

Raising Sails To Raise Sales

Looking for an unusual tool for executive team building? How about one that is 179 feet long and 130 feet high, weighs 500 tons, and comes equipped with 24 cannons?

H.M.S. Rose, the largest operational wooden tall ship in the world, is "an incredibly powerful platform for conducting team building and leadership programs," says Michael Weiss, president of Voyages to Excellence, which operates the programs.

Weiss left a job as national training director at Chase Manhattan in order to pursue his dream of turning the Rose into a vehicle for corporate education programs. This year, his dream comes true. By mid-August, the Rose was expected to have received certification from the U.S. Coast Guard as a Sailing School Vessel. With the official certification, shipboard corporate training programs will have begun.

Weiss describes his first experience on the H.M.S. Rose. It was 1986, and the ship was in New York harbor for the Statue of Liberty centennial celebration. He was struck by the feeling of camaraderie among the people on board.

"I had never seen a group of such different people, from different walks of life, come together as effectively as they did on the ship that day," he says. "And I thought, 'if I could bottle this—if I could package this—it would be unbelievable!'"

The same day, he spoke to Richard Bailey, captain of the Rose, about using the ship for corporate education programs. Bailey was enthusiastic, and the two began planning—and preparing the ship for its new role.

"This is four years in the planning," says Weiss. "But that original vision is even more relevant now, in today's corporate environment."

Other training programs have been done onboard ships, says Weiss, but this ship is different.

For one thing, it looks different. The tall ship has 17 sails, according to Captain Bailey, and is an almost-exact replica of the original H.M.S.

Rose, a British frigate built in Yorkshire in 1757.

The ship is also different in that virtually all training participants board it as equals. Even those with sailing experience are unlikely to have sailed a wooden, square-rigged fighting ship, says Weiss.

He should know; he's a longtime sailor and the former captain of the Chase Manhattan sailing team.

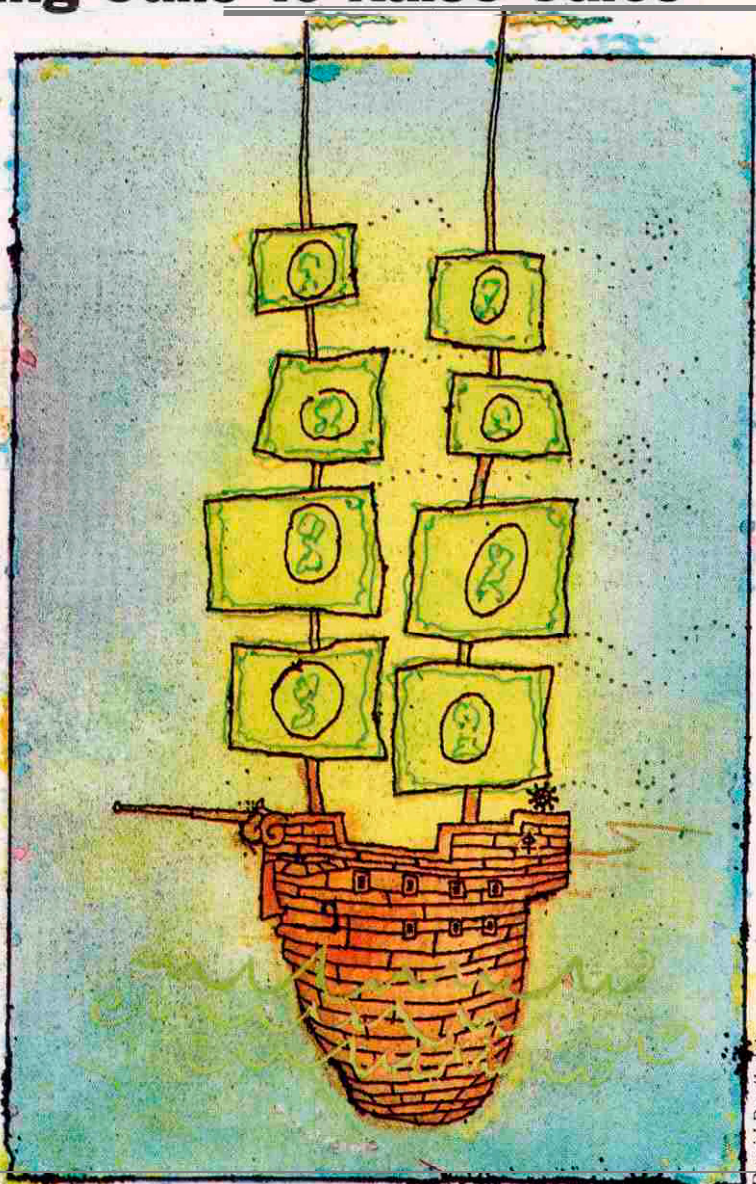
Weiss points out another important distinction of the Rose: it has been specifically rebuilt as a training facility.

