

# FYI for your information

## Reach Out and Train Someone

Long-distance learning is an increasingly popular alternative for organizations and individuals alike, or so it appears from the recent spate of announcements of television-, video- and computer teleconference-based adult education and training programs.

Some programs are designed specifically for work-place participation and concentrate on technical skills training, business and management development. More are intended for at-home learning; these usually are offered in cooperation with a college or university as part of an accredited degree program.

The American Open University and the New York Institute of Technology are collaborating on a nationwide, off-campus college degree program that uses a wide selection of technology-based instructional delivery systems. Students can participate by accessing special locally relayed television channels; by playing videocassettes of lessons on their home or work television; or by linking their home or work computer to a central mainframe system via modem. Tuition includes access to a low-cost, WATS-like telephone line linking each student with an instructor/facilitator.

Business sciences, behavioral sciences and general studies are the initial program offerings.

Ohio University and the International University Consortium for Telecommunications in Learning offer "The Adult Years: Continuity and Change," a television-assisted, interdisciplinary course for off-campus adults. The content draws upon the fields of psychology, sociology, counseling, psychobiology, history and literature, and it is worth six credits at IUC member institutions.

The eight-topic course (topics include adult romance and sexuality, multi-generational families and relationships and images of adulthood) will be available in Spring 1985.



## The Human Movement

What do Bubbleman and Bubblewoman, Stick Figure, Silhouette Figure and Sausage Woman have to say to instructional designers?

Plenty, if choreographers and computer scientists are successful in using this cast of blank-faced characters to create a universal, computer-animated system for recording human movement.

Scores of unsatisfactory earlier attempts to record dance movement range from the "excruciatingly thorough" hand-recorded Labanotation (highly respected but so complex that less than one percent of dance professionals are fluent) to videotaping, unacceptable because it records a unique performance, full of nuance and interpretation, rather than an "objective" sequence of movement.

Training designers have captured some three-dimensional technical procedures on the computer screen, but they have tended to focus on manipulating machine parts, not recreating the sophisticated, often subtle human movements necessary to perform the work successfully. If computer choreographers can transfer their three-dimensional motion analysis of live movement onto the screen, capturing real-life speed and fluidity and correct perspective, trainers can use these techniques to improve the quality of computer-animated skills training.

For a closer look at experiments in motion notation, see the May issue of *Science 82* magazine.

## Settling on Training

Recent settlements of two major employment discrimination suits have made provisions for employee education and training a major part of the agreement.

General Motors Corporation and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reached an accord on a decade-old claim by establishing goals for hiring and promoting women and members of minority groups. The settlement featured a \$15 million educational package that provides scholarships to affected GM employees and their families at four-year and two-year colleges and technical schools, according to *The Washington Post*.

In addition to the scholarships, GM will spend millions of dollars on a "smorgasbord" of training programs within the company, including \$8.9 million for 250 women and minority group members in white collar jobs, \$2.2 million on executive development, \$3 million on career development for clerical staff and \$2 million to train women for supervisory jobs.

The Associated Press and the EEOC ended more than four years of litigation when AP agreed to provide some \$2 million in back wages and other relief to improve job opportunities for women and members of minority groups. A \$50,000 training fund to prepare women for promotional opportunities was part of the package as reported in *Resource*, a publication of the American Society for Personnel Administration.

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"Office automation equipment is neutral. Whether it brings with it more freedom or less, autonomy, more stress or higher quality of work life is largely a matter of people."

—Rosabeth Moss Kanter  
Yale University

In announcing the findings of a national survey on office automation sponsored by Honeywell, Inc.

## Boom Times for Software Developers

The market for business-oriented, off-the-shelf, microcomputer-based training programs will increase 256 percent in 1984 for total sales of \$35 million, according to TALMIS, a market research and consulting firm. They say by 1987 sales of these products will reach \$88 million.

TALMIS reports that the most popular uses for computer-based training are computer-related; 50 percent of organizations providing computer literacy training do so using computer-based materials. Software developed by CDEX, ATI and Comprehensive are among the more ubiquitous, especially programs that train people how to use a personal computer, word processing system or special database.

