

Xerox Learning Systems Bought By Communications Franchise

Xerox Learning Systems will be acquired by The Times Mirror Company, a diversified communications firm based in Los Angeles, according to an agreement in principle announced by Times Mirror and Xerox Corporation. Scheduled to take effect this month, the proposed purchase brings together a worldwide leader in training for business and industry and the nation's fourth largest media company in revenues and the largest in net earnings.

"We are very excited about the acquisition; it will provide a synergy that offers XLS significant growth potential," says John Franco, president of XLS. "Times Mirror is a solid, prestigious firm with 101 years of experience in the communications field."

According to Franco, neither Times Mirror nor XLS plans to change day-to-day operations. Office locations, sales force and business policies will remain the same. "We will, of course, be changing our name, but that's about the only change that clients will notice," explains Franco.

XLS says it has trained over one million persons, and that its client roster boasts 407 of the nation's FORTUNE 500 companies. Stamford-based XLS has offices throughout the world.

Customer Training

Submitted by Patrick J. Germany, manager of training, The Western Company of North America, Fort Worth.

Most organizations view customer training as an expensive luxury, but the benefits of this approach are numerous, including increased revenue and profits. In a highly competitive market where the services and/or products provided are not

differentiated easily, customer seminars can give you an edge.

Here's how to begin:

■ Find out what customers' training needs are by interviewing and surveying. Also, identify problems your line management and sales managers have that can be solved by customer training.

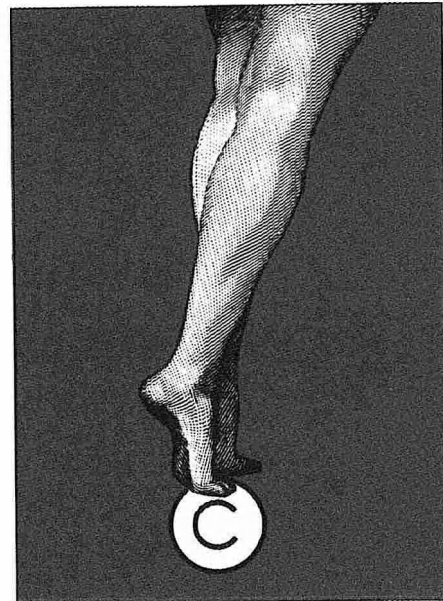
■ Start small! It is easier to sell management on a small pilot than to ask for approval on a 40-page catalog of seminars. Remember, you are about to approach the fountain from which all good things come: the organization's customers. Management will be extremely cautious.

■ Pick a curriculum you have been teaching for some time—one your instructors confidently conduct. This should be easy since the training needs of your customers will be very close to those of the organization's employees who provide the service or product purchased by the customer.

■ Next, begin your marketing effort both within and outside the organization. Line management and the sales force must understand the goals and objectives of the course. The best medium for selling seminars is your current sales force, but you will meet resistance. Even though sales personnel may be thoroughly familiar with the subject matter, they may be reluctant to sell these seminars. Mailouts describing your offering will bring many customers. Other good sources of students are telephone prospecting and one-on-one sales. You should be prepared to make sales calls. After all, if you, the training director, can't sell this service, who can?

■ Don't be afraid to charge for training. Your customers understand that it is expensive to provide a trainer, meeting room and meals. Price according to whatever the traffic will bear, but remember your goal is *increased revenue from existing products and services* and not the development of another line of business.

■ Make it a training experience. Customers have paid to learn, so teach them. Avoid overwhelming them with company propaganda. Your competitors have practices, approaches and theories. Tell the participants the pluses and minuses. A training program that turns into a sales promotion is the quickest way to lose sales.



Stepped On Any Copyrights Lately?

In a recent settlement, the Denver-based Tracom corporation successfully concluded a copyright infringement suit against International Learning, Inc. Tracom, a subsidiary of Reed Telepublishing, N.A., is a developer of psychological instruments and training programs.

