

Pharmaceutical Sales Reps Witness Product Performance

In a joint venture of the Medical College of Pennsylvania and Medical Education Systems, Inc., pharmaceutical salespeople are learning firsthand how the drugs they sell to physicians affect patients.

Called MCPPEP (Medical College of Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Education Programs), the medical education program for drug company representatives is the first that brings together the expertise of a leading academic medical center and an international education and management development firm, according to Maurice C. Clifford, M.D., the college's president.

"Pharmaceutical sales personnel have a tremendous responsibility to the public," explains Dr. Gerald J. Kelliher, college liaison to the program and a professor of pharmacology and associate professor of medicine. "The information they communicate to physicians about their company's products is frequently the deciding factor in which drug is prescribed for a patient."

Most pharmaceutical firms have internal training programs for field representatives, and they may occasionally call upon an M.D. or Ph.D.

to lecture. The MCPPEP programs are custom designed to meet the specific needs of a company and provide hands-on learning, says Kelliher.

As part of their MCPPEP training, pharmaceutical sales representatives accompany medical college house staff on hospital rounds. During clinical pathology and microbiology labs, the salespeople examine the infective agents their remedies are targeted to treat. They question infectious disease experts about why doctors select certain drugs over others.

In another phase of the program, hospital patients who have classic symptoms of diseases such as hypertension and rheumatoid arthritis talk to the pharmaceutical sales representatives, describing their condition and how the company's drug affects them. The salespeople spend time in the emergency room to observe how drugs are chosen in crisis situations.

The sales reps' new technical knowledge is supported by training in communicating confidently and effectively with physicians. Formerly, most pharmaceutical representatives could only recite "canned detail," the information printed on a drug's package. Those who have attended the MCPPEP program can converse more competently about the field of medicine that is the drug's context.

MCPPEP is an expansion of a program the Medical College of Pennsylvania began nearly a decade ago at the request of Smith, Kline and French, the Philadelphia-based pharmaceutical firm. The six-day course is repeated up to 18 times a year and has trained more than 400 salespeople. In 1982, the program expanded to include Hoechst-Roussel, a German pharmaceutical company.

MCPPEP will be sold to pharmaceutical companies across the United States, and it will be implemented at affiliated hospitals in the greater Philadelphia area and in academic medical centers throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe.

The American work force is growing older, and demographics tell us that the proportion of post-middle age workers will continue to increase during the coming decades. Many trainers have already experienced the phenomenon firsthand, as the flow of young trainees slows to a trickle and older workers take more and more seats in training sessions.

Here are nine tips to keep in mind when you train older workers.

1. Determine the educational level of the older worker, and adjust your training design accordingly. An older worker with less than a high school education generally will be motivated to learn by concrete, real-life examples. He or she will want immediate results. Teach a new skill, let the employee practice it and then apply it immediately in the training program.

The more educated older worker has a higher tolerance for postponing application until back on the job.

2. Older workers will perform well in areas of learning that address work experience. Design training programs using old skills and old ways to teach the new skills and new ways. Build upon the skills the older worker feels comfortable using.

3. Provide opportunities for older workers to help you plan, design and evaluate training programs. You may pick up some hints that will help your program be accepted more readily by the senior workers.

4. Select techniques that tap the creativity of older workers. For example, use peer teaching, small group work, lots of discussion and questions and answers.

5. Older workers' intelligence increases with age, while the speed at which they learn decreases. It may take longer to teach an older worker a new skill. Prepare for this by allowing more time for practice and skill acquisition.

6. Those older workers with high intellectual endowment and those who keep mentally active tend to show the least mental decline with age. Who are the workers you are to train? Have they been given on-the-job opportunities to keep mentally ac-

tive? The answer will have an impact on their knowledge acquisition.

7. Attitude, motivation, self-concept and responsibility have at least as much effect as age on the older worker's ability to learn. In designing training, include activities that stimulate and motivate through involvement, such as case studies and problem analysis.

8. Allow for the older worker's uniqueness. Provide various ways to learn a new skill or task: verbal instruction, role modeling, opportunities for practice.

