

# Professional Experience For Growth

*some thoughts behind the theme of ASTD's 1974 National Conference*

**Edward E. Scannell**

"How was the speaker?"  
"Well, first of all he read his speech."  
"Oh, that's bad."  
"Secondly, he read it poorly."  
"That's worse."  
"Thirdly, it wasn't worth reading!"

Doubtless there is not a conference-goer who has not heard or uttered a similar exchange in discussing speakers or topics at various programs.

While the anecdote may be humorous, its implications are far too serious to be taken lightly. Whether the scene be an in-plant program—or an ASTD National Conference, nothing can make or break a successful session as much as the selected topics and speakers.

The maxim, "If the learner hasn't learned, the teacher hasn't taught," is well-known and accepted. Too often, however, the learner or conference goer is content to "chalk that one off" as a bad experience. But if we truly believe that learning is indeed an internal process and that all learning is "change in behavior resulting from experience," then every ASTD member attending ASTD's 30th annual National Conference in San Francisco, March 31-April 4, can make that a real "Professional Experience for Growth."

But, as any experienced trainer will attest, far too many learners or conferees fail to realize that the ultimate responsibility for learning is theirs and theirs alone. This is not to say, of course, that the role of the teacher or trainer is to be taken lightly. (On the contrary, it would be just short of heresy for any ASTD member to suggest such foolishness!)

## Conference Planning

To illustrate the emphasis

placed on obtaining qualified speakers for the 1974 ASTD National Conference, read through the criteria suggested by Dick Beil, conference design chairman, San Antonio, Texas.

1. The talk presented must be the talk described and agreed to by the speaker for the Conference.

2. The speaker must be knowledgeable and experienced in the use of training aids requested.

3. The presentation must be designed to give the person attending the Conference a base of information from which a program can be developed and presented in that person's company with a minimum of change and effort.

4. The presentation should be designed to fall under the theme of "The San Francisco Experience—A Professional Experience." This means that the presentation itself must be an example of a professional presentation.

The entire ASTD National Conference Design Committee has felt its charge a serious and important one.

## Role Of The Conferee

Being a good conferee means more than physically filling the time and space at the proper hour in the proper place. The simple requirements of common courtesy suggest that the conferee be on time for the session, listen attentively, participate intelligently and sit through the entire session. To many, it would be extremely rude to even think of varying from that procedure.

But, there are numerous times when it takes real patience—even courage—to follow all four rules. There have been too many times when a session has "bombed," or a speaker apparently forgot to read the program describing his own session and is not even close to the announced topic. Along with a host of other unfortunate

circumstances that may plague even seemingly well-planned programs, they *do* invite an early exit. Certainly to suggest continued attendance at these situations would be naive advice.

### Your Money's Worth

There is no question that the total cost of attending the 1974 ASTD National Conference is a relatively high one. For some, the total costs of registration, transportation, food and lodging make for a very expensive figure. To transform that cost, then, to an investment requires that every attendee make a sincere and conscientious effort to do his part to help make the Conference a true "Professional Experience for Growth."

Conference planners have tried to provide programming for the novice, the intermediate and the advanced trainer. Certainly, the general sessions, divisional meetings and special interest groups will bring new and interesting ideas. The Training Equipment and Services Exposition promises an informative and exciting look at new training aids, materials and resources. The chance to meet and greet trainers from across the country is always a stimulating by-product. Often the sharing of ideas over coffee or cocktails may bring just the solution you've been hunting for to a pesky problem.

Whatever the case, the National Conference should provide an ideal forum for all of us to strengthen ourselves and our profession. Coupled with the natural lure of San Francisco, all of these items could well make for the best ASTD National Conference ever.

### Evaluation

Granted, the real test of evaluation of the Conference comes much later when the new ideas, training tips and related items are really put to work for you.

But it's also important to secure some immediate feedback on the overall appraisal of the sessions. For that reason, a new evaluation card has been devised to provide that kind of response.



As shown, the card is a simple, yet workable instrument. Your opinions and comments are valuable in post-Conference evaluation and are also weighed heavily for future Conference planning.

**Conclusion**

By definition, a conference is for sharing. For sharing ideas, information, friendship or a dozen other things, the 1974 ASTD National Conference provides the setting for an outstanding opportunity for growth. So plan on

enjoying the "San Francisco Experience." With your active involvement, it will definitely be a "Professional Experience for Growth."

**USE ASTD**

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conducted more than 350 specialized sales and management development programs for retailing, manufacturing, governmental, trade and professional organizations. His writings include "Train the Trainer," a training manual for the U. S. Dept. of Labor, Employment Security Division, 1967, and numerous articles and training manuals in the fields of communication, management development, creativity, small business management, etc. He is a member of the American Society for Training and Development, serving on the 1974 National Conference Design Committee, and the National Association for Management Education.

**EVALUATION CARD**

SESSION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
<b>1. SPEAKER</b>					
A. How well did the speaker cover his or her subject?					
B. How was the speaker's manner (skill) of presentation?					
C. How well did the speaker use his or her audio/visual equipment?					
<b>2. TOPIC</b>					
A. Of what value was the topic to you?					
B. Of what interest was the topic to you?					
<b>3. How well did the program announcement describe what happened in the session?</b>					
<b>4. How many years do you have in the training field?</b>	0-2	2-5	5-10	over 10	

If you left the session early please check this box  and state the reason on the back of this card.