Tracom brought the suit to protect its proprietary rights to key concepts and terminology used in its Social StyleSM training courses. In an out-of-court settlement, International Learning agreed to acknowledge properly Tracom's copyrights, to pay a monetary settlement and to refrain from using certain terminology identified with Tracom StyleSM products, especially its Social StyleSM Profile, which reports how an individual's behavior is viewed by others.

According to Tracom chief executive David Merrill, the company believes the lawsuit sets a precedent in copyright infringements of training materials: "Today, more than ever, it has become important to protect intellectual property from the moment an idea is conceived through publication and use of that idea.

"The training business is a cottage industry made up of many small entrepreneurial companies. The marketers of training materials have often assumed it is acceptable to use materials developed by other people without obtaining permission and

without properly referencing their source. However, if these materials are properly copyrighted and a person or organization uses these materials for commercial, money-making purposes, they are clearly in violation of the law."

"Our lawsuit was a precedent because our Social StyleSM Model has been reproduced by many organizations, most often with proper credits, financial agreements and our permission. Because of this widespread use, some assumptions have been made about the material being in the public domain. Our settlement demonstrated that it is not safe to assume that a training product is in the public domain just because it has been available for a long time and is well known."

Switch Rather Than Stew

Recent research by The Goodrich and Sherwood Company, New York, indicates that people who switch jobs during their career tend to be happier and do better than their counterparts who stay with the same company throughout their career.

According to Andrew Sherwood, president of the human resources consulting firm, approximately five out of every six people entering their 30s experience some form of mid-career crisis dealing with whether they have made the right career choice.

The manner in which they handle these decision points will often determine long-term success, failure and happiness, he says.

Sherwood offers these factors and questions to consider prior to making a job change decision:

- Assess where you are in your career and what is missing.
- What are your ideal job specifications?
- What additional skills, abilities and knowledge can you bring to a job?
- Your immediate and long-term monetary needs and desires.
- What geographic considerations do your extracurricular activities require?
- Where you'd ideally like to live.
- What kind of people you'd prefer to be associated with both on and off the job.
- What kind of work environment you prefer.
- What are your business ethics and special values?

■ Where you'd like to be in your career in five years.

If you're unsatisfied in your job, get on with your life and switch rather than stew.

The Limitations of Electronic Mail

Electronic mail may be viewed as a solution for communication problems in some corporate cultures, but, according to John A. Sargent, director of the Compugraphic Center for Effective Communication, "it is not a panacea."

Sargent's observation appears in a recently released report summarizing discussions on corporate culture and effective business communication led by center members Lynn Oppenheim and Glenn R. Butterson.

"Electronic mail was used in an attempt to combat the absolute growth in numbers" at one high-technology company that had grown from an entrepreneurial firm to a 65,000-employee enterprise, Sargent said. "The feeling at this company was that using electronic mail was more personal—more like the old days—than using the telephone or writing something on paper."

But the result, he said "was electronic mail overload. Electronic mailboxes were cluttered. Everyone thought they were communicating, but in fact, they were not."

Communication has been defined as "the act of the recipient," and in this situation, Sargent said, "there could be no guarantee that the messages were read or remembered, let alone acted upon."

In the report, center members agreed that a change in communication patterns could be used to help change a corporate culture, and that communication channels were more active in companies undergoing rapid change.

"Corporate culture or style is usually considered one of the key elements" in organizational functioning, Oppenheim, a senior associate at the Wharton Applied Research Center, said. "Communication or information flow is another. Therefore, one would expect that culture and communication would be aligned or consistent within an organization."

In large, successful organizations a number of factors were observed to influence information flow and methods of communication. These included the nature of the industry and the strategic environment, the focus of the communication itself, the formality or informality of other internal systems and the dominance (or lack of it) by top management.

For example, Oppenheim said, in an aggressive corporate culture characterized by constant change and innovation, communication flowed in all directions—upward, downward and laterally—by means of an active grapevine supplemented by numerous memos.

