

Advisory Committees on Training – Quo Vadis?

Charles C. Easterly

Does management have *all* the answers? It certainly does not have *all* the answers; however, good management will know where to go, or what to do, to get answers. Good management will base its decisions on facts and information supplied to it from various sources. No one individual can supply all the facts and information management requires, and must have, in order to make the right decisions. The future welfare of the organization will, very likely, be determined by the decisions management makes today.

Advisory Committees can, in many cases, supply management with the type of information it is seeking. The Advisory Committees must be well chosen. The more accurate, reliable,

and up-to-date information the individual members of the committee have, other things being equal, the better it should be able to function. Education and experience are important factors. The right, positive kind of attitude, of each member is most important. Each can and does stimulate the thinking of the other members. When an impasse is reached they will go outside the committee and seek further for information that is required.

Several committees may be established to work independently on the same problem, in which case end results are compared. In other cases each committee will work alone on one facet of the problem but all facets must be complete, otherwise the problem

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is only partially solved for management.

If the employee development and career development programs of an organization need a sustained purpose and direction to fulfill the requirements of an expanding mission assignment and an ever growing organization, then an "Advisory Committee on Training" is needed to provide this necessary purpose and direction. The committee may either be responsible for policy making decisions or responsible for making its best recommendations to management in matters relating to training. The committee may be composed of regular members and alternates and may either meet regularly or at call of the chairman.

Committee Functions

To assist management in the development and coordination of essential training for its employees the Advisory Committee on Training should have the following functions:

1. Provide a focal point for the exchange of information and ideas concerning internal training needs.
2. Establish both short and long range goals, and establish the framework within which to work.
3. Recommend areas where new or additional training facilities and individual courses would serve to increase the effectiveness and productivity of both employees and organizational segments.
4. Provide a sounding board for consideration of training policy and other training proposals.
5. Recommend method or methods of evaluating training (in progress, at the end, or at some later date—or any combination of the three).

Goals

Goals, both short and long range, must be established if employees are

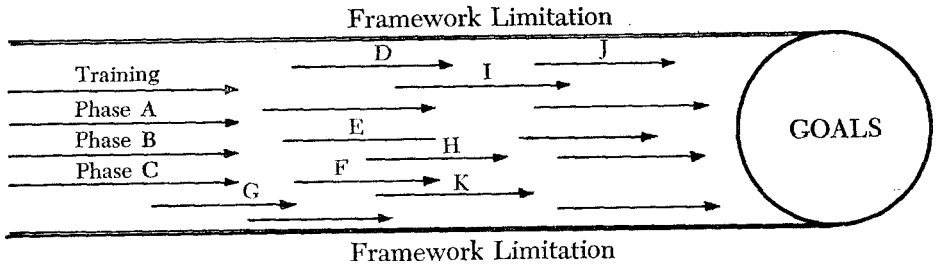
to be trained to meet the needs of tomorrow (short range) and the day after tomorrow (long range). If training is left to chance, without adequate planning, many employees may find they are not qualified to do the jobs of tomorrow. What are the goals of the organization five years from now? Ten years from now? How will the mission and function of the organization tomorrow compare with what they are today? What kinds of jobs today will be obsolete tomorrow? What will be the future jobs in varying degrees of importance that are non-existent today? What planned, scheduled, programmed training will be needed over "X" number of years in order to qualify an employee to perform at his maximum at that time? Can we get a maximum utilization of his skills and training?

Yes! Goals are important, and the committee selected to establish these goals has a real challenge. Any committee that can develop and put in written form the real goals of the organization will be doing that organization a distinguished service. It takes big men, men with foresight, men with courage, to work on this most important committee.

Operating Framework

A second committee, closely related to the committee on goals and almost as important, should develop the framework within which to operate. "What is the framework within which we operate?" (Include responsibilities as well as limitations in the definition of "framework".) (Define "we" as management and training representatives responsible for the training of the employees—and responsible ultimately for the destiny of the organization. The goals must be established before completed action can be taken on the framework.

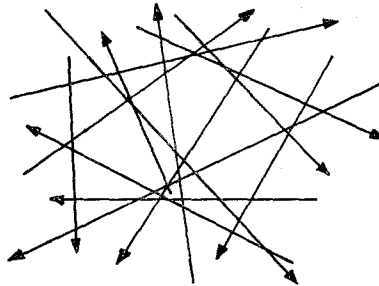
A diagram to illustrate might make the picture clear.



————> Represents training phases, courses, sequences, etc. which help the individual, individuals, and the organization move toward its goal.

Without the goals and the framework the picture would look more like the following illustration, with many

little unrelated goals and without a concerted effort—each going blindly on its own way.

