

It's a mad, mad magazine

My, oh my. At last we have convinced ourselves that managers everywhere have learned sufficiently well how to plan, organize, lead and control, to communicate effectively, to delegate, to make effective decisions, to evaluate performance, etc. No need to clutter our *Journal* further with anymore of the fol-de-rol. Let's get down to the basics of human relationships—sex.

Hey! We've done it! We've made a positive break in our *Journal* from sound training and development thinkers to those wildly innovative pseudo-psychologists who are determined to make of OD a sort of corporate rubric.

Next month, let's hear it from Bill Agee and Mary Cunningham about how their involvement in OD took them from corporate dronship to office love to executive headiness to oblivion. Could we have Hugh Hefner come in to interview Gloria Steinem about her journey from *Playboy* to wonderland?

How about bringing in a few artists from *Mad* magazine to draw a cover for us or to design some comic lead cartoons for some good articles on sexual relationships? Then maybe we could wrap our *Journal* in plastic and place it on newsstands next to *Penthouse*, et al.

Does "Child Abuse in the CEO's Office" come next?

Perhaps I could write an article on how old-timers just don't understand these new directions in training. "Office Love—A Training Issue?" Indeed!

John F. Connors
Timonium, Md.

Editor's reply:

You may be surprised to learn that we agree with you: the first and foremost concern of the human resource professional ought to be the development of the individual to be more effective at work. We share your concern for the underlying values of the profession, and the *Journal* doesn't intend now or in the future to abandon its responsibility to support those values.

However, we also believe it is necessary to broaden our horizons and consider issues that are the natural product of working in a changing society. A friend pointed out to me recently that his ivy league college, founded before the American Revolution, did not see fit to admit women for almost two centuries but now treats them equally with men. His point: that even the most venerable institutions change to meet the reality of the times.

Our February issue dealt with the problems that arise when men and women work together. Other such problems of the work place are discussed in our pages frequently, often from a psychological or behavioral perspective. We believe that by doing this we aren't replacing one set of values with another but are acknowledging the wide and diverse perspectives that reflect our changing times.

Spinning Our Wheels?

Will our trainees return to their work settings and use new management practices they've been taught? Possibly not, if they say, "It was a good course, but my boss should have been there!"

What they're really saying is that they can't make changes in the work place. They are looking up the managerial ladder and relying on their supervisors to take the initiative, rather than assuming individual responsibility for changing their own behavior.

I can understand their frustration. They attend courses and learn new ideas they often find reasonable and, sometimes, exciting. When they return to their work place, however, they experience the same old environment.

Back at the job, management style and climate is set by their supervisors. Faced with the immediate demands of their jobs and the natural tendency to accept the prevailing management mode, participants do not practice what they've just learned.

To combat the situation, HRD pros should agree with management trainees

that there may be little they can do *initially* to influence the organization's management style.

But our trainees are supervisors and they have the opportunity to influence directly those whom they supervise, and this can have an immediate positive effect upon the organization.

We've got to instill trainees with the spirit that they can make a difference. In return, they commit themselves to act on the skills learned in our management development courses.

If we do not stress individual responsibility, participants will regress to existing patterns of organizational management behavior, thereby nullifying our efforts and taking the meaning out of *our* labor.

James Noel
Program Manager
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Blue Chip Training

In order for HRD professionals to make sure training continues to prove itself as an investment, we have to guard against those who cloak themselves as consultants but offer short-term services with no regard for client needs. We also have to prevent the takeover of the HRD function by non-HRD organizational units.

Several strategies can bolster our "portfolio" and keep us from professional bankruptcy:

■ *Build professional image, attitude and behavior.* Step one is to believe you are a professional. We are all acquainted with the self-fulfilling prophecy and the defeatist attitude. Step two is to act like a professional. Define your commitment. Sharpen your skills. Build your resources. Polish your ethics. Decide on your direction. Then, step three, project professionalism. Promote yourself and your work. Market the benefits of yourself and your profession.

■ *Support internal industry growth.* Expand industry horizons by going beyond the present boundaries of philosophy and theory. Experiment, test, apply relevant techniques from other fields. If successful, promote

your results. Give vocal and moral support—even resource support—to those in the field who are experimenting and testing.

■ *Be more politically active.* None of us exists in a vacuum. There are other constituencies and groups around you. Help others see you as you would like to be seen. Give assistance and expect assistance in return. Some find politics uncomfortable and distasteful, but it is a natural organization process.

■ *Physician, heal thyself.* It is our business to deal with the whole person, keep those people growing and make them valuable resources and dynamic forces in their own jobs and lives. Can we do less for ourselves? Remain vital and dynamic.

■ *Risk for the rewards of success.* When you are comfortable and things are routine, take a new risk. When there are no more threats, take a new risk.

■ *Map the future.* The steps are simple: Analyze your environment (i.e., attitudes, trends, theories and concepts) and project a realistic future 20 years from now. Then, list in chronological order those events that must occur to get to that future. They have dimensions that include length and frequency of occurrence, scope of involvement by people, and resources allocation. Place the events in a gridwork that represents time so the distance between them can be charted in "time spaces" rather than miles. On this "time-o-graph," consider positive and negative conditions, pitfalls, possibilities and alternate routes.

Realize relative significance. This is an important difference between time-mapping and other mapping. Each event has a significance relative to other events. When we travel by car we mark progress by cities, milestones and miles covered. Travelling through time is more than a simple ticking off of events and time spaces. It requires an awareness and employment of each event's significance relative to each other event, especially to those events just before and after. Significance can be measured in terms of dollars lost or gained, but, more importantly, it can be measured in terms of the event's necessity. Project significance and prepare for it.

*Chuck Betts
Brass, Richie & Betts, Inc.
Iowa City, Iowa*

Sacred Cow Barbecue, Anyone?

Congratulations and thanks to David Forrest for his timely "Self-Destructive HRD," (December 1984).

It is time HRD professionals—in-house or consultant—take a brutally harsh look at their methods and decide if the thousands of hours, dollars and materials put into training really contribute to the professional development of their staffs.

Perhaps, then, these golden cows of training will be debunked:

■ I was trained therefore I am more intelligent than I was before.

■ I was trained therefore I am sensitive.

■ I was trained therefore I don't have to learn anything more about the topic on my own.

■ I was trained therefore the company cares about me.

I suggest that companies put their training activities on hold for six months and then see if anyone is worse off. I guarantee one thing: money would be saved.

*Anita Salustro
Washington, D.C.*

Another Fluff Fleecer

At last someone has the courage to attack abusers of the word "share." Whenever I hear it these days, I want to clobber the offender with my dictionary.

When this word takes over completely, we'll see slogans like "Go share it with the Marines." Children will be forced to ask their fathers, "Share a story with me, Daddy."

The entire tenor of "Developmental Fluff" was wonderful. Thanks for the words of sanity.

*Gloria L. Kirchheimer
Associate Editor
Personal Report for the Executive
The Research Institute of America, Inc.
New York*

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