Meanwhile, in a top-management-dominated organization with a conservative corporate culture, she said, communication was based on a "need-to-know" rule, whereby management determined what information was transmitted to subordinates. Similarly, the upward flow of information from the work force to top management was filtered. In this organization, information was transmitted formally through newsletters and other public-relations-style programs.

Butterson, an associate in communication at the Harvard Business School, observed that though the relative importance of oral, written or electronic communication varies depending on corporate culture, effectiveness of any business communication could be measured according to whether it says as much as required but no more, and whether it is accurate, relevant and clear.

Do Quality Circles Pay?

Submitted by Efraim Turban, professor of decision systems, University of Southern California. (This study was conducted while the author was a visiting professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.)

According to a survey I recently conducted, most companies do not use systematic financial cost/benefit analysis of quality circle programs—the vast majority consider intangible benefits to be far more important. Ironically, the companies which do conduct such analyses report that investing in quality circles is more than justifiable.

Of the 412 companies that received the survey questionnaire, most were medium-to-large size organizations; most respondents were quality circle facilitators or coordinators. The following results were gleaned from 73 valid responses to the questionnaire:

■ *Quality circles are used primarily in manufacturing.* 83.6 percent of the respondents came from manufacturing concerns, but QCs are beginning to move into the service sector and non-profit sectors.

■ *Intangible QC benefits are rated highest.* Improving quality and productivity, while important to respondents, do not rate as high as such intangibles as improved communications, attitudes and morale.

■ *Cost/benefit ratios improve with time.* Companies that measured financial factors in QC programs reported that QC

programs saved, on the average, \$1,757 per circle member; the average cost per circle member per year is \$751; and benefits increase in the second and third year after implementation.

■ *Problem areas are limited.* Several areas were listed in the questionnaire as possible problem areas. Of these, only "middle management feels threatened" was recognized as somewhat of a problem. Areas such as "too expensive" and "unions feel threatened," were listed as significant by 10 percent or less of the participants.

Most users of QC are not emphasizing its monetary benefits. The tangible benefits of QC are so impressive that there is no need to justify financially their existence in most organizations. However, this situation may soon be

changed, as a recent study by Cole and Tachiki indicates.¹ Thus, there will be a need to conduct cost/benefit analysis. Such an analysis will show that monetary benefits can be extremely high (more than 100 percent annual return on investment on the average). A follow up of this survey indicated that there is no acceptable methodology to conduct such a cost/benefit analysis.

Additional information collected in this survey indicates general confidence in the method and strong support of its philosophical foundations.

Reference

1. Cole, R. E., & Tachiki, D. S. (1983, June). Japanese quality circles—Preliminary comparison. *The Quality Circle Journal*.

Enthusiasm Awareness Index

Submitted by Patricia Sanders, associate professor, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain.

Below are seven indices related to enthusiastic delivery skills. Assess your level of enthusiasm based on self-knowledge and past performance in

training situations. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. The aim of the index is to assess self-awareness of your level of enthusiasm

in training situations and not to evaluate your training effectiveness. Circle the appropriate level of enthusiasm on each index.

	Level of Enthusiasm						
	Low		Medium			High	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Eye Contact	Avoids eye contact; unfocused gaze or blank stare; dull or bored look		Moderately good eye contact; appearing interested and occasionally lighting up			Maintains excellent and constant eye contact while avoiding staring; shining, wide-open eyes	
2. Facial Expressions	Expressionless, deadpan or frowning; little smiling; closed lips		Smiles occasionally; agreeable looking; pleased; expression generally "fits" situation			Vibrant; demonstrative; exhibits many variations and frequent changes in expression; broad smile	
3. Gestures	Arms kept at sides or folded; rigid; infrequent use of arms		Maintains steady pace of appropriate gestures; pointed, occasionally sweeping movements			Quick and demonstrative movements; frequent and sweeping movements of hands, arms or head	
4. Body Movements	Stationary; standing or sitting; seldom moves from one spot		Moves freely, steadily but slowly; sometimes paces; uses frequent instructional motions			Large demonstrative body movements to emphasize vocal delivery; rapid, energetic and natural movements	
5. Word Selection	Few descriptors or adjectives; simple expressions; no use of metaphor or simile		Moderate use of descriptors, simile and metaphor, but tends to be repetitive			Highly descriptive; great variety; excellent and frequent use of simile and metaphor	
6. Vocal Delivery	Monotone; minimum inflection; poor articulation; little variation; reads from notes or book		Pleasant variations in pitch, tone, cadence and volume; good articulation; good integration of notes and instructional materials			Highly varied tone, pitch, volume and cadence; uplifting intonations; excellent articulation; variations from rapid, excited speech to a whisper; rarely uses notes or book	
7. Overall Energy Level	Lethargic; inactive; sluggish; appears tired or sleepy		Maintains an even and moderate level of energy; occasional bursts of energy			Exuberant; high and constant degree of vitality, drive and spirit throughout session; inspiring	