Despite its historical appearance and atmosphere, the Rose is equipped with modern but inconspicuous navigational equipment. It even has a cellular phone and a fax machine. Trainees can use overhead projectors, television sets, and video cameras on board.

"We want to set a standard in outdoor training programs," says Weiss. "We've got everything that the best conference centers provide, including enough electricity for a multimedia show."

If the original Rose had been this high-tech, the British might have won the American Revolution.

The first H.M.S. Rose was a fighting ship. It saw its first action in the Seven Years War, before sailing in 1761 to the West Indies to help in the capture of Havana and Martinique.



**“Sailing
is a metaphor
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A few years later, the *Rose* played a part in the creation of the U.S. Navy. In 1774 it sailed to Newport, Rhode Island, a city made rich by its main industry—smuggling. The presence of the British ship cut down on the smuggling, which caused so much unemployment that Newport lost four-fifths of its population in less than a year. In response, the state general assembly asked the Continental Congress to establish a national navy to deal with the pesky ship. The bill was passed in October 1775.

The H.M.S. *Rose* later fought in the American Revolution, making forays up the Hudson and East rivers and patrolling the western end of Long Island Sound. The ship's career ended in 1779 off Savannah, Georgia, when the British sunk the *Rose* (on purpose) across the mouth of the harbor, in order to prevent a French fleet from getting close enough to attack the city.

More than a hundred years later, the new *Rose*, built in 1970 in Nova Scotia, is seeing a different kind of action.

"We want to focus on the sailing experience as a metaphor for operating a complex business," says Weiss. Through sailing and living on the ship, groups of corporate executives will learn about pulling together as teams and will work on individual leadership skills.

The constraints that affect sailing—such as navigable waters, variable winds, and equipment problems—parallel the constraints that executives face in trying to run a business, says Weiss.

And the 24 cannons give a whole new meaning to the term "hostile takeover."

"This is not a passenger vessel," says Bailey. "This is a hands-on, participation-type vessel."

He says that the ship can take 12 to 35 trainees—middle, upper, and senior managers—for overnight trips. Weiss says the ship could accommodate several companies at once, each sending a small group of employees at the same time on a joint program.

By itself, Weiss says, a shipboard program provides "an experience

you'll remember the rest of your life." But in order for it to produce long-term effects, "this program, like other adventure learning programs, is best used as part of a larger effort."

The larger effort could include pre-voyage action-planning and objective-setting, as well as follow-up discussions three to four months after the shipboard program.

Most onboard programs last from two to five days. Before leaving shore, facilitators conduct safety training for participants and familiarize them with the layout of the *Rose* and the basic tasks required of crew members. Once at sea, small groups of participants take turns performing the various tasks that are required to sail the ship. Experienced trainers and crew members are always present to oversee the work and lend a hand.

"The real experience here is getting the ship to operate," says Weiss. "And it's a very supportive environment, one that is nurturing as opposed to challenging or confrontational. You don't have to prove yourself."

The historical aspects of the ship play an important part in the onboard experience. "This was not a luxury vessel; it was a fighting ship," stresses Weiss. Accommodations are definitely not luxurious. Trainees sleep in small bunkbeds in cramped dorm rooms.

