

Training Is a System

putting the success odds in your favor

George Kent

If you've ever sat at your desk unhappily evaluating a "bust" training program, you will probably agree that something went wrong! You still don't know why this particular program went bad while the previous program was a success. It may be that you or your department hasn't produced a *system* which will put the success odds in your favor.

Your problem may even go deeper than the control factors. Do you know what the training function in your company is designed to do? Does your superior really know? If you were asked to define training in 15 words or less, could you do it?

What Is Training?

Let's look at the results of a "Training the Trainer" session

held last November. Of the 26 people in the class, four could not condense their definition into such a short span. Twenty-two gave us a definition which defined the training function; not one defined "training." What, then, is training?

Our gut definition is: "*Training is a method whereby you make or save a buck for your employer.*"

It's that simple! This being the case, you should also understand that the training department is an overhead factor which has a dollar value placed on its function. If at the end of any given year the dollar value received is less than the dollars expended, you're out of business or at least in trouble! This is where a solid system comes into play, one that makes you move in the proper direction and also will

assure you the most for each dollar spent.

Base System

Our particular system is divided into 11 subsystems as follows:

1. *Definition system of company structure:* This is done to evaluate who does what and who has what authority.

2. *Structuring system of company functions:* What is done and why.

3. *A needs assessment system based on company function.*

4. *Priorities of needs system:* This is where we most often err. What a trainer sees as a top priority is not always the same as the person with the authority. This is why we make a very careful study of the company structure. We must know top management's

system, plan to use it! It comes in handy to plan your next week's calendar, allows you to pace your work and at times prove to your superiors that you cannot handle any more projects without some outside help. Check off the steps as you complete them and you'll always know where you are and where you're going.

George Kent is the director of education, research and technical services for the Allied Construction Employers Association. He is a member of the American Society for Training and Development as well as past Chairman of the ASTD Construction Division special interest group. He presently represents ASTD on the National Metric Conversion Council. He is also active in the Wisconsin Chapter, acting as the Region V Conference Chairman. Having just fin-

ished a tour of duty on the Advisory Board for the Insurance and Banking Committee of the State Assembly, he is presently waiting for the Governor's confirmation to the Construction Inspection Fee Commission. Also, he is acting as an evening division instructor on communication and management studies at the Milwaukee School of Engineering and recently was added as a guest lecturer to the University of Wisconsin, Department of Continuing Education.

ASTD Regional Conferences Set

The 1975 ASTD Regional Conferences are shaping up to be "better than ever before!" The following is a capsulated wrap-up of each Region's scheduled plan of events:

Region 1

Mark Oct. 5-8 on your calendar and plan to attend the 1975 ASTD Region 1 Conference, scheduled to be held at the Jug End Inn, South Egremont, Mass.

Training professionals such as George Odiorne, University of Massachusetts; Ben Miller, St. John's University; Scott Parry, Training House; and Dorothy Sarnoff, Dorothy Sarnoff Speech & Communication Services, will conduct conference sessions.

Also included on the list of program speakers are: Don Kirkpatrick, 1975 ASTD president; Kevin O'Sullivan, ASTD executive vice president; and Jan Margolis, member of the ASTD Board of Directors.

The Conference will be a "Multilevel Approach For the Training and Development Team," which includes executive trainers, front line trainers, OD specialists, etc. Participants will be able to find out how to design programs that will satisfy them, how to sell those programs to management

and how to evaluate the worth of the programs.

For additional Conference information, please contact: John M. O'Shea, manager, Manpower Development Division, West Chemical Products, 46-16 West St., Long Island, NY 11101.

Region 3

The Holiday Inn in Perrysburg, Ohio will be the location for the 1975 ASTD Region 3 Conference, to be held Nov. 5-7.

This year's Conference, designated a "Challenge Of Change," will feature a three track program: Track I for relatively new trainers; Track II for people in non-profit service organizations; and Track III for experienced trainers.

Topics to be highlighted include: needs analysis, instructional design, adult education, learning, team building, OD, role negotiation and several special interest group sessions. Participants will also be treated to a tour of the Dana Corp. headquarters and their "Dana University" approach to training.

The Perrysburg Holiday Inn has twice been chosen as one of the top 10 Inns in the United States and their restaurant has twice been selected number one in the country — so don't miss this excellent fa-

cility!

Anyone wishing to register for or exhibit at the Conference should contact: Clyde Hoag, training supervisor, Champion Spark Plug, P.O. Box 910, Toledo, OH 43661.

Region 4

"Tune In To New Directions In Employee Development" is the theme of the 1975 ASTD Region 4 Conference, scheduled for Oct. 9-11 at the Hyatt Regency in Nashville, Tenn.

Ted Mills, director of the National Quality Of Work Center, Washington, DC and member of the National Commission On Productivity and Work Quality ('73) will give the keynote address, "The Trainer's Challenge: Productivity and Results."

Also featured as a general session speaker will be Dugan Laird, well-known training consultant and author, Decatur, Ga. He will inform participants on "How To Achieve Excellence In Training and Development."

And that's not all! Also featured on the program are: Jan Margolis, Martin Broadwell, Kevin O'Sullivan, the president of a large corporation and a surprise guest — Don't miss this one!

For additional Conference information, please contact: Donald J.

[Continued on page 23]