Scoring: In general, a score of 42-49 indicates a very high level of enthusiasm. You are "inspired by the gods."
 a score of 21-41 indicates moderate levels of enthusiasm. You are in "apprenticeship to the gods."
 a score of 7-20 indicates a very low level of enthusiasm. You are "inspired by Morpheus."

The Necessity of Support Systems

Submitted by Jo-El Henning, president of T.E.A.M., a company that develops and conducts training programs and support systems.

Training departments can increase skill transfer—and thus training effectiveness—by developing support systems for trainees. A support system is anything that actively encourages employees to try the new things they learned in training, back on the job.

Traditionally, trainers have sent participants back to the job with handouts or manuals and left them on their own to put the training to use. This is where failure begins, as participants get discouraged or confused in applying a technique or skill. Trainees may also lose track of the importance of the training, since no one is encouraging them to make use of it.

With a support system in place, employees are not left alone. They are assisted either directly by their manager, or indirectly through a variety of communications. The support must last for six to twelve months after formal training ends for maximum effectiveness. Some support systems that can increase training effectiveness are described here. Most can apply to either technical or management training.

Management involvement

Nothing can help increase skill transfer as well as support from the participant's manager. An employee who is encouraged by his or her supervisor to apply new skills to the job will be more likely to do so.

But encouragement alone is not enough to guarantee successful skill application. The training department must involve managers in understanding the purpose and value of the training so that they can help the trainee find suitable applications to his or her work. Specifically, the training department can:¹

- Distribute the course outline and training objectives to the trainees and their managers for them to review and discuss prior to training.
- Encourage managers to develop a specific work project or application with the trainee that can be tied to the

course content. This adds meaning to the training both before and after course completion.

- Provide managers with guidelines on how to evaluate and give feedback to the trainee as he or she attempts to apply new skills on the job.
- Provide managers with any forms, new procedures and new terminology that will be used in training and should be carried over to the job.
- For company-wide programs, conduct top-down training so that managers will have experienced the training themselves before sending their staffs.

Written communication

Developing written communication is another way of providing support to trainees. Communications remind trainees of the skills and concepts they learned during training and serve to demonstrate the company's continued interest in helping them to apply those skills to the job. Communications should begin three to four weeks after the formal training session ends and continue on a monthly basis for six to twelve months for maximum effectiveness.

The format can be a newsletter, special memos or distinctive index cards that can be filed. Information can be included in the company house organ for programs conducted company-wide. Whatever the medium, communications must be clear and concise enough to encourage the trainee to read them. Specific topics that trainees will find helpful include:

- how to apply a particular skill to the job;
- how to overcome problems when trying new methods;
- descriptions of the positive results others have achieved when using the skills taught in training;
- step-by-step directions, reminding trainees of how to proceed with a particular task, activity or application;
- new, but related, information that wasn't discussed during formal training.

Communication that requires employee involvement can be especially effective. Short multiple-choice games and true/false quizzes can focus attention very quickly on key training concepts and build the trainee's confidence in his or her own knowledge and abilities.

