

In Practice

Clowning Around

Hotel manager and co-owner Terry Henson of Orlando, Florida, encourages her employees to clown around on the job.

Henson's Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort Lake Buena Vista and Holiday Inn Main Gate East boast more than 60 "certified" clowns on staff. The 10th class graduated last December.

Henson, who holds her own diploma from Clown Class, incorporates clowning into the hotels' management and employee development programs.

"From a management standpoint, clowning skills foster participatory management and [attention to] service. It encourages managers to relate to guests' needs and feelings, and also improves communication skills and self-confidence," says Henson (a.k.a. "Pinkie").

The hotels' Clown Class was conceived in 1987, after the family-oriented resorts added a full-time clown to their recreation staff. Professional clown Jim Whaples created the clown training course for hotel employees.

In Clown Class, employees learn makeup techniques, "balloonology," magic tricks, costume design, clown ethics, and the "Seven Clown Commandments." Before graduating, each student creates his or her own clown persona complete with name, personality, and costume.

Along with clowning around at work, employees donate performances to children's hospitals, senior-citizen centers, and other community institutions.

"The program has proven to be a real team-building activity," says Henson. "It fosters creativity and teaches us to incorporate fun into our daily work and personal lives."



For more information, contact Lisa Spence, 407/396-4488.

A Title Tale

"**I**nstructional Conscience"—you won't find that handle in the *Index of Occupational Titles*. But at Apple USA, that's the descriptor on Judy Issokson's business cards.

How does one attain a position that wields such moral clout? Here's Issokson's story.

Apple USA hired Issokson in 1989 as an evaluation specialist to assess training programs and materials developed for Apple sales, service, and product-support staff.

In 1992, Apple USA sought to change its relationship with its big-business clients. The company decided it could expand its share of the big-business market by "selling deeper," Issokson says—selling Apple products to new accounts-within-accounts, such as the finance

Forget that MBA. To polish your management skills, consider earning your C.C. instead—Certificate of Clowning.

departments of large customers.

To carry out this major change in business strategy, Apple had to equip its sales staff with new tools and techniques. Several Apple trainers—including Issokson—joined marketing specialists on a cross-functional team charged with designing the needed training for the sales staff.

The marketing specialists were accustomed to telling sales reps about marketing plans, not teaching them new skills and behaviors, Issokson says.

“They were the subject-matter experts in marketing, and we were the experts in instructional design and delivery,” she explains. “We had to help them understand that their presentations were supposed to have an [effect] on the business that could be [measured and] tracked.”

Issokson’s role was to ensure that the team

- ▶ set learning objectives
- ▶ designed a sound instructional process
- ▶ linked the instruction to the selling strategy
- ▶ monitored whether the strategy produced the desired result.

“I helped them develop evaluation strategies,” so that down the road, we could determine where, when, and how reps used the information and if the training achieved the objective, she explains.

As the work progressed and Issokson’s exhortations began to sink in with the marketing specialists, team members began describing her as their conscience—the voice that reminded them to keep learners’ needs in mind, stay focused on performance, and remain accountable for results.

“I told my manager, and she agreed that the term more accurately captures what I do,” Issokson explains. So the change was made official.

How did the project turn out? “It did pretty well,” Issokson reports. Between 40 percent and 60 percent of participants targeted their time more effectively in selling to large companies.

Currently, Issokson is working on a similar cross-functional team dedicated to changing how Apple USA markets, sells, and supports products by telephone.

“Being viewed as a conscience allows me the latitude to look at the system, to keep groups accountable for performance, and to ensure that the company leverages, rather than loses, its incremental knowledge,” says Issokson.

“Instructional conscience” also has a more dignified ring than the first epithet she earned. “They called me ‘the Jiminy Cricket of Training,’” Issokson says.

Soundbite

In the February 12 Washington Post, James L. Brooks, director of films such as “Broadcast News” and TV shows such as “Taxi,” told writer Hilary de Vries why he often depicts workplaces.

“Well, your work defines you. [In the final episode of “Mary Tyler Moore”] we gave Mary a speech where she tells her colleagues in the newsroom that they are really her family. That was an emotional speech for me—it gives me goosebumps even now. But I don’t think the same is true anymore. Today, your family is your family.... We don’t go to the union hall anymore, and a lot of our jobs can be done by computer. Our employers have let us down! They’re no longer bringing us into a place where we can meet people who care about us. That’s a big deal, and there has to be a reaction.”

Advice for the Career Advisor

By James J. Kirk, coordinator of HRD Academic Program, Western Carolina University, 210 Killian, Cullowhee, NC 28723.

