FYI for your information

Learning to Use Tomorrow's Technology Today

With the slogan "Use Tomorrow's Technology Today," ComputerLand of San Francisco profitably is teaching customers how to use technology to achieve greater control.

For about six months, ComputerLand of San Francisco, a three-store franchise of ComputerLand Inc., which sells a whole range of personal computers and software, tried with informal training programs to reduce potential customers' confusion and increase buyers' confidence and competence. Gail Harris, now ComputerLand's director of training and education, approached them with a timely proposal and has been training their customers since mid-February. The first classes were filled without benefit of advertising, and student evaluations were enthusiastic.

The classes cover very specific areas of information, e.g., the popular financial spread sheet software program, Visicalc, and the word processing program, WordStar. Classes are four to eight hours in length and cost $60 to $100, depending on length and degree of difficulty or complexity. The program is unique in that each student works at his or her own computer in small classes with a lot of individual attention. There are day, evening and weekend classes for different computers, as well as for different software. Instructors also go on site to teach employees of large corporations how to use company-owned computers.

The kinds of software sold in the greatest volume determine the classes presented, so as to meet customer needs. Classes are also designed for programs anticipated to be popular, such as Lotus 1-2-3, which has a financial spread sheet, word processing, a data base and graphics all in one program. Another possibility being considered for more complicated programs, such as accounting, is offering a training package with the software. Thus, while basic courses, such as "How to Choose a Computer" and "Introduction to Microcomputers" remain, the class calendar changes.

Self-paced video instruction is also available for the same programs, making it possible for people to choose the learning method most comfortable for them. The cost for this is $20 per half hour, in half-hour training segments.

Future plans include licensing companies that want to set up their own training labs to use the tapes at their own site. Certificate programs for specific areas of expertise are being developed for teachers and office workers.

CAI Applied to Interpersonal Skill Training

An application of computer-assisted instruction to behavior modeling training for supervisors has been announced by Development Dimensions International (DDI), Pittsburgh.

Although computers have played a role in self-paced, individualized training for nearly 10 years, the computer-assisted method (CAI) has never before been used to teach the interpersonal skills of supervision, according to DDI president William C. Byham.

DDI is applying computer-assisted instruction to employee situations that first-level supervisors handle only occasionally, but which are critical when they do occur, for example, an absenteeism problem or interpersonal conflict with an employee. States Byham, "When an organization can't invest training time to prepare supervisors in advance for these situations, CAI lets the skill be available at the teachable moment when the individual supervisor really needs it."

DDI's computer-assisted supervisory training, using a microcomputer linked to an interactive videotape, assumes that the learner has already received basic interactive skills training in the classroom using behavior modeling technology.

The computer begins by checking the supervisor's proficiency in "key principles" of human interactions that were acquired in the classroom training, providing a refresher if needed.

To gain skill in handling the situation, the supervisor first watches a videotaped example (positive model) showing the problem being handled effectively. Then, he or she actually interacts with an "employee" on videotape. The computer branches to different parts of the videotape depending on the responses chosen by the learner. With effective responses, the employee becomes more cooperative as the "discussion" progresses. Incorrect responses make the employee recalcitrant and even belligerent.

At the close of the simulation, the learner is given specific feedback by the computer (based on the responses he or she entered) as preparation for handling the real interaction with the employee.

The DDI program is compatible with the Apple II Plus and can be modified to fit most other major microcomputers. Additional required equipment consists of a video interface board, a disk drive and any random-access video playback unit with standard TV monitor.

From Computer Awe to *Computer-Ease*

Do the seemingly esoteric lingo and the technology of microcomputers intimidate you? Karl Albrecht's recently published book *Computer-Ease*, subtitled "A Brief Book for Busy People," attempts to replace awe with understanding. The manual-size, soft-cover book is aimed

at the business person with limited time and a need to learn the basics of microcomputer use well and quickly. In *Computer-Ease* Albrecht answers the 50 most frequently asked questions about computers. He has eliminated extraneous historical and technological information and focuses on the essentials. The book format is question and answer, the design is instructional with a quiz at the end of each section, and the style is informal and encouraging.

The book may be purchased for $6.95 by mail order or in bookstores. For more information, write Dr. Karl Albrecht & Associates, P.O. Box 99097, San Diego, CA 92109.