9. Older workers show little loss and sometimes show gains in tests of vocabulary, general information, verbal reasoning, experience and judgment. Use your older trainees' judgment and reasoning abilities to help summarize the training program and to help sell the training program to current and future attendees.

In summary, when preparing a training program that will have older workers in attendance, keep in mind individual differences and the increase in those differences as a person ages. Recognize that older workers who are healthy and who use their skills and abilities will perform at a higher level than those who do not. Remember that although older workers may decline in some tasks (e.g., time and speed activities), they may excel in tasks in which they use already learned skills.

*Submitted by Edward E. Jones, Jr.,
President
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Wakefield, Rhode Island*

“Find a market that has plenty of neophytes—the personal computer market is ideal—and produce a series of instructional programs. Sell season-long, noncancelable advertising spots up front, and get the series on a regular cable schedule. You'll only need to hire a camera, some TV-spot veterans, a director and a producer.”

Fred Pfaff

*in "How to Make Your
New Media Millions,"*

Adweek, December 5, 1983

Reinforce Training Via the Transfer of Learning Meeting

Trainers constantly quiz themselves with, “Did the trainees really learn it, and if they did, will they really use it?”

Post-program critiques are useful for providing immediate feedback on the program's content and format. Follow-up questionnaires sent to participants, their managers or their subordinates provide some insight into behavior changes, and the questionnaires serve as reminders that can generate renewed efforts toward applying the learning. These questionnaires are normally distributed one, two or three months after the training session.

But what about one, two or three years after the program? Have the learnings become established behaviors, or has time washed them away, like a New Year's resolution?

To determine, and reinforce, the long-term lasting power of training, try conducting transfer of learning meetings. The objectives are:

- To bring together the manager of a department (or of a subgroup of a large department) with the employees who attended a particular training program during the last one to three years.

- To share information with the manager and give reinforcement to the employees by discussing applications, successes and failures of learning since the program.

- To provide feedback to the manager concerning departmental policies, practices and climate that promote or hinder the application of learning.

- To focus on specific problem issues and gain commitment to solving them.

- To provide a structure and process to support transfer of learning that can be used without the trainer's involvement.

To accomplish these objectives, take the following steps to prepare for the transfer of learning meeting:

- Select programs with desired behaviors that are easy to identify and discuss, e.g., coaching, performance appraisal, management style and effective work relationships.

- Contact a manager with at least four employees who have attended the



targeted program. (When more than 10 employees have attended, select a representative group to attend the meeting.)

- Discuss the meeting's objectives, and allow the manager to add objectives.

- Gain the manager's commitment to the meeting's purposes. Underline the importance of openness, nondefensiveness and active listening.

- If the manager has not attended the program, provide materials for review. Ask the manager to select three or four content areas from the program for the basis of discussion during the meeting.

- Decide on a meeting time and date suitable to the department's schedule and priorities. Allow two hours for the meeting.

- Provide a draft invitation memo that will be sent to the program participants from the manager.

- Contact the manager the day before the meeting to confirm arrangements and expectations for the meeting.

All those involved should now be ready to participate in the transfer of learning meeting. The following are roles assumed by the meeting's participants:

- **Trainer**—Explain his or her interest in the meeting and clarify the meeting process. Act as a process consultant during the meeting.

- **Manager**—Share his or her interest in the meeting and focus on the content to be covered. Ask questions for clarification and emphasize openness and candor.

- **Participant employees**—Share successes and failures in applying the program's learning. React with specific examples concerning the department's climate that promote or hinder the application and transfer of learning.

When specific problems are iden-

tified, the manager or trainer should set action steps and follow-up procedures for solutions.

No longer than one day after the meeting, review the highlights of the meeting with the manager. Ask:

- What are the manager's reactions to the meeting?
- Was there a useful exchange of information concerning the program content?
- Did the manager learn anything new about his or her employees?
- What specific problems and issues does the manager intend to pursue?
- How will the manager follow up with the employees concerning the outcome of the transfer of learning meeting?

Offer to continue to assist the manager.

*Submitted by Don M. Dawson
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Brown and Williamson Tobacco,
Corporate Office
Louisville, Kentucky*

Bibliography

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- Kelly, H.B. A primer on transfer of training. *Training & Development Journal*, November 1982, 102-106.