## New Source for Employee Assistance Counselors

Human resource departments that are responsible for employee assistance programs should consider hiring as counselors graduates of rehabilitation services training programs. The unique blend of training they receive—balancing the interests of employee and employer in their counseling techniques—makes rehabilitation counselors highly qualified, if untraditional, candidates for employee assistance positions.

A typical academic program for rehab counseling students covers general counseling; psycho-social and medical characteristics of both disabled and "normal" work populations; vocational assessment techniques; case management; and occupational analysis and placement. Students also receive training in employer concerns; job analysis and work site modifications; regulations and work place considerations affecting disabled persons; and career and vocational development.

Rehabilitation counselors have primarily been employed by public vocational rehabilitation agencies or private rehabilitation firms—precisely those service providers that are contracted to do organizations' employee assistance work.

—Submitted by Ingrid Green  
Rehabilitation Counseling Student  
University of South Carolina  
Columbia, S.C.

## The New Wave in Sound Tracks

They may never reach number one on the hit parade, but the computer-generated melodies distributed by Omnimusic are a big success with corporate media producers.

Among the 26 albums in Omnimusic's current catalog are *The Scientific Mind* ("light industrial moods with an electronic feel"); *Country Moods* ("a selection of rural atmosphere backgrounds"); and *Fireball* ("rock, jazz and disco").

The Port Washington, N.Y. company's 17 composers also create sound tracks to producers' specifications, reports *Media Profiles, The Audio Visual Marketing Newsletter*. A catalog and sample "Superquiet" disc are available by writing Omnimusic, 52 Main Street, Port Washington, NY 11050.

## Helping Employees Learn Standard English

InterNorth, an Omaha-based diversified energy company, has implemented a program to help all its employees learn standard English. The program is targeted to members of regional or ethnic groups who have never made standard English their own.

Peggy O'Dea Tighe, InterNorth's director of human resource development, believes industry should shed its double standard and invite non-standard English-speaking employees to develop the language skills that will bring them into the corporate mainstream. "Participants' original language or style is not condemned. An alternative is offered, and the employee's repertoire is broadened. The employee has a choice."

The organization's interest in this area began in 1981, when a well-educated training coordinator, who is a minority group member, approached her supervisor for help with the language of a training module. The module required a formal presentation of some complex material, and the training coordinator's weakness in speaking sustained, standard English became a problem for the first time.

The organization made a commitment to help this employee and all its employees who wanted to learn standard English. Supervisors and managers identified 12 employees whose English was fluent but not

standard. A U.S. government language trainer was hired to train and consult with InterNorth. The director of human resource development and a training specialist were minimally trained via a programmed instruction course in linguistics, and they received a week's training from the consultant.

During that week, the instructors met with the participants' supervisors to assess needs and to clarify each supervisor's commitment to the learning process. Negotiating a helping contract with the employee and participating in a class session were part of the expected commitment.

Employees attended class sessions for two and one-half hours on Tuesdays and Fridays for the next six weeks. There were seven black, three white and two Vietnamese employees in the first course.

Participants pronounce word lists, practice difficult sounds, read, tell stories and use every spoken word as a learning tool. Learning to listen increases their sensitivity to the English language and its standard usage. The greatest contributing factor to individual achievement is the nurturing environment.

Employees' improved self-image carries into improved job performance. In the first training group alone, one participant achieved his first job movement in seven years, and another participant was promoted.

A videotape was made toward the end of the first session which has been used as a documentary in supervisory meetings. Videotaping has been used during each course to monitor classroom progress, and participants are encouraged to use audio tapes at home.

Like any other training program, participants benefit to the degree to which they are involved. The second time the course was offered, two participants retained a hostile, uncooperative attitude. These employees' supervisors did not attend the orientation meeting or a class session; this indicates that the supervisory relationship may be a key factor to success.