The Search for Productivity

Productivity: Where it Went and How to Get it Back is the title of a "white paper" written by Charles H. Kepner and published recently by Kepner-Tregoe, Inc. From studies and interviews with major corporations here and abroad, the consulting firm has concluded that the current crisis in United States quality and productivity is the result of five key causes:

•The emphasis on individualism, self-reliance and competition over the past 30 years has fought against teamwork and cooperation in problem-solving.

•Work has been dehumanized by the principle of scientific management—that the system must come before the people. The result has been a destructive adversarial relationship between management and labor.

•Return on investment has become the overriding criterion of success. Managers are concerned with short-term improvements in ROI, rather than long-term growth and quality improvement.

•Computers have given managers access to more numbers, and managers, obsessed with numbers, have been spending less time dealing with the human factors and other realities of management.

•In the boom years and heavy demand that followed after World War II, management was able to get along, and even prosper, with practices that were not adequate when demand turned down.

Kepner also identified six conditions that can rescue American industry from its current plight:

•An unshakeable, sincere commitment by the organization to improve quality;

•Providing new problem-solving skills to everyone, from top to bottom of the organization;

•A framework of time and place in which the newly learned problem-solving techniques will be applied, in groups, with appropriate coaching and guidance;

•Leadership in the use of the problem-solving techniques;

•Organizational rewards for successful solutions to productivity and quality problems;

•Leadership and support to ensure the long-term continuation of programs for quality and productivity improvement.
—*reprinted from "Behavioral Sciences Newsletter," December 27, 1982, published by Roy W. Walters & Associates, Inc.*

Putting America Back to Work

Helping unemployed and underemployed American workers get back into rewarding, productive occupations is the goal of a national project underway by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC).

A $100,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Mich. will provide partial funding for the one-year "Putting America Back to Work" project. The program's aim is to enlist the cooperation of governmental, educational, corporate and labor leaders to improve the use of the community college in preparing people for the work force.

The AACJC will contact chief executive officers from among the Fortune 1,000 companies, all community college presidents, governors in all 50 states and leaders of local and national chambers of commerce to secure support for developing policies and programs that help the community college respond to the needs of local industry and business. The AACJC will also meet with the National Alliance of Business, the Conference Board, the American Society for Training and Development, the National Association of Manufacturers, the AFL/CIO and the UAW (United Auto Workers). Also invited into this major undertaking will be the NAACP, the Conference of Mayors of the United States and the National Governors' Association.

Some statewide community college systems and technical institutions are a part of their state's economic development program, and state policy permits them to assist new businesses and expand existing ones by providing training programs at state expense. Private corporations have also begun to use the community colleges, contracting with them and assisting in the funding of on-campus building construction to house worker training programs.

In 1982, the AACJC awarded financial grants and certificates of merit to outstanding community college-industrial programs in Nebraska, Michigan and Illinois. "The number of successful cooperative models is unfortunately small," said Dale Parnell, AACJC president, "and the existing need is great. We must make full use of these models and build upon them to encourage more public and private sector cooperation."

AACJC represents 1,219 two-year colleges, most of which specialize in technical and vocational education programs serving 11.4 million full-time and part-time students. These colleges are within commuting distance for more than 90 percent of all Americans, making geographic accessibility to job training and retraining available for the vast majority of the nation's unemployed and underemployed.

The project will be directed by Nolen M. Ellison, president of Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland. Ellison is also vice chairman of the AACJC "Putting America Back to Work" task force, headed by Donald C. Garrison, president of the Tri-County Technical College, Pendleton, S.C. The group has called for a new national policy on adult employment development and training.

The Kellogg Foundation-sponsored project is one part of AACJC's four-pronged effort toward a comprehensive national policy on human resource development. Other initiatives under way are:

•*Job Training Partnership Program:* To enable community, technical and junior colleges to participate in training programs for one million workers to be funded by the $3.8 billion authorized by the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982;

•*National Small Business Training Network:* To help reduce the failure rate of small businesses through a network of community, technical and

junior colleges providing high quality, low-cost, small business management training;

•*Business-Industry Community College Coalition (BICCC):* To help make community college staff and trustees more knowledgeable and active in working with employers to train a skilled work force.

