Management Steps Out

These two packages present some, shall we say, *different* approaches to getting people to work together.

Management by computer

If managers and subordinates constantly butt heads over work responsibilities, schedules, and project control, coaching may be just the right solution. *CompuCOACH*™, a diskette-based analysis tool, lets managers figure out a middle ground between their own views and those of the people with whom they work.

The program uses the results of 10,000 interviews to determine the management and communication approaches of supervisors and their staffs. Managers complete a survey for both themselves and the person they want to coach. The survey questions interpersonal dynamics, attitudes toward work, and ways of getting the job done. Then it compares individual responses to its data base and prints out a personal profile detailing both parties' strengths and weaknesses in terms of planning and establishing work priorities, executing and appraising tasks, and communication styles. This part of the program can provide insights into what makes people tick.

Another part prescribes coaching techniques designed to gain employees' attention and achieve a closer match between expectations and performance. Program author Charles L. Sodikoff notes that *CompuCOACH*™ also gives subordinates a way of determining just what the heck their bosses want out of them. The program's overall focus, enhancing working relationships to improve effectiveness, allows it to function well both ways.

This program can bring to light some revealing interpersonal factors, but Sodikoff cautions against using it to "fix" problem employees. He takes the position that managing need not rely on designating good or bad behaviors; *CompuCOACH*™ identifies ways of capitalizing on peoples' strengths.

To obtain more information and try out a very entertaining demo diskette (for IBM-PCs and compatibles), get in touch with **CompuCOACH**, c/o Charles L. Sodikoff, 1320 Sandra Lane, Merrick, NY 11566; 516/868-6723. *Circle No. 185 on Reader Service Card.*

It takes two to teambuild

This time a year ago, the hottest show on Broadway was *Tango Argentino*; and—wouldn't you know it—Monad Trainer's Aide has come out with *Tango Teambuilding*.

This film shows how to create successful working groups through teambuilding. Quoting from the press release: "Designed for all levels, it shows how after a disastrous planning meeting, a training manager witnesses a dress rehearsal of a tango dance team preparing for a dance competition."

"Visually exciting performances of the tango reinforce the 10 key elements of teambuilding." (Really: see photo.) The manager notices parallels between his problems and those of the choreographer as she pulls together a finely coordinated team.

Tango Teambuilding comes with a meeting guide and is available in 16mm film and all video formats. Priced at $600 for purchase, organizations can also rent it for five days for $140 or pay $40 for a preview. Contact **Monad Trainer's Aide**, 163-60 22nd Ave., Whitestone, NY 11357; 718/352-2314. *Circle No. 186 on Reader Service Card.*

To continue this theme, a Midwest firm sent "New Training Tools" a release describing a video that compares managing organizational change to training an elephant to dance. Unfortunately, their photo showed a manager instead of the elephant.

What If "Just Say No" Isn't Enough?

Substance abuse may be last year's news for the mass media, but it remains a topic of debate within corporate boardrooms and factory lunchrooms. The problem seems obvious: employees high on drugs or alcohol probably don't perform as well as their straight colleagues. And 95 percent of all companies report direct experience with on-the-job employee substance abuse, almost double the figures reported 10 years ago.

That's according to *Substance Abuse in Organizations 1971-1986: Realities— Trends—Reactions*, a recently released study that traces workplace substance abuse over a 15-year period. Human Resources Research (HRR) collected data from a national sample of 300 organizations on four different occasions. In addition to surveying basic substance abuse information, they also charted corporate reaction to emerging trends.

The result is a 100-page report that provides
■ a 15-year data base of organizational information;
■ descriptions of organizations' responses to the substance abuse problem, including policies, management trends, and concerns about the future;
■ a drug testing report that describes who tests for drugs, how they test, and who they test;
■ a special report on how increasing cocaine use has affected corporate policies and action;
■ information on how an organization's size and the degree to which it employs young people affect substance abuse policy;
■ a discussion of appropriate executive and management training.

