

A Practical Approach To Training

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Since training is necessarily a staff function by nature, that is, primarily a recommending and coordinating type of activity, a training man must enlist the aid of the various line functions within the company organization. The approach, if properly executed, will sell training in a most successful manner because the program resulting will actually be the ideas and efforts of the line authority.

At the Lewistown plant of the American Viscose Corporation, a program of Pre-Supervisory Training was formulated and executed on this basis. Surveys made at the completion of the training indicate that this approach was highly successful. Not only the management personnel were contacted but the pre-supervisory trainees were consulted also. A performance appraisal form was constructed and was utilized prior to training and again approximately two months after completion of training. The results indicated a general overall improvement on the part of the participants.

The approach utilized started with the appointment of a committee of four assistant department heads to formulate a listing of all the aspects of a supervisor's job.

It was decided that the program should be divided into three phases.

1. the personnel aspects
2. the departmental training
3. training in related departments (job rotation)

PHASE ONE

Areas suggested and included in the personnel aspects phase of the training program were: Accounting and Budget Principles; Employment Procedures; History of and the Purpose of Job Evaluation Principles; Background of Employee Benefits (H & A Insurance, Pension Plan, Surgical Insurance, Workmen's Compensation, etc.); History Significance, and Interpretation of the Labor Contract and Wage & Personnel Policy Manual; Basic Economics; History of the Plant and the Corporation; Human Relations; Safety Program; Training Principles; Communications; Stores Requisitioning Procedures; and Orientation of New Employees.

These areas were covered with the pre-supervisory trainees as a group (approximately 14 in number at one time) over a period of one work week (40 hours). The program was kicked off by the Plant Manager who pointed out

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the importance of the first line foreman as a member of the management team and the importance management attached to the training the group was about to receive.

Particularly significant was the fact that the program called for 17 staff personnel to present the material covered during this one week phase of the program. These staff personnel were requested to resolve their conference to writing in outline form. The staff people met with the training supervisor and presented their part of the program on a trial run basis and the training supervisor offered constructive criticism on the presentation and content of the conference. The outline was rewritten and included in a manual which was circulated to all department heads, staff and staff assistants for their files. Suitable handouts were selected and the use of effective visual aids incorporated in the presentations.

In some cases it was necessary to call personnel in from furloughs to relieve the pre-supervisory trainees for participation in this week's activities.

PHASE TWO

Since the department heads are the specialists in their respective fields, they were contacted and requested to compile in outline form the aspects of the foremen's job in their department and also (phase three) compile an outline of activities in other departments which they felt the foremen should be acquainted with in order to perform their supervisory duties in a most efficient manner. These outlines were reviewed by the department head and the train-

ing supervisor and rewritten as necessary. They were then duplicated and became a part of the aforementioned manual as a permanent file for the interested parties. It was decided that this manual should be reviewed annually for the purpose of bringing it up-to-date and incorporating improvements.

PHASE THREE

The pre-supervisory trainees were put on a schedule and rotated through various departments as indicated on their respective departmental outlines. This had a very desirable effect on the participants for it gave the departments a chance to not only "educate" the trainees but to impress them with the fact that other supervisors have problems very similar to the ones confronting the trainees when they are temporarily upgraded to supervisor. A better relationship among the supervisors in the various departments resulted.

RESULTS AND WHY

The foregoing program was initially installed on a trial basis, but its success was such that it has become permanently adopted. It is the writer's opinion that the success of the program was due to a number of factors. First, the cooperation of all members of management which was in some degree due to the fact that it was their program since they had formulated it; secondly, the prestige lent to the program by the Plant Manager's initiating talk; thirdly, by close coordination insofar as seeing the conferences were well prepared, well delivered and that the schedule was adhered to; and fourthly, that a feeling of

importance was transferred to each of the participants.

SELECTION

The selection of candidates for pre-supervisory training was accomplished in three steps.

1. Departmental management recommended at least two candidates for each supervisory position.

2. These candidates were then screened on the basis of their personnel

records and test results. (I.Q., Aptitude, Practical Judgment, How Supervise, Interests and Personality).

3. Those candidates who passed the screening of personnel records and test results were then submitted to a Supervisory Selection Committee composed of the Plant Manager and three or four of his staff. Here final selection was made and reasons for selecting or not selecting the candidates recorded and sent to the department management.

Washington Conference Group Says "Make A Date For '58"

The 14th Annual Conference Committee of Washington, D. C. has asked all ASTD members to send them their ideas and suggestions for next year's conference. In a letter to each chapter president the committee has asked members to list subject fields, new techniques, and approaches in which they are most interested and want to learn more about. They also asked for names of outstanding speakers that might be secured for the conference, May 6, 7, 8, 1958.

Roy Colbert of the Post Office Department, is General Chairman of the 14th Annual Conference and Joe Davis, of the Navy Department is Associate General Chairman. Other Committee Chairmen are: Industry Liaison, Dorothy Foster; Congressional Liaison, W. C. Christensen; Business Administration, Charles Trainum; Arrangements, George Escher; Reception, Agnes Bryan; Enter-

tainment, Mary Moran; Program, Robert Stockment, and Publicity, Elliott French.

These Chairmen comprise the Conference Administration Committee that is responsible for the conference. They will be assisted by 21 Sub-Committee Chairmen and the entire Washington chapter.

In the five committee meetings held to date, the conference plans for program, exhibits, entertainment and publicity have been developed. Initial program plans call for seven general meetings and 24 concurrent sessions, during the three-day conference.

Special interest group meetings will be held on May 5th and 9th.

ASTD members and other interested training people will be kept advised of plans through the *Journal* and by direct mail. Make your ideas and suggestions known . . . and . . . "MAKE A DATE FOR '58."