

# MEDIA REVIEWS

Reviewed by Dorota Praski and Bill Ellet  
for *Training Media Review*

Video remains a vibrant training medium. Here are three worthy products on different, yet valuable, topics.

## Bury My Heart at Conference Room B

Chances are that if you eavesdrop on a work-related conversation, it will only be a matter of time before it turns to leadership, or the lack of it. If you're the person who decides on the training others receive, here's a good option on a popular topic.

How many training videos list "deadly serious" and "totally twisted" on the bottom of their covers? We were definitely intrigued. The slick graphics and print materials communicate that leadership skills are relevant even to people who are too funky or cool or iconoclastic for traditional messages. In short, *Bury My Heart at Conference Room B* will attract audiences jaded by repeated exposure to vacuous content.

Shot in MTV roving camera style, the main thrust of the video is debunking six myths, such as "Leadership is just one more thing I have to do," that stop leadership in its tracks. The debunking occurs in a series of clips with management guru Stan Slap. Slap's presentation style is interesting and facilitates further thinking on the topic.

Based on his belief that leadership and management are counterintuitive, Slap explains the relationship between living out your personal values and inspiring people to follow along. In essence, developing leadership skills can add sense and soul to your job. About half of the video consists of exercises for identifying, protecting, and promoting personal values.

The support materials are worthwhile. The comprehensive facilitator guide includes a humorous introduction and walks you through the course step by step without scripting your every move.

## Village of 100

In 1997, a professor at Stanford's School of Medicine received an email that startled him. He did what most of us do with an interesting message: He forwarded it to everyone in his address book.

That was the genesis of the now famous "Village of 100" email that provided a snapshot of world demographics. For example, if the planet's population were shrunk to 100 people, it would consist of 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 residents of the Western Hemisphere, and eight

### *Bury My Heart at Conference Room B*

★★★★1/2	Holds viewer interest
★★★★1/2	Acting and presenting
★★1/2	Diversity
★★★★★	Production quality
★★★★1/2	Value of content
★★★★	Instructional value
★★★★1/2	Value for the money
★★★★1/2	Overall rating

### *Village of 100*

★★★★★	Holds viewer interest
★★1/2	Acting and presenting
★★★★★	Diversity
★★	Production quality
★★★★★	Value of content
★★★★★	Instructional value
★★★★★	Value for the money
★★★★★	Overall rating

### *On the Edge: Managing High-Risk Situations*

★★★★1/2	Holds viewer interest
★★★★	Acting and presenting
★★★★	Diversity
★★★★1/2	Production quality
★★★★	Value of content
★★★★	Instructional value
★★★★	Value for the money
★★★★	Overall rating

#### RATINGS KEY

★★★★★  
★★★★1/2  
★★★★  
★★★1/2

Outstanding  
Very good  
Good  
Above average

★★★  
★★1/2  
★★

Average  
Below average  
Poor

Africans. There would be 70 non-whites and 30 whites. Of the 100, 80 people would be living in substandard housing and 50 would be suffering from malnutrition.


*Village of 100* has diverse narrators reciting those statistics, and that's about it. It's not going to win any awards for production quality, but the content is enough. It makes a powerful statement about, among other things, the reality of diversity. Given the resistance to required diversity training, this simple video could raise a few eyebrows. We think that's a good thing. There are many other messages, such as the ubiquity of suffering in the world, but they don't relate directly to business as much as we wish they did.

Strangely, no one knows where the statistics come from. After forwarding the email, the professor forgot who sent it to him and disclaims any responsibility. Lately, demographers have been saying that the numbers are plausible.

## On the Edge: Managing High-Risk Situations

The lurid nature of workplace shootings and other acts of violence shouldn't blind us to the fact that they're as preventable as accidents. And the low number of on-the-job deaths due to violence shouldn't mask the fact that any amount of violence, intimidation, or bullying in the workplace is too much.

*On the Edge: Managing High-Risk Situations*, a new version of a program released in 1996, resembles other programs produced by Edge Training Systems with its concise content, well-scripted and well-acted vignettes, and aesthetically pleasing photography. The video isn't one of Edge's more imaginative products,

 [WWW.LEARNINGCIRCUITS.ORG](http://WWW.LEARNINGCIRCUITS.ORG) to access TMR's reviews of e-learning materials, including e-courses, authoring software, learning management systems, and more.

and the narrator sounds a little too scripted at times. On the other hand, the program doesn't get in its own way and concludes in just 15 minutes.

The vignettes demonstrate patterns of blatant behavior that often preclude violent episodes. It seems the key point is whether anyone chooses to do anything about the warning signs. The rationalizations that we're likely to fall back on in such situations are probably the critical piece of the puzzle.

## Recommendation

*Bury My Heart at Conference Room B* is a solid program dealing with cultivating leadership qualities and would make a worthwhile addition to any development library. It's particularly appropriate for people looking for something new, working with new or underdeveloped managers, or who are pressed for design time. It's not recommended for novice trainers.

*Village of 100* can convey the inescapable facts of diversity, in two minutes. It's a trainer's dream in a time- and attention-constrained era. We'd hesitate to recommend the video if its statistics were based solely on a mysterious email forwarded on to Internet fame, but recent findings suggest their viability. This video will make an impression on all viewers and shake some of them up. What more can you ask of training on diversity? Where you take things from there may be a challenge.

Preventing workplace violence isn't pleasant or popular training.

Even if you don't feel you have to worry about somebody "going postal," your workplace may suffer from aggressive behavior that could lead to physical confrontation. *On the Edge* may make its most valuable contribution when it warns of how complacency can lead to disaster. And by showing a well-produced program like this, an organization can make a statement that written policies can't.

## Video details

*Bury My Heart at Conference Room B*, video, 2001, VisionPoint Productions: 800.300.8880, [www.vppi.com](http://www.vppi.com). Purchase US\$725. Other material: leader guide, leader materials, and participant materials.

*Village of 100*, video, 1998, A Step Ahead Productions: 877.706.9671, [www.astepahead.com](http://www.astepahead.com). Purchase US\$125. Other material: none.

*On the Edge: Managing High-Risk Situations*, video, 2001, Edge Training Systems: 800.476.1405, [www.edgetraining.com](http://www.edgetraining.com). Purchase US\$695. Other material: none.

**Dorota Praski** is a human resource consultant specializing in strategic planning and leadership based in Manitoba, Canada; [victorygrp@escape.ca](mailto:victorygrp@escape.ca). **Bill Ellet** is editor and principal of Training Media Review; [wellet@tmreview.com](mailto:wellet@tmreview.com).

Product evaluations are provided by Training Media Review and do not imply endorsement by T+D or ASTD. For more information, contact TMR at 877.532.1838, [tmreview.com](http://tmreview.com).

