

A CODE OF STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PEOPLE

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Business and industrial training has developed into a considerable educational force in our nation. Untold numbers of our adult citizens are influenced by it yearly in acquiring greater skill and understanding on their jobs. With a growing body of specialists in this field, there is need for some statement of standards to serve as a guide for them and for students and employers interested in the work.

Training of this kind has most of the aspects of a profession. It is intellectually based, has responsibility towards those it serves, and is made up of an educationally communicable technique with practical applications. One aspect of traditional professionalism is lacking and that is control of membership by government or by action of the professional organization.

It would be unreasonable and unnecessary for any attempt to be made to dictate to organizations either who should do their training or how it should be done. Nor is this possible in business and industry for any professions except as prescribed by law.

The formulation of certain standards of preparation and conduct for training people can be helpful, however, by providing employers with a basis for selection and a guide for judging performance. It can similarly be valuable for members of the training profession and for those planning to enter it in understanding the role they are expected to play.

In this spirit, the following code of standards is offered under three main headings: Standards of Preparation, Standards of Employment, and Standards of Conduct.

Standards of Preparation

Professional training people should be prepared by education, inclination and experience to give competent service in this field. Since the training profession has grown rapidly since 1940 many men and women have found themselves carrying on training activities who were not prepared specifically for this assignment. Their experience and accomplishments have given us a good basis for determining the preparation needed for work of this kind.

In addition, the training function itself has been in process of evolution during this period. The concept of training as a "schoolroom process" that relieves management of the responsibility for improving the attitudes, skills and knowledges of its people has changed to a recognition of training as staff assistance to the line in doing its own job of improving its people.

This evolution has been most evident, perhaps, in training for attitude change and least evident in training for improvement of knowledges and skills. Educational qualifications for a director of training properly begin with a requirement for a college degree in some field that contributes directly to proficiency in guiding and educating others.

A degree in the areas of education, speech, personnel, journalism, or law are in the direction indicated for training work. Important related skills and knowledges are found in such courses and curriculums as uses of audio-visual aids, psychology, economics, methods of research and measurement, industrial engineering, and labor relations.

Further values will be found in work on communications, graphic expression, sociology, group dynamics, logic and other programs of study that may be involved in the broad range of training activities.

WORK experience may properly be recognized in lieu of some part of formal preparation. It is always a valuable supplement to the educational background. Experiences that will give the trainer breadth and depth of under-

standing in his work include employment as an hourly worker, service as a teacher or conference leader, and a period of time as a supervisor.

One element of preparation involves self analysis or determination of real interest and aptitude for the profession. The individual who does not find satisfaction in guiding and influencing people does himself and his organization no service by accepting a training assignment. Training is a "calling" in the full sense of the word.

ALL the personal qualities that are desirable for any professional person and leader will be important for the trainer. Particularly important are the qualities of patience, sociability, emotional stability, and sensitivity to people and situations. Mental alertness and the ability to verbalize readily are taken for granted as necessary in this particular field.

Standards of Employment

Training assignments in an organization cover a broad range. They include such job titles as training assistant, instructor, program writer, conference leader, staff consultant on training, and training supervisor or director. Depending on the size of the organization, definite lines of progress should be laid down. Many firms have found work in the training field to be an excellent preparation for assignment to posts of responsibility in the line organization.

The trainer is entitled to professional staff classification. His beginning salary should be equivalent to that of business

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administration graduates who are employed by the organization. This will vary, undoubtedly, with age and experience. In the position of training director, his salary should be comparable to that of heads of other major personnel services.

As a foundation for his job the new trainer should have thorough induction and orientation to the organization and the work it does. He should be assured of continuing appraisal of his performance to give him a basis for estimating his progress and plan for the future.

The professional training person will seek employment in a professional manner and without undue self advertising. He will avoid asking for posts already filled by qualified training people. He will provide on request a clear and truthful record of his qualifications and experience and will offer no references or recommendations for which he does not have prior consent.

The trainer will give and expect due notice before making any change in employment.

Standards of Conduct:

Conducts any necessary criticism of the work of other training people with careful regard for the good name of the training profession.

Does not commercialize on his affiliation with any professional group or organization.

Accepts no compensation of any kind from producers or suppliers of training

aids, materials or services for purchasing their products.

Will not knowingly use or reproduce training materials prepared by others in the profession without obtaining permission and giving credit.

Maintains active memberships in professional organizations such as the American Society of Training Directors and its regional and local groups.

Instructs and encourages new and prospective members of the training profession.

Assists in the improvement of industrial and business training by conference participation, writing and speaking on the methods and results of his own work.

Demonstrates complete but intelligent loyalty to his employer during his period of service.

Conducts himself in accord with any reasonable standards of behavior required by the organization for its representatives before employees and the public.

Maintains a professional level of service by contributing of his energies and abilities on other than a routine basis.

Continues his professional growth by study, research, observation trips and attendance at professional meetings.

Engages in no outside employment without approval of his employer and in none that affects his work adversely or impairs his professional status.

Gives fair and just treatment and full measure of his abilities to all partici-

pants in courses or conferences under his direction regardless of the participant's social or economic status, political preference or racial or religious characteristics.

Respects the confidence of those he contacts as trainer or consultant and does not use such confidences to advantage himself.

During a training activity scrupulously avoids any remarks or references that will undermine the influence and authority of those to whom trainees report in the organization.

Recognizes the limits of his staff relationship and accepts line authority for final decisions in training matters; at the same time, recognizes his responsibility to give line people the benefit of his professional knowledge.

At no time uses his position, with its opportunities for influencing the opinions of others, to undermine the government of his country.

Respects the community in which he is employed and takes an active part in its affairs as befits an individual of his training and abilities.

Brainstorming: Ideator or Opiate?

Artist-designer George Samerjan raises serious questions about the value of group thinking in the advertising field and Lee H. Bristol, Jr., Advertising Manager of the Bristol-Myers Products and a trustee of the Creative Education Foundation makes a rebuttal in a serious debate as carried in the November 16, 1956 issue of *Printer's Ink*. Training Directors will be interested in what each has to say.

MR. TRAINER . . . WHAT NEXT?

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There are many important problems that beg for practical applications of this knowledge in industry today. Consider the organizational and human relations problems that may arise out of an organization where the president is an idealist. He admires men of principle, he has idealistic goals for his company and feels that it should contribute significantly to the advancement of mankind, it should be a company with a heart, it should be a symbol of right thinking and right doing. He likes to see his management and employees alike participating in community and church and civic activities.

BUT in the same organization, the vice president of production is a realist. He judges men by the production and profit they turn in, regardless of their principles. He is impatient with do-gooders and is a champion of rugged individualism.

Down the line, reporting to the vice president of production, is the plant manager who is a pragmatist. He likes to use a group or committee approach to running the factory, even though it may take a little longer to get things done than by direct order. He is primarily concerned with maintaining harmony in the plant as the method of ultimately getting the best production and performance.

Does it seem likely that we have here a basis for a number of conflicts of personalities, clashes over policies, and con-