization, this can be as *distracting* as one that is too familiar. It's a matter of avoiding extremes in *either* direction, in my personal opinion.

Yours truly,
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