Weiss says that his company offers programs on other historical ships, and that the sleeping arrangements on them are less austere. But the experience on its flagship, the *Rose*, is the most historically authentic. And, he says, sleeping in more modern, private berths can actually detract from the team building experience of a shipboard program.

Through the end of the year, H.M.S. *Rose* is also a floating museum. It carries the state of Rhode Island's original copy of the Bill of Rights, as well as a brass cannon that was cast by Paul Revere in 1797. Weiss says he is fitting in corporate programs between stops on the *Rose*'s touring schedule. Next year when the Bill of Rights Tour is over, the H.M.S. *Rose* becomes a

full-time training vessel.

Despite the H.M.S., the new *Rose*—made in Canada and based in Bridgeport, Connecticut—is American, not British. "Officially, the ship's name is just 'the *Rose*,'" says Weiss. "The H.M.S. stands for 'humongous ship.'"

Voyages to Excellence is based at 109 West 89th Street, New York, NY 10024.

Developing Training

Picture this: A customer is left waiting to purchase an item while the salesperson turns his back to chat on the telephone. Tired and frustrated, the customer finally leaves the store.

Another snapshot: At the same store a salesperson drums her fingers, rolls her eyes, and smacks her gum while a customer tries to explain that the package he purchased was incomplete. After getting the "cold shoulder," the customer vows to take his business elsewhere.

Those two scenes would be any businessperson's customer service nightmare. Fortunately, they did not occur on the job; they took place at a training facility for Dean's Photo Service, a California-based photo processing chain.

The training program is required of all new employees of Dean's 52 retail outlets. The facility has a 2,000-square-foot classroom that seats more than 60 students. But much of the training focuses on the facility's mock store, which is fully equipped with actual photo-finishing and retail equipment.

Employees attend two five-day training classes at the mock store, during which they learn sales skills and human relations. The trainees are videotaped and critiqued by their peers.

Trainees also learn technical skills during a mini-lab operations course. At the mini-lab, students get hands-on experience at fixing machines that have been purposely broken. They also get experience using corrective measures to develop rolls of film with exposure problems.

According to John Bond, Dean's

vice-president of training and quality control, employees see the classes as valuable subsidized career training. He says many employees take advanced classes to hone their retail and technical skills.

Bill Price, president of Dean's, says the training program has been well worth the time and money the company has spent on it. "Our huge investment in training sessions, with basic and advanced classes, is paying off," he says. He calls the training "the foundation on which the firm's continued growth is built."

According to Price, Dean's encourages promotions from within; the training provides the groundwork for entry-level employees to rise to the ranks of managers. He says the program also pays off in terms of employee satisfaction and low turnover. And the bottom line is customer satisfaction.

Dean's model training has enhanced the company's image so much that competing photo chains, including those of film giant Fuji, have sent their employees to Dean's training program at a cost of \$250 a person for a week of training.

The training program also helped Dean's win the "Retail Business of 1990" award from the Small Business Development Center of the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce.

It appears that Dean's has struck upon a near picture-perfect program. One thing is certain—the program gives new meaning to the term "train and *develop*."

Resources for ADA

Mention the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to your average businessperson and you might get a nervous reaction. That's because many are apprehensive about how to comply with a law they know little about.

Fortunately, they don't have to go it alone—various resources can help firms interpret and follow the law's regulations.

One resource is the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). The network contains the collective knowl-

edge of companies that have pioneered the employment of disabled workers. JAN was established by the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities and is available at 800/526-7234.

The American Society for Training and Development offers help through its Disability Awareness Network. Members of the network represent vocational rehabilitation organizations, corporations, government agencies, hospitals, universities, and private consultants. Members of ASTD are encouraged to use the expertise of the network to prepare themselves and their companies for the opportunities that the ADA represents. For more information, contact Mary Dickson at 503/255-9318.