“The minute a lot of judgment is necessary for a job, then it's unlikely that the robot can move into that position. Work that is changeable, varied, creative and unstructured will always be done by humans—and this is the kind of work that is most satisfying. Why not use the robot to do the undesirable or tedious jobs and free people to do more enjoyable tasks?”

*Joseph Engelberger
President, Unimation, Inc., and
the “father of robotics”
Interviewed in U.S. News and World
Report, December 5, 1983*

Issues Management Takes Off

More than 1,200 major corporations and associations now employ issues managers, according to T. Yancey Crane, publisher of the twice-monthly newsletter *Corporate Public Issues and Their Management*. He called issues management “perhaps the most rapidly growing management profession” and “the coalescence of once separate functions: public relations, government relations, strategic planning and risk management.”

The December 15 issue of *Corporate Public Issues* encapsules 55 major issues management events of 1983, creating a profile of a vital, advancing and potentially very powerful field. Among the events noted:

- Resources for the Future, Inc., a unit of the Ford Foundation, identified and analyzed eight high-priority natural resource issues: public lands, nonfuel minerals, endangered species, marine fisheries, global climate, water supplies, agricultural lands and private forests.

- IBM became the first major company to establish a corporate board for management of profit and policy.

- The George Washington University appointed an issues and policy planning board “to create a broad vision of what the school might become” and an issues action plan to make the vision a reality.

- The Associated Press distributed nationwide a feature about issues management as a career choice for women.

- The American Society of Mechanical Engineers created its Board of Issue Management to identify, research and recommend responses to “technical issues which should have ASME action.”

- SmithKline-Beckman, Alcan, Bank of America, Unionmutual and The American Society of Association Executives each published issue action programs that demonstrated their integration of issues management into total institutional strategy.

For a free copy of the *Corporate Public Issues* report, write to CPI c/o Issue Action Publications, 105 Long Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06903.

“In the advertising world, positioning is everything. Expectations determine how people view and receive a product or service. When you position training properly, participants see how training relates to the organization's objectives. You give them a reason for participating in the training.”
*Derwin Fox, Vice President,
Development and Consulting
Services
Xerox Learning Systems
in “Integrating Training Into the
Organization.” XCHANGE
newsletter no. 18*

New Name, Rank and Serial Number

The *OE Communique* has been renamed the *Army Organizational Effectiveness Journal*. The change reflects the new focus of the Army's organizational effectiveness (OE) program, according to CPT Charles D. Marashian, editor of the quarterly.

The *Army Organizational Effectiveness Journal* provides state-of-the-art information on the application of the OE process throughout the Army. The publication is a forum for the exchange of innovations and lessons learned in the use of systems integration techniques, and it fosters the development of research and evaluation methods for determining the contribution of systems integration to operational readiness.

The new focus of the OE/systems integration program addresses large organizational and systemic issues, and thus the journal seeks articles that discuss:

- OE implementations at division/installation level and higher;
- force integration issues;
- the management of change in large, complex organizations;
- the management and processing of information;
- the integration of complex systems;
- high-level strategic planning;
- management information systems;
- large organizational issues.

Direct inquiries to *Army Organizational Effectiveness Journal*, U.S. Army Organizational Effectiveness Center and School, Fort Ord, CA 93941.



