

Dollars and Sense

The phone rang. He introduced himself as training director of a well-known manufacturing concern. He'd been told to get in touch with me by a mutual friend.

"A firm of industrial engineers has been brought in to survey our place," he said, "and I've been asked to justify my program in dollars and cents. Do you think it can be done, and if so how?" He sounded worried.

Why do training directors scare so easily when this question pops up, I thought as I said,

"How well are you prepared to answer the question?"

"I don't have any answer. I've always assumed that training couldn't be measured in dollars and cents; that the results were intangible and so intertwined with the results of other forces that there was no way of determining even the degree of our success in the total picture."

"The success of your company's advertising program can't be justified wholly on a dollars and cents basis."

"True, but our Advertising Department does test the results of their campaigns. Can I do the same?"

"Why not? What records have you kept?"

There was a pause. "Well," he said, "I always send a written monthly report to my superior. In it I list the number and kind of requests for training, the departments from which they come, the classes we run, the texts used, the number of employees who start a course and how many were graduated and how department heads feel about the results."

"Good. Why not get an opinion from the department heads as to how much your training program has been worth to them in dollars and cents? Let them provide the answer. Then, if you've done a good job and have helped them out of some tough situations, you'll get all the backing you need."

"Say, that's worth trying. Can you suggest anything I might do in the future to keep the company so sold on training that this question of dollars and cents will never come up?"

"It does us all good to have to justify our jobs in terms of dollars once in a while. Reporting regularly to your superior in writing as you've been doing is good practice. In addition to lots of meaningful statistics, include at least one case history each time. The anecdotal angle will often make your work stick in the boss's mind better than pages of figures."

"Yes, I can do that."

"Are you a member of a training directors' society?"

"No."

"You should be. Join one and take part in its activities. Go in with the idea of seeing how much you can contribute to it aims and not simply how much you can get out of it. You'll be surprised at the results. Invite your boss to some of the meetings and let him see a group of professional training directors in action. He'll probably be impressed to learn how many other companies think training is worthwhile. This will make your job easier.

"Be sure to keep the editor of your company paper or magazine supplied

with stories, pictures and articles dealing with your training program. Classes starting, groups graduating, honors earned, company brass giving talks or handing out diplomas—all make news which helps sell your program to both workers and management.

“Make vocational and educational guidance a part of your program. Know something of the adult education programs and libraries in your community, and be ready to advise all who seek aid.

“Lastly, stay within your budget. Often times the training director can do a lot to justify his program in dollars and cents by showing how little it costs

for big returns, even though all the returns can't be measured by the dollars.”

“You've given me something to think about,” said the training director. “Do you think I've much to worry about with my present problem?”

“Not if you've done a good job,” I said. “Industrial engineers are more ready to suggest additional training than less, providing it fills a need and is well done.”

“Thanks for your advice and your time,” he said. “I feel a lot better. Goodbye.”

“Goodbye.”

We hung up our respective phones.

(How would you have answered this phone call? We will run signed letters from those who believe they would have given additional or better advice in this situation. Editor.)

P-H Books for Your Training Program

★ COUNSELING EMPLOYEES by Bowler and Dawson

A must for every supervisor and foreman, this book presents the tested, successful methods used by many companies in the field.

Specific procedures to insure solution of everyday problems are included. To help the trainee grasp the important points, questions are presented at the end of each chapter.

247 pages

★ TESTED TRAINING TECHNIQUES by Haas & Ewing

In crisp, clear style the authors present those training techniques which have been used successfully in a wide variety of training situations.

They explain the principles of teaching skills, and methods of developing them. They include

directions for handling training through panels, institutes, forums, conferences, lectures, individual instruction, researches, discussions and demonstrations. Forthcoming

★ SPEAKING FOR ALL OCCASIONS by Becker

This book stresses the practical situations the industrial and technical worker, foreman and salesman, supervisor executive will encounter. It tells you how to master any likely occasion calling for a forceful, effective speech.

It minimizes the theoretical side of this lively subject and emphasizes the practical material needed by the man on the job. Lists of words to aid in pronunciation are included. Cartoon-type drawings add extra interest to the presentation.

169 pages, Convenient 5½" x 8¾" size

Write Today for Your FREE Copy of the Catalog of Technical, Industrial and Vocational Books

PRENTICE - HALL INC.

70 Fifth Avenue

New York 11, N. Y.