

Why a Training System?

*economies and benefits
of the
systems approach*

H. Irwin Stutt

Over the years a system of training has grown up. Like "Topsy," it "just grew." The courses of study and the different levels of the trades were established by experience and knowledge of the job. There was not always a defined separation of the responsibilities of the different trades or trade levels. In some trades all the theory material was taught to the basic tradesman and he progressed to higher trade qualification through application on the job. His initial formal training was long and arduous. A relatively large portion of his initial employment was spent on training. This lengthy training also made him better qualified for employment in other industries.

Course content received little or no change over some years. Personnel returning from field experience added material which they had found useful on the job. It was rare to find that material had been removed from a course — course planners had taken the attitude that "it must be necessary as it has always been taught."

Into this milieu, the bold facts of a reduction in manpower and the pressure of forced economics were introduced. Some means of reducing expenditures and maintaining a high quality of trained personnel for the non-reduced commitments had to be developed. From this requirement, the training system came into being.

System Divisions

The training system has three large divisions: (1) the analysis of the job requirement and the production of the training objectives, (2) the preparation of the course and the materials to conduct the course and (3) the evaluation and validation of the previous two divisions. How does the training system meet the requirements of economy and efficiency?

Re-evaluation of the training

took place and the analysis of each task determined valid objectives. These objectives were assigned to specific trade levels thus giving a definitive description to each tradesman. The objectives were defined, wherever possible, in terms of the performance which must be achieved on the job. Further definition included the conditions under which these performances were conducted and the acceptable standards required to meet the needs of the operational commitments of the unit. These objectives gave definition to the aims of the trainers within each school.

Knowledge of the objectives that were required for successful completion of the course gave the student specific aims for his study. It gave his future employer the opportunity to place him in the job for which he had been trained. It established an entrance repertoire of skills and knowledge on which to build future training courses. Satisfaction of being able to carry out his assigned duties developed a more satisfied employee, hence a happier employer-employee relationship. The objectives of the course also pointed out, by omission, what had not been taught in this trade.

Changes in Objectives

As new equipment is introduced or the commitments of that trade level are altered, course objectives could be removed or added to maintain a valid course to reflect these changes. The completion of the objectives serves as a measure of achievement for the trainee, the school and the employer. The objective of the training system is to economize and remain effective. Has this been accomplished?

In some schools the re-evaluation of their course of instruction and the analysis of the tasks of the trade have produced a shortened

course at the basic level. This saving can be utilized by placing the graduate on the job sooner, and indicates a financial economy. In cases where the introduction of new personnel is restricted to specific times, as production cycles, it was found that more practice in the use of the acquired skills and knowledge produced a better-trained individual. This reduced the on-job training required when he reported to his unit. In both cases economies were achieved.

Control and Evaluate

The stating of training objectives eliminated the non-relevant material from the course. The material now became more meaningful and learning was achieved more effectively. The graduate became a more effective addition to his employer's organization. Is this achieved in the training system?

To control and evaluate the results of a system it must be carefully monitored. The instruction must cover what has been determined by the analysis and the stating of objectives. The means or methods of instruction must be constantly assessed to ensure that the best methods and best training aids are employed. This requires a supervisor who is well versed in learning theory, methodology and multi-media audio-visual training aids. The other area of control is a validation of the program by constant feedback from the employing unit. This ensures that the objectives are being kept up to date with the changing of equipment and the changing role of the graduate.

We all work within a system and live within a system. It is essential that our training be conducted within a system which has a sound basis and will not just develop at random. The rate of increase of training technology is so great that the innovations must

be carefully studied and introduced to maintain our proficiency in the training of personnel, and retaining an effective modern organization.

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