What do a priest, a hospital administrator, and a military officer have in common? All pursued second careers as career advisors, according to a recent survey.

My experience as an HRD professor and career development consultant suggests that career development is becoming a more popular career path. Students pursuing their

master’s degrees in human resource development at Western Carolina University, for instance, increasingly opt for career development over the historically more popular specialties of training and development or organization change.

Aspiring HRD professionals see career development as a career in which they can earn a living as well as professional respect. My students point out that ASTD’s *Models for HRD Practice* places career development alongside training and development and organizational development on the “human resource wheel.” They seem reassured to see that career development is accorded a professional status similar to those of other HRD specialties.

They also observe the rapidly swelling ranks of middle-class workers who are suddenly forced to make major career changes, and they expect the growing population of displaced workers to hike demand for career advisors.

To explore this premise and gauge the likely employment prospects for the emerging crop of aspiring career advisors, I surveyed 78 full-time career advisors; 49 responded.

On average, respondents were in their mid-forties. Most (73.5 percent) were female, and most were white (96 percent). They held various titles and worked as career counselors in educational institutions, financial and business services, government agencies, public utilities, and large manufacturing firms.

Respondents averaged almost six years in their posts and supervised an average of 4.4 subordinates. Most of the respondents said they previously worked as educators, counselors, trainers, HRD specialists, or managers.

As in any profession, career development has its ups and downs. Respondents shed light on typical frustrations in the field when they answered an open-ended question about professional disappointments. Their complaints and concerns included the following:

- ▶ Managers don’t always understand the value of their people.
- ▶ Career development doesn’t always work.
- ▶ Key people still leave.

▶ Too many top managers don't see the value of career development, except in the context of outplacement programs.

▶ Participants have unrealistic expectations.

▶ It's difficult to see the payback.

▶ Upper managers don't support career development with commitment and resources, and employees lack interest in the area.

On the other hand, respondents identified many gratifying aspects of their work. Among other things, they cite their satisfaction in knowing that their work helps their companies retain high performers, reduce turnover, improve internal communications, increase productivity, boost morale, reduce recruiting costs, and make better use of human resources.

They also said they find satisfaction in helping people find satisfaction in their own work, develop and acquire new skills, and find jobs that suit their talents.

Their comments suggest the following advice for would-be career advisors.

Consider public or nonprofit agencies. Few private businesses employ full-time career advisors. Most firms consider career advising a job function rather than a job title.

More than half of the respondents worked for nonbusiness organizations. For example, almost 39 percent were employed by educational institutions, and about 15 percent were employed by government agencies. Tip: You're more likely to find work with large organizations than small ones.

Acquire the necessary credentials. Responses showed that career development specialists follow many paths to their profession. But to land a job as a full-time career development advisor, you'll probably have to return to school. Among survey respondents, 71 percent held master's degrees and 20 percent held doctorate degrees. About a third of the respondents were certified career counselors, licensed psychologists, or licensed counselors.

Consider the competencies you'll need to master. *Models for HRD Practice* cites 14 competencies necessary to carry out the basic career development responsibilities of helping

employees to "assess personal competencies, values, and goals, and to identify, plan, and implement development and career actions," as well as align individual career-planning and organizational human resource planning processes.

Consider the populations you want to work with. Among the full-time career development specialists surveyed, 65 percent provided career development programs for career changers, 65 percent for managers, 54 percent for new employees, and 52 percent for high-potential workers.

Altogether, respondents offered 18 kinds of career-development programs. Of these, 12 mainly target professional, technical, and clerical staff. Program content includes career counseling and planning, flexible work options, job enrichment,

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job rotation, and mentoring. Six kinds of programs are available primarily to upper and middle managers, including inplacement and outplacement, assessment centers, managerial career coaching, paid educational leaves, sabbatical leaves, and temporary job assignments.

(To find out more about career development programs, consult *Career Development In Organizations* by Douglas Hall. Jossey-Bass, 1986.)

Believe in yourself and persevere. Overall, the career development specialists responding to the survey described themselves as "very successful," "very marketable," and "very satisfied" with their choice of careers. They said their career expectations had been met to a "very high degree" and that their careers were progressing at about the pace they expected.

In order of importance, they

attributed their success to "being in the right place at the right time," achieving "superior performance," having "positive self-esteem," and displaying "personal perseverance."

Reich Ruling

Sixteen years, four presidents, and seven secretaries of labor later, Honeywell has been found guilty of discriminating against female employees in the early 1970s.