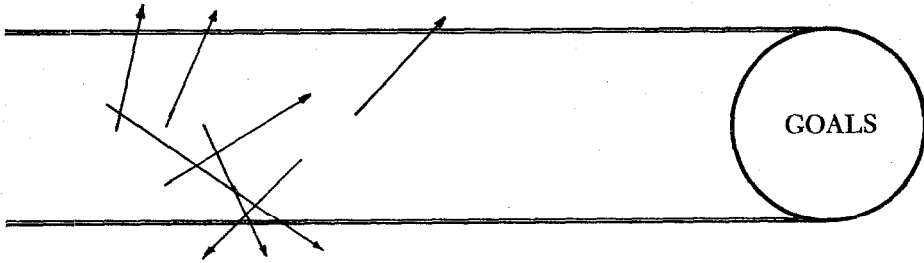


Program Supervision

A third committee might be assigned the following topic, "How can we, as managers and training representatives, best supervise and monitor the preparation of the new fiscal year training program?" This could be divided into two elements, one for managers and one for training directors. Depending upon the creativity and eagerness of the committee, all kinds of interesting patterns could and should be developed. Unique and different techniques would no doubt be developed.

"What steps are to be taken now to assure that the best and most meaningful training program for the new year be prepared and carried out to fruition?"—would be a topic for another committee. The term year could mean fiscal year, calendar year or it could mean any period of time assigned to it, e.g., six months—15 months—2½ years, etc. Employee development, career development and organizational development should all be considered and kept within the framework, limitations and goals, as established. The reason for this last statement is to preclude a situation best

illustrated by the following diagram taking place.



—————> represents phases of training not directed toward the common goal. The main goal would be lost sight of by frustrating, unplanned training.

Resources

Still another worthwhile topic for a committee would be, "What are the written training resources and references available to aid in identifying and evaluating the following:

- The purpose of training.
- The declaration of policy.
- Discovering and determining training needs.
- Sources of training.
- Forms, records, nominating procedures, reports.
- Better employee utilization.
- Evaluation of training-follow up.
- Motivation.

There are or could be certain documents essential in the overall planning. The development of these documents might be assigned to a committee. These documents are: A "Master Training Plan" for each major division, a "Personal Data Statement" for each employee, a "Personal Data Change Notice," and an "Employee's Statement of Career Objective."

A tricky assignment would be, "How can these various committees become more effective?" In other words, "How can committees be motivated to do their best work?" An award might be in order by management to the com-

mittee making the most outstanding contribution. This committee could motivate and then evaluate the work of the various committees. The award might be a cash award with a certificate of accomplishment, an increase in pay (step increase), a three-day holiday, extra points for advancement, etc. This committee might want to consider, as a small part, programs such as Toastmaster's Club, management seminars, social activities, motivational techniques, etc., in its thinking and planning.

Information Systems

One committee that should not be overlooked should answer the question, "How can the ADP System best serve management in the training function?" The "output" requirements will determine the "input" requirements. Management of today has the advantage of having a tremendous potential of additional "brains" available at its disposal in the computer. Management that uses it today to its fullest capacity in the training of its employees will be the management that survives in the competitive field of management of tomorrow. A skills bank in the computer would be a valuable asset to management.

The chairmen selected should be those most qualified to motivate committees to their greatest achievement. They should be the "dynamic pushers" in the organization. Each chairman should be consulted as to the membership of his committee. Resource material, if necessary, should be made available. Some committees may desire to develop an outline of procedures and review the steps in problem solving. Finally, thought must be given as to the format of the written report to management.

Benefits

Each committee has a big task but not an impossible one to perform. Fi-

nally, if the committees have performed their work well, management will have excellent guidelines to be formulated into policy. Action for progress and movement ahead towards the goals will be rewarding to both the members and the organization as a whole. Guesswork will have been eliminated because everything will have been thought through, planned, and programmed. Action will be positive and dynamic. Morale will be high, incentives in abundance and rewards great.

If the above outline is followed, then the question of "Quo Vadis?" will be answered.

Arizona Technical Education

All six junior colleges in Arizona will be offering Technical Education programs. Four new programs are now in the planning stages at Yavapai College, Prescott; Central Arizona College, Casa Grande; Pima County Community College, Tucson; and Scottsdale Community College, Scottsdale. The new Technology Building

at Mesa Community College will be completed by April, 1968; approximately 30,000 square feet of floor space at Mesa will include Technical, Police Science, and Home Economics. The new Vocational-Technical Facility at Cochise College is scheduled for completion in October 1968. (U. S. Office of Education.)

duPont Psychiatrist on Screening

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who discover things like nylon . . . Dr. Frederick Dersheimer, retired psychiatrist, E. I. duPont de Nemours & Company.