—Submitted by Peggy A. Tighe,  
Director, Human Resource  
Development  
InterNorth, Inc.  
Omaha, Nebraska

## The Envelope, Please

The National Council on Measurement in Education will present an award for an outstanding example of the application of educational measurement technology to a specific problem.

Examples of problems include, but are not limited to, the selection or classification of students, measuring a hard-to-measure trait, evaluating an educational program or product and integrating testing and learning. Selection criteria are the quality and innovativeness of the application or the positive effect of the application on practice.

To be eligible for this award, the application must have taken place first during 1981, 1982 or 1983. Four copies of a three- to five-page statement describing the technology, the application area and the products or results of the effort should be sent to Jason Millman, Stone Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853. The deadline for submission is February 3, 1984.

The award will be presented at the council's annual meeting in New Orleans.



## Still Searching

Tom Peters and Zenger Miller, Inc., a designer of training systems for business, have announced the introduction of "Toward Excellence," an action program designed to help senior management implement the concepts that *In Search of Excellence* co-author Peters found characteristic of the U.S.'s best-run companies.

The book has sold more copies during the time it has been in print than any book in history.

"Toward Excellence" is "an intensive executive planning session that guides participants to discover and commit themselves to actions that will put their companies on the path to outstanding performance." It is the only such training program Peters has helped develop.

In researching his book, Peters learned that there were no gimmicks, or structure that set the excellent companies apart. Instead he found that "the real bottom line of excellence is the thousand concrete, minute-to-minute actions by everyone in an organization that keep an excellent company on course."

What distinguishes the excellent companies, Peters says, is that they are brilliant in a few basic areas. They show an overwhelming respect for their customers; provide a continuous array of innovative products and services; and, above all, gain the commitment, ingenuity and energy of their people.

"Toward Excellence" provides management teams with a framework for making their own commitment to these basics. It focuses on five excellence fundamentals that consistently appear in the successful companies: taking innovative action; getting back in touch; existing for customers; fostering individual commitment; and instilling values.

Zenger Miller has designed "Toward Excellence" as a three-step process of understanding key concepts, evaluating and planning. In the first step, participants use workbooks dealing with each subject and see a videotaped presentation of Tom Peters outlining the qualities found in excellent companies.

In step two, the management team members evaluate their own performance and the relative importance they attach to the five fundamentals. They discuss how the concepts can be applied in the future and how they can be applied immediately in their organization. In the final step, the team is taken through a guided process of data gathering, alternative building and decision making that concludes with the production of personal and group action plans.

A minimum time for the sessions is three days. The seminars can be led by the organization's senior executive, an outside consultant or someone from the company's training department.

Peters says management teams

will come away from the sessions with "a frank and pragmatic assessment of their organizations' performance on the five fundamentals and a solid, nuts-and-bolts plan for action that will launch many of the thousands of behaviors appropriate for their company.

The base price for licensing "Toward Excellence" for use in an organization is \$13,500. The per-participant price for material is \$85.00.



## Managing Innovation

Innovation can be a predictable, manageable process that has little to do with luck or guesswork.

Innovator-consultant C. Joshua Abend, in remarks before The White House Conference on Productivity, said that managing innovation is a discipline that, when tied to specific organizational objectives, reduces wasted motion, frustration and failure within the R&D and engineering professions, areas we depend on heavily to increase technological productivity.

Abend said the discipline requires managing the professional work climate; facilitating the use of creative skills such as synectics, the De Bono type of lateral thinking and other "brain" techniques; and facilitating the work team structure.

He said these techniques are well beyond the theoretical stage and that they are practiced successfully in many U.S. companies. They do not depend on Japanese work or motivation styles.

## Correction

The article "The Trainer's New Cloze," that appeared in November's FYI column, was submitted by Drake Beil, President, Trans-Pacific Management Associates, Inc., Honolulu, Hawaii. The *Journal* apologizes for omitting this attribution.



## Etiquette Training Aims at Boosting Profits

To help increase growth and profitability, members of Florists Transworld Delivery (FTD), the worldwide network of 20,000 independently owned floral shops, worked with Sandy Corp., a Southfield, Michigan training and communications firm to develop a training program aimed at improving staff productivity and increasing long-term sales.