The National Center for Access Unlimited (NCAU) offers help for those who work with businesses in the following industries: hotel and motel, restaurant and food services, grocery, retail, telecommunications, banking, and transportation. NCAU is a partnership between the United Cerebral Palsy Associations and the Adaptive Environments Center. NCAU can help companies develop human resources, architecture, and communications policies that satisfy requirements of ADA.

John Kemp, co-director of NCAU, says that determining the most effective methods to accommodate people with disabilities requires businesses to analyze and plan from a new perspective. He says that through seminars, workshops, publications, and individualized consulting, NCAU helps private and public corporations. The goal is for them to learn to analyze their facilities, services, and employment practices to make them usable by people with disabilities—at the smallest cost to the companies.

The center will offer services that include the following:

- job analysis to create specific job descriptions, including minimum physical requirements
- methods for avoiding discrimination in employment, recruitment, interviews, hiring, promotions, wages, benefits, and customer services

- communication and other modifications to worksites
- planning, budgeting, and reaping the available tax benefits for accessible new facilities or renovations to existing facilities.

For information on NCAU's training and consulting services, contact Karen Meyer, ADA administrator, at 312/368-0380.

For more information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, see the article in this issue.

Quality Applications on the Rise

Despite the rigorous application and evaluation process, the number of companies applying for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award continues to increase. Apparently, companies figure the rewards of winning outweigh the trouble of applying.

This year 106 U.S. companies have applied for the award. They include 38 manufacturing firms, 21 service companies, and 47 small businesses. In 1988, the first year of the award, 66 companies applied and there were 3 winners. 1989 got 40 applications and two winners. In 1990, 97 companies applied and there were four winners.

Of the 106 applications, those companies that pass the initial screening by an independent board of examiners, composed mostly of private-sector quality experts, will become semi-finalists and be subject to site visits in September. The finalists will then have to pace the hallways and wait to plan their promotion campaigns until the winners are announced later in the fall.

Building on Downsizing

Has downsizing left a lot of your company's employees down in the mouth? Certainly, downsizing dramatically affects those laid off, but the experience also affects remaining employees—a point companies often overlook, says George M. Smart Jr., a team building consultant in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Smart lists some of the problems

employees who aren't laid-off experience:

- dramatically increased workloads
- feelings of guilt about having jobs while their former co-workers are gone
- increased anger at the company for its role in the downsizing, even if it was the best alternative
- fear of further layoffs.

Fortunately, there are approaches companies can take to help employees adjust to downsizing. Smart suggests team building as a way to address some of the concerns:

"Team building—which addresses the norms, values, and culture of a group and then helps that group improve its own communication—gets at these issues through interactive training in consensus, evaluation, clarifying goals, and getting ownership or 'buy-in' before proceeding with decisions.

"Team building has traditionally focused on the realm of developing management skills or assessing interpersonal issues in work groups, but now companies have a way to back up those hard choices about layoffs with the proper training for the team that's left to carry the ball."

CEOs and HRD Execs Take Different Positions

Close your eyes and think like a CEO. Ready? Now answer this question: If you were CEO, which would you think were the most difficult executive positions to fill? If MIS was the first thing to pop into your mind, you obviously weren't concentrating.

In a survey by Martin Mirtz Morice (MMM), an executive search firm in Stamford, Connecticut, 40 percent of the CEOs listed general management positions as the toughest to fill. That was followed by sales (26 percent), marketing (19 percent), MIS (13 percent), and operations (11 percent).

By contrast, 28 percent of the human resource executives slated the MIS position as the toughest, followed by general management (22 percent), marketing (16 per-

cent), operations (14 percent), and research and development (14 percent).

John Mirtz of MMM says that the results are worrisome: "Accomplishing an organization's strategic staffing goals requires close cooperation between the CEO and the top HR executive in setting and implementing plans. Our study suggests, however, that the desired shared understanding of the marketplace and the difficulties encountered during the recruitment process remain elusive."

Mirtz says that without effective communication between HR and top management, structuring a company's organization beyond the traditional annual planning cycle becomes a near impossibility.

