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## Issues

### Tell Us What You Think

Last month's "Four by Four" explored the programs used by various companies to retrain employees for other jobs before the employees are let go. It was a difficult article for our editor to write, for the simple fact that such programs were difficult to locate.

Our research turned up one company that provides retraining and outplacement services in conjunction with a state-run project, and one that operates a joint program with the employee union. But for many dislocated workers, the only help comes from government programs such as JTPA, and from professional associations in some industries.

That doesn't mean that companies don't have such programs; just that we haven't found them. Does your organization have one? How have you structured it? In what ways have you benefited from it? How successful has it been for helping laid-off employees to make a new start?

We'd like to hear about your program. Send your views to "Issues," *Training & Development Journal*, 1630 Duke Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.

### That Plane Won't Fly

In your letter, "Gaining the Competitive Edge Through Participation and Involvement" ("Issues," January 1989), you decry the readers' dearth of submissions to the "Issues" section of the *Journal* and conclude (amazingly) that "HRD people talk a lot about diversity, participation, teamwork, innovation, leadership, and effective communication, but

when it comes to their own profession . . . they won't apply those concepts."

Balderdash. We apply those concepts constantly. We just don't follow it up with a letter to you.

I once heard of a personnel department that chartered an airplane so the employees could recreate in Hawaii. When not enough employees signed up to make the trip viable, the department twisted arms and "sold the benefit" until the employees got the recreation they deserved—or else! That is what Bill Oncken calls "the mastery of technique over purpose."

You have created the "Issues" vehicle for our betterment. It may be in a temporary slump, but if an insufficient number of us signs up for the trip over the long haul, don't beat us by saying "they won't apply those concepts." It would simply mean that the airplane you've selected had insufficient demand.

Of course, the thought has occurred to me that the real reason for going public with your inflammatory memo was simply to agitate readers so that they would reach for their pens to let you know they were at least alive out there. But I doubt you'd be that scheming, because it certainly wouldn't work on me.

Take hope.

Bob Eddy

*Kulicke and Soffa Industries, Inc.*  
*Willow Grove, Pennsylvania*

### Lessons in Leadership

(The following is in response to January's "Tell Us What You Think" concerning leadership programs and a *Wall Street Journal* editorial criticizing them.)

In response to Jack Falvey's article, the real argument is the answer to

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## Issues

the question, "Are leaders born or made?" Most enlightened people understand that leadership can be studied, learned, and practiced. If that premise is accepted, then the next question is: "What is the best method for studying, learning, and practicing leadership?" Mr. Falvey's suggestion is that mentoring is all that is really necessary. Relying only on mentoring, however, is fraught with dangers. How would he go about identifying "top junior talent" and "top unit leaders"?

If Mr. Falvey is really serious about his recommendation, and if he truly believes that leadership training is phony and run by hucksters, he should enroll in the Leadership Development Program at the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina. If he can objectively voice the same criticisms after making the minimum investment of five days and \$4,000 to learn about real leadership development, then the cause of us who labor with the art and science of developing leaders is in great jeopardy. Mr. Falvey should see that there aren't many great role models in the ranks of "top unit leaders."

James E. Shelton  
Ames Rubber Corporation  
Hamburg, New Jersey

## Time Versus Performance

(The following is in response to December's "Tell Us What You Think" concerning the time it takes to develop one day of instruction.)

Given the scenario, your question seems to place more emphasis on numbers than on producing performance results.

The scenario seems to occur all too often in the training environment of today's businesses, sad to say. Concern for number of hours,

days of instruction, and number of employees trained seems to be a valued objective in some training departments. Those numbers, in some way, are supposed to translate into how effective and valuable training is to business.

As performance interventionists, however, it would be in our own self-interest to identify how training can be a value-added center for business instead of the traditional cost-generating center. The shift from "How many?" "How long?" and "What kinds?" to "What is the performance problem?" "Is this the correct audience?" and "Is training the best solution?" should be made before the training developer replies, "No problem, the cat's in the bag." The length of time it takes to develop training that shouldn't have been developed in the first place or that doesn't add to the bottom line seems to be time wasted.

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"Issues" is compiled and edited by Eric R. Blume. Send your viewpoints to Issues, Training & Development Journal, 1630 Duke Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.