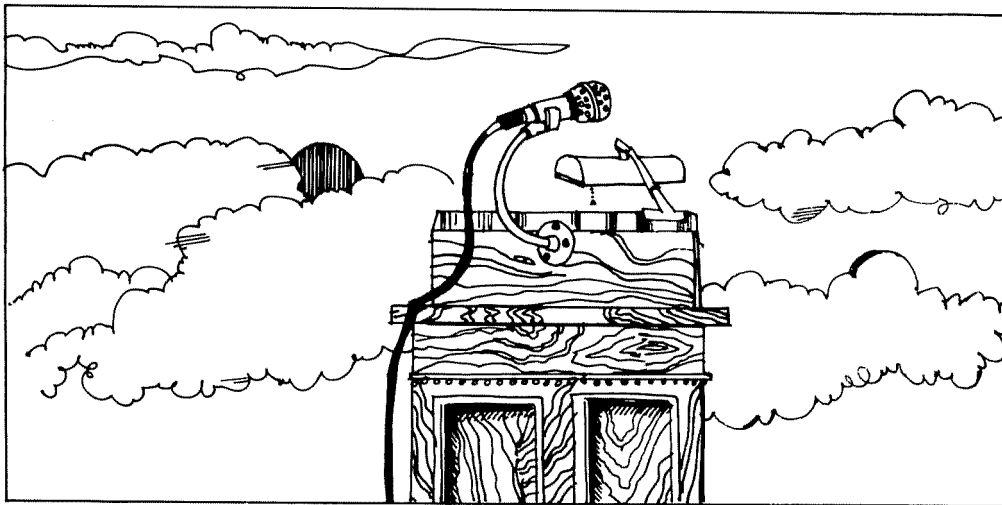
Can Computer Games Close the Gender Gap?

An experiment has shown that playing computer games may improve the player's spatial skills, leading educational psychologists to speculate that they've hit upon the solution to a longstanding puzzle: the fact that, after puberty, women consistently score lower than men on tests

measuring spatial skills.

The January/February issue of *Science 84* reported on a Harvard School of Education experiment in which 58 students took a spatial skills test, with the expected results: The women scored lower. Then some participants spent five hours playing two arcade video games, *Targ* and *Battle Zone*. When the entire group took another test, the scores of the men who played video games did not change significantly, but the women players scored dramatically better; in fact, they scored as well as the men.

While there's optimism that this discovery may help women develop the spatial skills they need to compete in science and engineering careers, many caution that the huge gender gap in video game play, home computer ownership and computer course enrollment will have to be bridged before the discovery can be put to use.



The Stuff Dreams Are Made of...

Training and development is one of the fields featured in *Dream Jobs*, "a career guide to nine glamorous, fast-growing, 'in the news' industries—businesses that can offer you challenging, rewarding, lucrative careers."

Authors Robert W. Bly and Gary Blake call T&D "the sleeping giant of the corporate world... the place to be for people who are bright, alert and able to relate well to others."

But don't get a swelled head too quickly. Blake and Bly endanger their credibility when they blithely state, "Old-timers in business tend to look down on [training and development]

because *it does not contribute directly to bottom-line profits*" (italics ours).

The other "dream jobs" covered in the book are in advertising, biotechnology, cable TV, computers, public relations, telecommunications, travel and, for the "self-starter with ideas and expertise to sell," consulting.

Dream Jobs was published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. in 1983.

Please send items of interest for Practicum to Elizabeth Lean, Training & Development Journal, Suite 305, 600 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20024.

How-To Manual for Establishing Support Groups

The *Unemployed Workers' Support Program* is a manual for organizing and delivering systematic, small-group, survival skills training for the never employed, the newly unemployed and the about-to-be-laid-off worker. The program focuses on the immediate emotional, economic and job search needs of unemployed workers.

Sheila H. Akabas and Vi Pirie, director and project associate, respectively, of the Columbia University School of Social Work's Industrial Social Welfare Center, prepared the inexpensive guidebook.

The program advanced in the manual is a structured group learning experience combining cognitive and affective training methods. The three sessions cover time management for the unemployed; problem-solving approaches to the emotional impact of unemployment on the worker and his or her family; economic resources and entitled services available to the worker and family; choosing future options, including educational and training alternatives; and locating and obtaining jobs.

To obtain a copy of the *Unemployed Workers' Support Program*, send \$3.00 to Dr. Sheila H. Akabas, Director, Industrial Social Welfare Center, Columbia University School of Social Work, 622 West 113th Street, New York, NY 10025.

Engineering Course Catalog Goes On Line

IBM has added the entire 1983-1984 catalog of videotape courses offered by the Association for Media-Based Continuing Education for Engineers to its Technical Information Retrieval Catalog, the association's *Monitor* newsletter has reported.

The IBM data storage and retrieval system permits a key word search, enabling the user to enter subjects of interest and receive an immediate video display of all pertinent courseware. The user makes his or her selections and then receives hard copy abstracts and course descriptions for those offerings.