Communications can also be a stand-alone method of training employees

when formal classroom training is impractical. The newsletter, special memo or distinctive cards can serve as a vehicle to train employees in time management, office procedures and telephone skills.

Manuals

Training manuals traditionally have been written for use during the formal classroom training. Adopting pull-out sections, charts to hang up, better reference tabs and a guide that has answers to the most commonly asked questions aids trainees on the job and increases the value of the manual as a support tool.

Job aids

Job aids are easy-to-use reference materials that help the employee perform on the job. Checklists, step-by-step directions, forms, catalogs and decision trees can all be used to speed skill transfer and reduce the employee's need to memorize details or ask for help from someone more experienced.

Job aids can be used as a stand-alone method of training. They can help supervisors who do on-the-job training, can substitute for training when procedures are changed and serve as initial guides for new hires until they are enrolled in a formal training program.

Follow-up meetings

Follow-up meetings with trainee groups keep track of the success of skill transfer and increase the likelihood that transfer will occur. Trainees, meeting together, can share firsthand successes and problems and learn from one another as they discuss the practical applications of the training. Trainees are also more likely to attempt to practice their new skills if they know that they will be asked to report back their progress to the group. And participants who may have had trouble understanding a concept presented in the initial training session may suddenly have it come to light as they hear another trainee discussing an application of it.

Reference

1. Georgenson, D. (1982, October). The problem of transfer calls for partnership. *Training & Development Journal*.

Increase Your Chances for Publication

Have you ever wondered why some authors seem to get published regularly in magazines and journals, while your manuscripts keep getting rejected? The reason might not be the quality of your ideas, but the care with which you package and market your manuscripts. For example, did you know that many professional editors won't even read single-spaced manuscripts, much less consider their content? That many publications require query letters before submission?

All periodicals have some author's guidelines, and following them can get your work on the top of what is always a large stack.

But few libraries and even fewer individuals can afford to have access to the majority of education journals; potential contributors frequently are

unaware of all their options, much less individual journal requirements. Fortunately, a new publication has been created to alleviate the problem: *Journal Instructions to Authors: A Compilation of Manuscript Guidelines from Education Periodicals*. An invaluable source for authors tired of wasting their time and money, this guide includes information on manuscript preparation, style requirements and editorial policy, as well as names and addresses. Journals that have no formal guidelines and accept manuscripts "as submitted" (a brave lot, indeed!) are identified, as are journals that are entirely staff written or publish "invited" contributions only.

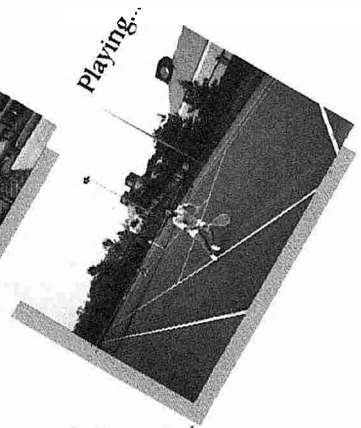
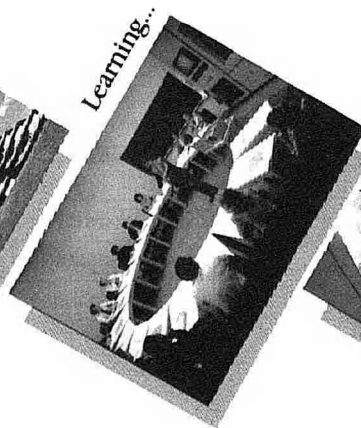
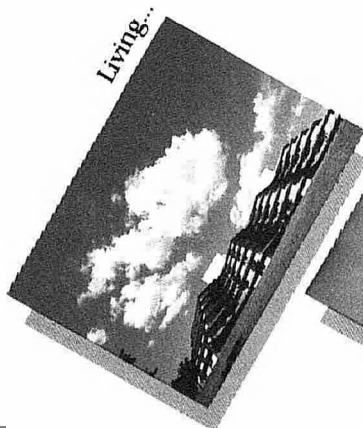
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