

The "Ivory Tower" Attitude Of Training

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The new employee stiffened in his chair on the back row of the meeting room. Others around him shuffled their feet in anticipation as the training director made his grand entrance.

The group was assembled for the company's new employee orientation. They came from various departments throughout the organization, but all had one thing in common. They knew practically nothing about the company or the industry they had recently joined.

The training director advanced to the lectern and began his tirade with the traditional, "Welcome to our organization." For nearly three hours thereafter he delved into company plans and policies, areas of operation, employee promotion and future, history of the organization, and other subjects that are normally packed into such a program. He used almost every training technique known to the profession.

And then he stalked from the room, leaving the neophytes stunned from the urgency of his exit and thoroughly confused by the weightiness of his presentation. They all still had one thing in common. They knew practically nothing about the company or the industry they had recently joined.

Is this your training program? I rather doubt it, because this is an example that could be called "way out." But—is it so far out?

The modern training director is an educated man in a specialized field. He prides himself in keeping up with the latest innovations and in knowing how to use them effectively. He tosses around terms such as grids, climate and needs

determination with authority.

Every new training philosophy with an impressive sounding name tag is a must for his employees. After all, his people deserve the best, and a technique with a fifteen syllable name must be good!

But, wait a minute! Aren't we getting the cart before the horse? What about that group of new employees we left blinking their eyes just a few minutes ago? What about that group of supervisors who were guinea pigs for that new technique we tried out last week?

Are these new "ivory tower" techniques we have today really helping our employees, or do they view these efforts as mere attempts to glorify our own head and expound our own theories, using four-bit words we read in some magazine?

I am not knocking new concepts, new theories or new training methods. I am merely trying to point out that they must be properly used. I am the first to admit that without progress we will fail our charges, but with egotistical use of terms and methods that even the originator did not fully understand, we will not only fail our charges, but will fail ourselves as well.

What can be done about this growing trend of "big name-ism" in training methods and techniques? Two tried and tested formulas still work: (1) keep it simple, (2) keep it to the point.

In any training the trainee must be the first concern. He must be fully cognizant of need, methods and goals of the program. These things *can* be accomplished by "down to earth" methods.