"New marketing and management skills seemed to be the missing link for increasing profits of the association's florists," Kent Johnson, director of education for FTD, said. "Florists employ small staffs—an average of four to seven employees each, including salespeople and delivery personnel. Our florists needed specialized direction and on-location training materials that would be fun and easy to use and that would not require time away from the shop for meetings and seminars."

Johnson said FTD's goal was to familiarize employees with a series of practical skills: basic selling and delivery skills, phone skills and finally, prospecting skills. "We needed to help them perfect phone selling skills since more than 50 percent of our sales are made by phone. We also had to provide training in etiquette since our staffs are frequently asked questions in that area. Customers are anxious about purchasing flowers because often they don't see the product. They trust the florist to carry out an important social function for

them. Our staffs need to know how to communicate with customers at emotional times."

Besides communicating effectively with the customer, FTD's program had to help employees sell more and boost profits. The training program that resulted, FTD's "Pathway to Profits," began by establishing small focus groups of selected FTD florists and field staff members. The groups discussed realistic requirements for floral staffs so that "Pathway to Profits" could be geared to the needs of a typical floral operation.

Self-study workbooks with step-by-step instructions were developed. The training modules included realistic, often humorous dialogues, self-assessment checklists and audiotapes of "slice-of-life" success stories.

"The FTD learning program has only been available since last December, but we've received a lot of 'happiness reports' about the impact it's had on employees," Johnson said.

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## Staff Reductions Up; Job Changes Down

More employees in the U.S. and Canada were let go because of staff reductions in 1982, while fewer employees voluntarily left their jobs to take other positions than in past years, according to a survey conducted by the Administrative Management Society.

The AMS Office Turnover Survey, which included 2,274 organizations employing 372,482 people, found the overall turnover rate for 1982 was 15 percent, down slightly from the 17 percent reported in the last biennial survey conducted in the 1980. However, of the companies surveyed in 1982, 15 percent of terminations were due to staff reductions compared to four percent in 1980 survey. Also, while the main reason most people left their jobs in both 1982 and 1980 was to take another job, in 1982, 11 percent fewer left for another job than in 1980, when the rate was 33 percent.

The Western part of the U.S., including Colorado and the states westward, had the highest turnover rate in 1982: 16 percent. That figure was down from 23 percent in 1980. The East, East Central and Southern regions all had 1982 turnover rates of 15 percent, down from 16 percent in 1980.

At 13 percent, the West Central's 1982 turnover rate was the lowest in the country, down from 18 percent in 1980.

In Canada, the overall turnover rate was 14 percent in 1982 compared to 17 percent in 1980.

In 1982, as in the last survey, more employees left companies employing one to 25, and the least number left companies of more than 5,000 employees.

Employees with five or fewer years of service accounted for 73 percent of office turnover in 1982, down a few percentage points from 1980. While the turnover rate for hourly employees in 1982 was, at 18 percent, not quite double the rate for salaried employees, in the past three surveys the rate for nonexempt was more than double that for exempt employees.

The AMS Office Turnover Survey is available for \$15 by writing to "Turnover Survey," Administrative Management Society, 2360 Maryland Rd., Willow Grove, PA 19090.

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## Consultants' Network DATAFILE

The DATAFILE is a new resources-locating service introduced by the Consultants' Network. Its purpose is to make available the kind of information that users of outside services, programs or products say is necessary for making reliable selection decisions.

The DATAFILE contains detailed listings provided by consultants and consulting organizations serving the human resource development field and is the outgrowth of the resources directories and referral activities in which the Consultants' Network has been involved for the past 10 years. Operation began with an invitation to consultants to submit the descriptive and supporting data required to create both their individual files and the master matrix, the "menu" to what's stored in the DATAFILE. The matrix is available free on request from The Consultants' Network, 57 West 89 St., New York, NY 10024.

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*Send all items of interest for FYI to Elizabeth Lean, Training and Development Journal, Suite 305, 600 Maryland Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20024.*