The suit, filed in 1977, claimed that Honeywell had violated a 1965 executive order, signed by President Johnson, barring government contractors from discriminating against workers based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The order gave the labor secretary the authority to enforce its provisions.

In a statement explaining his ruling, Reich said he found that between 1972 and 1977, Honeywell denied women promotions and systematically channeled women into jobs offering few opportunities for advancement. He remanded the case to a Labor Department judge to determine what remedies to apply.

Reich noted that the Honeywell case was one of dozens that languished for years in the department's Office of Administrative Appeals.

A 1993 finding by the Labor Department's Office of the Inspector General found that over the past 10 years, the OAA "became a 'burial ground' for politically sensitive cases." Acting on Reich's instructions, since June 1993, the OAA has settled about half of the longest pending cases, including 22 of the 26 oldest cases. Honeywell was one of the four oldest cases.

Trust Traps

In the new, interdependent workplace, trust must form the foundation for working relationships. But managers often undermine the trust that would enable people to work toward common goals.

In its new leadership-development system, *Strategies for High-Involvement Leadership*, Development Dimensions International identifies the following "trust traps."

Passing judgment. Assuming someone is going to react or perform badly in a situation sows, and then perpetuates, mistrust. If you pass your assumptions on to others, the damage can spread.

Covering yourself. Protecting yourself often requires deflecting blame to someone else. It includes forcing decisions or plans that favor you at the expense of others. At the very least it can mean making excuses, refusing to make commitments, undermining others' efforts, or juggling facts.

Breaking promises. Nothing can ruin credibility faster than making a promise and not keeping it. Breaking even seemingly insignificant promises can seriously damage trust. People quickly see that they can't believe the things you say, and they stop listening to you.

"Shooting the messenger." When people fear the reaction you'll have to bad news, they avoid delivering it. They might dilute the truth to make it more palatable. Or worse, they might not pass the information on at all.

Mixing messages. When you say one thing and then act in a way that's contradictory, people get confused. They aren't sure what to believe or how to behave. They might feel as if they've been set up for failure. People will feel the need to protect themselves and will be tempted not to commit full effort to their work.

Sugarcoating. You might be tempted to give half-truths or talk around an issue instead of addressing it directly, because you fear repercussions or conflict. You might successfully avoid conflict for a while, but nothing gets accomplished. People don't get the direction they need, confusion prevails, and the foundation is set for even less communication in the future.

For more information, contact DDI, 1225 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA 15017; 412/257-0600.

Afta NAFTA

Since the U.S. Congress ratified the North American Free Trade Agreement last fall, many U.S. firms are deciding whether to set up shop south of the border.

Doing Business in Mexico

Dean Foster of Berlitz's Cross-Cultural Training Division offers this advice for firms doing business in Mexico:

- ▶ Do not refer to yourself as "American." Mexicans will remind you that they are Americans, too.

- ▶ Go ahead and use your high-school Spanish. Most Mexican businesspeople speak at least some English, but they will appreciate any effort you make to speak their language.

- ▶ Cement relationships first—make deals later. Mexicans want to know who you are before they make decisions about the business you bring to the table.

- ▶ Mexicans can be prompt, but generally the clock does not rule life in Mexico the way it does in North America. Arrive on time, but expect to wait and don't comment on it later.

- ▶ Mexicans don't appreciate references to "Montezuma's revenge." Keep your health to yourself. (A few tips: Drink bottled water, decline ice cubes, and wash produce in bottled water.)

- ▶ Mexicans prefer formal manners. Use titles or last names. Remember that most Mexicans' last names include the name of the mother's

family. For instance, in person you would address Jorge Gomez-Rodriguez as "Señor Gomez" (using his father's family name), but in writing you would add Rodriguez, his mother's family name.

- ▶ If you don't know a woman's marital status, it's safer to refer to her as "señora."

- ▶ Mexicans typically allow themselves a rich range of emotional and physical expression. Men may give and receive an *abrazo*, or hug, when greeted, women might exchange a *beso* (kiss) on the cheek.

- ▶ Stay in close touch through all phases of your business to ensure that things you assume are occurring actually are. Pride is powerful in Mexico and may sometimes drive your Mexican associates to tell you what they think you want to hear rather than an unpleasant truth. This is a statement on how much they value your relationship, not a reflection of their ethics.

This advice appeared in the company's winter edition of *Global Voice*. For more information on cross-cultural training for any country, contact Michael McCallum, Berlitz Cross-Cultural Training programs, 800/528-8908.

