

# SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

## "PORTRAIT" OF A TRAINING EXECUTIVE

BY RALPH YOUNG & PAUL CUMMINGS

A common question asked of the *Journal* and ASTD's Member Inquiry Service (MIS) is, "What qualifications are organizations seeking in prospective training executives?"

We asked Ralph Young (president) and Paul Cummings (consulting director — training and development) at Amansco, Inc., an executive search firm located in Pittsburgh, Pa., to look through their files and attempt to develop a "portrait" of this sought-after person.

Breaking their research into three categories — large, medium and small organizations — and stressing the point that there is no such thing as the "typical" or "average" training executive, Amansco, Inc. supplied us with the following cross section.

### Under 10,000 Employees

The first category would encompass organizations employing under 10,000 employees. This type of organization may be completely centralized having all of its employees in one geographical location. Likewise, it could have a relatively small headquarters location in a large urban area with many subdivisions locally, regionally or nationally. The "typical" training executive at this type of organization would have the following qualifications:

- **Education:** At least a Bachelor's degree from an accredited col-

lege.

- **Experience:** A minimum of two to five years of training and development experience. General-



Paul Cummings (left) & Ralph Young ly speaking, the candidate would probably not be required to have specific product background experience, but rather some direct training responsibilities. Typically, the client is searching for a candidate who wants to "move up" from the title of training supervisor to training manager or training director. The candidate could be a "seasoned" subordinate and staff member of a large corporate training and development division.

- **Product Background:** In this category, this qualification may be of lesser importance, as the client is probably looking for a younger less-experienced professional.

- **Age:** This will vary, but may range from candidates who are 25 years old and upward.

- **Knowledge:** With two to five

years of experience the candidate is more of a generalist than a specialist. Clients may want other areas of exposure, such as equal employment, recruiting, or some other function of personnel work. In effect this means that the training executive will split areas of responsibilities and will not function 100 per cent of the time in the training area. However, we have seen cases where a client may want a specialist, such as an OD or MD candidate only to administer a specific area of training and development.

- **Professionalism:** A candidate in this category may be in the entry-level stages of identifying him or herself with a local chapter of the ASTD. Likewise, the candidate could be attending a large university working toward an advanced degree.

- **Salary:** This candidate may have no staff at all, and possibly shares a secretary with some other member of the staff. The candidate will probably have a limited budget and will have to justify training expenditures to his superior. This candidate will probably conduct all training sessions and be flexible enough to function in many areas, such as front-line supervisory training, sales training, administering college tuition-refund programs, and many other areas. Typically, the candidate's salary range would be \$20-\$25,000 per year.

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• *Other Classifications:* This is the typical "one-man band" training executive since he or she will be exposed to many areas. It represents a great challenge in that the individual may move upward into other personnel responsibilities, or seek higher-paying training responsibilities in other companies in the future.

• *Probable Titles:* Training and Recruiting; manager, Training and Development; Training Coordinator; and OD specialist.

#### **10,000 + Employees**

The second category would include organizations employing 10,000 or more employees with several operating plants or locations basically within the United States. The "typical" training executive working for this type of organization would possess the following qualifications:

• *Education:* A minimum of a Bachelor's degree and preferably a Master's or M.B.A. degree.

• *Experience:* A minimum of five years of training and development experience. Depending on the client, the candidate may or may not need direct or allied training experience to meet the client's needs.

• *Product Background:* Depending upon the client's specifications, the candidate may or may not need specific background knowledge to fill the job. Obviously, the more specialized the client's business, the greater the need for candidates who possess the same or allied backgrounds. Health care, retail and banking positions may require similar background knowledge, although this is not necessarily a hard and fast rule.

• *Age:* The successful candidate could be 30 years old and up, although this qualification is not the most important.

• *Knowledge:* The candidate would have to demonstrate his or her ability to keep abreast of the current "state of the art." In ef-

fect, this category may well include more of a specialist's development, MBO or middle-management training experience.

• *Professionalism:* The more outside interests and activities this candidate can offer to a client, the greater would be his or her opportunities. Such activities would include active participation in local and national ASTD meetings, conferences, offices held, etc.

• *Salary:* This individual may have a staff of two to eight subordinate individuals, all located in a staff headquarters, with subordinate training supervisors located nationally in plants or other subdivisions of the organization. This individual would probably be responsible for training and development programs within the confines of the United States. The salary range would probably be \$25 - 30,000 per year, plus the usual benefits package.

• *Other Classifications:* The candidate would tend to be more of a specialist rather than a generalist, but if his or her span of control and responsibility were nationwide or regional, a large portion of time would be spent in the administrative end of the business.

• *Probable Titles:* Director, Training and Development; manager, Training and Development; and other variations.

#### **Large Corporations**

The final category would include large corporations that make up the Fortune 500 list. A so-called "typical" training executive in this category would possess the following qualifications:

• *Education:* A Master's or Ph.D. degree in one of the behavioral-science disciplines, such as psychology or sociology. A doctorate degree in education may also be acceptable.

• *Experience:* A minimum of 10 years of corporate progressive upward mobility in the area of training and development. A broad

base of actual work experience might well include everything from apprenticeship training to executive development.

• *Product Background:* This may or may not have any bearing on potential employment. Obviously, a former training manager in the banking industry would be considered more favorably for a vice president's position with a large banking institution in New York City than perhaps a training manager in the steel, retail or health-care fields.

• *Age:* The successful candidate would probably be in his or her late 30s to late 40s, although this qualification is not cast in concrete.

• *Knowledge:* The candidate would most likely have to demonstrate that he or she has kept up with the "state of the art," and is flexible enough to apply new concepts and training expertise to the needs of his or her new employer.

• *Professionalism:* This individual would have to be a decision-maker, one who has successfully managed large budgets, has been active in both local and national organizations such as ASTD, and, most important of all, able to demonstrate successful and effective training programs that produce results.

• *Salary:* This individual would probably have a staff of five to 10 subordinates, and would function both nationally and internationally. The candidate would be responsible for a budget in excess of \$100,000, with a salary of \$30-40,000 per year, plus a very lucrative benefits package.

• *Other Classifications:* This candidate would be considered more of a generalist than a specialist in terms of his or her background and experience.

• *Probable Titles:* Vice president, Human Resources; corporate director, Training and Development; vice president, Personnel Development.