Aiding the Job Search

Today's economy has certainly put a lot of people out of work. If you are faced with providing outplacement services, Minsuk, Macklin, Stein and Associates (MMS), a New Jersey-based outplacement firm, offers a few suggestions that may help you assist outgoing employees.

One of the keys to finding a job, according to MMS, is knowledge of the companies at which you plan to seek employment. According to Bonnie Brown, director of research at MMS, an effective, self-directed job search often begins in the reading room of the public library.

"Today's high-tech libraries can access a nationwide network to get the information you need," says Brown. She says some useful tools for finding valuable information on companies, industries, and areas where jobs may be available are directories, annual reports, and newspaper and magazine articles on particular industries.

Brown says that some libraries have sophisticated data bases such as *Dialogue* and *Dow Jones New Retrieval*, which provide up-to-the-minute information that has been gathered from news stories. She also says that you can find general information on major companies in directories such as *Dun's Million Dollar Directory* and *Standard &*

Poor's Corporate Directory.

These contain information such as a company's legal name, address, product line, and subsidiaries, as well as the names of corporate officers whom job seekers can contact for information on opportunities within the company or industry.

One source that is full of critical information is annual reports, says Lester Minsuk, founding partner of MMS. "To market yourself to a company," says Minsuk, "you should know its goals and philosophy as well as its bottom line."

He says the goals are usually outlined in the company chief's message to stockholders, contained in all annual reports. Also included in annual reports is more detailed information on subsidiaries, products, and management personnel.

State employment services or the department of economic development can also be an excellent source of information on local companies, placement programs, and the regional economic outlook. Local chambers of commerce can provide information on the housing, schools, tax structure, and lifestyle of areas being considered.

Searching for such information takes work and effort. Those who aren't willing to invest the time but are able to invest some money might consider hiring a company such as MMS to do the groundwork for them. But whether it is made in time or money, getting to know a potential employer before being interviewed or accepting a job is an investment that is likely to pay great dividends.

Calling on Training

What do hospital staff do when they suffer from downtime boredom? Read waiting-room magazines? Perhaps. Short-sheet cranky patient's beds? Not likely.

If they work at Kettering Medical Center (KMC) in Dayton, Ohio, they might pick up the telephone and order an educational video.

For six months the hospital is trying a new video system that allows staff, physicians, and patients to

order educational videos via a touchtone phone. Within 30 seconds of a request, a video appears on a specified closed-circuit television in the hospital.

The system permits staff to take advantage of downtime on the job and to view continuing education videos.

The system was developed by Osborn Entertainment Corporation, a supplier of television services, programming, and closed-circuit systems to hospitals. Marybeth Fannon, education specialist in the hospital's HRD department, says that the Osborn project is proving to be an excellent addition to the educational system.

"The fact that it's accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can be requested on demand makes it an excellent instructional tool," says Fannon. "In addition, the system's ability to operate via our existing resources makes it cost-effective."

Multimedia and Compatibility

The Interactive Multimedia Association (IMA) recently announced a broad-based plan to promote development and use of interactive multimedia and to reduce the barriers to widespread application of the technology. The plan emphasizes the need for compatibility in multimedia technology. It involves an open forum for development and distribution of hardware and software specifications for multimedia systems.

The goal is to define and publish common interface specifications for multimedia platforms and applications. IMA will also facilitate testing and validations of multimedia platforms and applications.

Richard Thackray, president and CEO of IMA, says that there is "a clear need for a strong national initiative to improve understanding of

multimedia and to promote the benefits of multimedia."

He says that IMA's goal is to provide hardware manufacturers with specific guidelines on what to build, developers with a clear framework for the design of applications, and users with a clear picture of what to buy.

"The market development initiative will help ensure that the promise of multimedia will be realized in all market segments," says Thackray.

An array of companies endorse IMA's initiatives, including 3M, Apple, Authorware, Commodore, IBM, Intel, Kodak, Microsoft, NCR, Philips, Pioneer, and Sony.

*This month's "In Practice" was edited and written by **Craig Steinburg** and **Catherine M. Petrini**. Send items of interest to "In Practice," Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.*

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