If your firm is among them, make sure management understands that Mexico's low-wage labor—considered an irresistible magnet by NAFTA's critics—doesn't guarantee profitable plants.

To spawn successful operations on Mexican soil, U.S. parent companies must accommodate their offsprings' native culture, beliefs, and business customs, says Mariah E. de Forest, an expert on business management in Mexico and Latin America.

De Forest, vice-president of Imberman and DeForest in Chicago, has served as a consultant to many *maquiladoras*—Mexican plants owned by U.S. firms.

In a report for the Academy of Management, de Forest discusses issues U.S. managers are likely to encounter in Mexican plants.

According to de Forest, "traditional

Mexican ideals stress employee/employer *interdependence*, mutual responsibilities, and loyalty between boss and workers." Mexicans tend to place great stock in personal relationships, formal manners, and saving face.

U.S. firms should plan on training Mexican employees and managers in setting goals, solving problems, and developing initiative, de Forest advises.

Meanwhile, managers from north of the border should always keep some basic principles in mind when running *maquiladoras*: treat people warmly but not informally, respect the conventions of chains of command and the bonds of personal relationships, criticize diplomatically and in private, and clearly spell out the plant's priorities and expectations for workers—rather than assuming

that all of the standard U.S. business practices cross borders.

For reprints of the report, "Thinking of a Plant in Mexico?" contact the Academy of Management, Box 209, Ada, OH 45810.

Title Insurance

Did you ever develop a great workshop that you couldn't sell? Maybe you lacked a marketable title.

Tom Payne, president of Lodestar, an Albuquerque, New Mexico-based speaker, trainer, and consultant, has devised the "Workshop Title Generator" (in the accompanying box) to help you come up with a winning title. (Hint: It is impossible to use "quality" in too many workshop titles.)

"In Practice" is edited and written by Erica Gordon Sorohan. Send items of interest to "In Practice," Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.

Workshop Title Generator

Pick three numbers from 1 to 20. Then look at the columns below, and form your workshop title from the words that follow the three numbers. For instance, if you chose the numbers 2, 9, and 12, your workshop title would be "Supporting Peak Performance"—a winner, for sure.

A	B	C
1) Creative	1) Customer	1) Strategy
2) Supporting	2) Oriented	2) Teams
3) Implementing	3) Organizational	3) Vision
4) Managing	4) Procedural	4) Results
5) Instituting	5) Multiple	5) Leadership
6) Building	6) Successful	6) Skills
7) Strategic	7) Efficient	7) Motivation
8) Optimizing	8) Supervisory	8) Change
9) Basic	9) Peak	9) Empowerment
10) Linking	10) Employee	10) Communications
11) Assessing	11) Self-Directed	11) Decisions
12) Continuous	12) Workforce	12) Performance
13) Understanding	13) Situational	13) Diversity
14) Powerful	14) Driven	14) Service
15) Challenging	15) Superior	15) Involvement
16) Developing	16) Group	16) Satisfaction
17) Maximizing	17) Effective	17) Meetings
18) Building	18) Personal	18) Behaviors
19) Improving	19) Global	19) Cultures
20) Quality	20) Quality	20) Quality

NEW CONCEPT

Selecting & Preparing New Supervisors?

Use **WORKING WITH OTHERS** (WWO) from The Clark Wilson Group

WWO is a selection and coaching instrument using feedback from co-workers, boss and others. It is based on 20 years of research with our *Survey of Management Practices (SMP)* which identifies trainable skills for success in management. We can help you validate it in your own organization.

WWO assesses skills in our Task Cycle model, plus a series of personal attributes. The skill model includes: *Commitment to work, Assertiveness, Problem solving/Resourcefulness, Teamwork, Willingness to listen, Attention to detail, Push/pressure and Recognizing peer performance.* The personal attributes are *Overall effectiveness, Approachability, Dependability, Working with diversity and Future promise.*

The Skills combine to yield an added three super factors that reinforce your selection and coaching:

1. Enterprise is a combination of *Commitment to work, Problem solving/Resourcefulness* and *Attention to detail.* It reflects competence and dedication to the job.

2. Interaction combines *Teamwork, Willingness to listen* and *Recognizing peer performance.* It reflects the ability to maintain positive two-way communications.

3. Drive is assessed by *Assertiveness* and *Push/Pressure.* It reflects a willingness to take charge, even dominate a situation. It can cause trouble if not balanced by good Enterprise and Interaction scores.

You can raise *Effectiveness* and *Future promise* above norms to gain balance between factors of WWO. Good balance reduces the unfortunate personal and financial results of misguided selections.

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