Which brings us to part two of HRR's new offering: a personal-computer-based package designed to teach bosses how to deal with workplace drug abuse. *Substance Abuse in Organizations: Micro Training Modules* uses an IBM-compatible floppy disk

and a manual to lead managers and supervisors through the intricacies of this complex issue. Trainees can test their knowledge against the study's data base, apply company policy to a series of abuse scenarios, and practice confronting job-related conflicts.

In addition the program presents what the promo materials call an action maze—a "fast moving case where the decisions you make affect the information you receive." The idea here is to demonstrate competence in handling employee personal problems by solving case situations quickly. There's also a management in-basket exercise to provide additional practice.

The looseleaf-bound report costs $50.00. The *Substance Abuse in Organizations: Micro Training Modules* instructional program starts at $39.95 for a single copy; prices go down for multiple-copy orders. A demo diskette is available for $5.00, which will be credited to future purchases.

For more information, contact **Human Resources Research**, a division of Far Cliffs Consulting, P.O. Box 92158, Milwaukee, WI 53202; 414/784-8790.
Circle No. 182 on Reader Service Card.

"Tele" Me More

The shake-up that followed Ma Bell's break up, coupled with some nifty new technology, has caused unprecedented growth in the telecommunications industry. More and more organizations find themselves at least peripherally involved in voice and data transmission, but discover that their managers don't really know how all this stuff works. A couple of new products offer primers on this budding field.

Telecommunications 101

"Basic, understandable information most sought by new people entering the field of telecommunications . . . ." That's how abcTeleTraining, Inc., characterizes its new text *Anatomy of Telecommunications*. Author Tom Smith condensed six years' worth of workshop materials and 35 years of industry experience into a comprehensive overview of the phone business.

The book is organized to ". . . enable

anyone to fully understand the complex telecommunications business, including the recent changes." In 160 pages Smith covers such basics as telecommunications electricity, the telephone terminal, and transmission systems. He goes on to describe more complex issues too: common carriers, regulation, the Bell System divestiture, new competitive aspects, and the national network of service providers. Designed for individual or classroom use, *Anatomy of Telecommunications* features a self-paced study format complete with objectives, study guides, chapter outlines, preview and review questions, and term definitions.

At $15.95 plus $1.75 for shipping, it's available from **abcTeleTraining, Inc.**, P.O. Box 537, Geneva, IL 60134; 312/879-9000.
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Computer-communication video

The 1980s have seen a merger of the fields of computer science and data communication that has changed the technology, products, and companies involved in the new computer-communications industry. To help technical managers, systems programmers and analysts, and data processing professionals keep abreast of these developments, the Association for Media-Based Continuing Education for Engineers, Inc. (AMCEE), has introduced *Communication Networks*, a 10-part videotape program. AMCEE is an Atlanta-based consortium of 33 engineering universities.

Program designer and author William Stallings premises course contents on three novel concepts:

■ There is no fundamental difference between data processing (computers)

and data communications (transmission and switching equipment).

■ There is no fundamental difference between data, voice, and video communications.

■ Distinctions between single- and multiprocessor computers and telecommunications networks mean little.

Eventually this overlap of technology will lead to a public system that integrates all communications and makes virtually all data and information sources easily and uniformly accessible. The video course prepares students for this future by presenting separate lessons on circuit-switched, packet-switched, packet-radio, satellite, and local-area networks. Then it covers Integrated Services Digital Network, the planned worldwide telecommunications link. In the process the series teaches how to take cost, performance, and effectiveness into account during systems procurement and application.

AMCEE emphasizes that *Communication Networks* is a self-contained course that requires no instructor and has no prerequisites. Its videotapes, plus a study guide and textbook, teach everything. Stallings designed the course to be run on a once-a-week basis to allow students a chance to assimilate the complex material through suggested "homework" and discussion assignments.

The videocassettes (VHS, Beta, or U-Matic) cost $3,600, or they can be rented for 10 weeks for $1,250. AMCEE does not restrict number of playbacks or the number of viewers. The study guide costs $16; the textbook, $42.50. A $110 preview package can help organizations evaluate *Communication Networks*.

For further information, write or call Cheryl Fidlow, **AMCEE**, Dept. CN, 500 Tech Parkway NW, Atlanta, GA 30313-2446; 404/894-3362. *Circle No. 184 on Reader Service Card.*