Experience Goes a Long Way

Experience is the best teacher. Fairchild Industries, Inc. is tapping the knowledge of five veteran retired executives in a new program designed for up-and-coming managers. The name of the program, "Interaction: Managing the Division," reflects its objective—giving key managers and high potential employees, selected by their respective divisions, the chance to develop leadership skills through the exchange of career experiences.

The first program was held in November and is expected to become a regular training program.

The five recently retired members of Fairchild's executive management team have joined forces to present the two and one half day workshop dealing specifically with managing a Fairchild division. "The idea is to give the attendees a competitive edge by working closely with executives who collectively have more than one and one quarter centuries of company experience and are willing to share the Fairchild techniques that made them successful," says Jack Ferrara, corporate training and development manager.

Charles Collis, corporate executive vice president, who retired in 1982, developed the program. He recruited other senior officers who, like himself, had many years of experience at Fairchild. "We're all 62 or under—old enough to retire and still young enough to get involved," says Collis.

The seminar faculty members make presentations in their areas of expertise, then using the viewpoint of a newly appointed general manager, they examine his or her new responsibilities. This covers understanding, organizing and evaluating the performance of the departments within a company.

Active participation by the students is encouraged through panel discussions. In one session, participants can raise specific questions over a range of subjects. In the other panel, retired executives discuss what they perceive as their greatest errors in management and relate these to their careers.

As currently set up, the program is a follow-up to the company's regular management seminar that is geared to helping participants understand the corporate staff functions and the interplay between them and the divisions.

"Resurrection is Tougher Than Birth"

Not many think of executive or management selection as a critical subject in an economy like the present. According to Ed Yager of Yager Associates, Park City, Ut., "Most managers worry most about who is being hired or promoted during times of expansion. In reality, these decisions are more critical during times of retrenchment, or especially during the early stages of recovery."

"Organizations take a beating during bad business periods. Good people leave and are not replaced, while the mediocre hang on. Once business begins to pick up, promotions and reorganization occur on a panic basis. This is when managers need to be most careful of whom they place in key assignments, and why."

Yager, whose firm specializes in management and executive selection and assessment, points out that the majority of promotions and choices are usually based on one of four irrelevant criteria:

•*Interviews:* These often tell little or nothing about a person's skill at anything except being an interviewee. This is valuable only if one is hiring an interviewee.

•*Past experience:* It is hard to predict skill levels in a new job based on the past job, unless they demand similar skills.

•*Referrals or connections:* These sources of information are not only frequently inaccurate, but, unless the criteria for the reference are clear, may be unethical or illegal.

•*Bias and prejudice:* It is amazing how many managers unconsciously look for people like themselves. A manager's personal prejudice often eliminates well qualified individuals from filling available job openings.

One trend in human resource development is the increased emphasis on selection. Yager points out: "Resurrection is tougher than birth—there is a major shift in emphasis from training to selection. All the training you can afford will not make up for one poor placement in a key assignment."

Time for a New Job?

With a depressed economy, high unemployment and a soft job market, not too many people are quitting their jobs these days. Yet, it is an excellent time to evaluate one's present job and determine if it's time to make a career move when things do improve.

Deciding to quit a job—which the average person does once or more during his or her work life—is one of the most important steps one can take.

When should you resign? Andrew Sherwood, president of The Goodrich & Sherwood Company, has developed this list:

•When you're still in solid shape with your company. The best time to look for a new job is when you have one. Being unemployed creates financial and psychological problems for most people and lessens their ability to negotiate effectively.

•When you have reached a dead end, when your learning curve has flattened and chances for advancement are seriously limited. Confirm this opinion by talking to your boss. There may have been opportunities you have overlooked.

•When you still have time. By the time you approach 40, you should have figured out what you want out of your job and where you want to go in your career. Ask yourself if you're happy doing what you're doing.

•When you find that you are in serious disagreement with the policies of your employer or find you cannot adjust to changes introduced by a new boss or management team, or if you can't live with policies, principles, procedures and personalities involved, look elsewhere.

•When your health, too much travel or stress makes you less effective on the job, it's time to find another where such factors are not as evident.

•When another company offers a hefty increase in pay. Remember, however, to consider carefully the value of "fringe" benefits, job security, advancement opportunities and other important factors. Money isn't everything.