

# SUPERVISOR OF DISADVANTAGED EVOLUTION

*an approach from the  
State of Washington*

It is no secret that there is an effort to bring the disadvantaged, the minorities, the hard core unemployed, etc., into the work force of public and private organizations. It was to no one's surprise that this brought out different and concerted programs to provide additional training for these people.

To discuss the methods, monies, successes and failures of these efforts would be a rehash and add little to this article. The fact many efforts to train employees were and are being made is itself important. The other side of that coin became of concern to the training section of the Washington State Department of Personnel. We wondered if any effort were being made to help supervisors adjust to the coming changes.

We believed no, and saw little effort to provide the training that State supervisors could use in meeting their "unusual" problems. For after all, new members of their work force would bring different attitudes, habits, and ideas.

We contacted the Vocational Education Division of State Public Instruction. On the second visit, an approach was determined. The plan was to begin with a seminar of interested higher level supervisors. They would help us develop ideas for a course for first-line supervisors. Naturally, the development would also serve as training for the higher levels.

Also at the meeting, serving as observers, would be experienced conference leaders from five community colleges. It was planned for them to carry back ideas and put together similar seminars to gain the "flavor" of their particular areas. Each area had a different population make-up we were discussing; namely, Spanish, Indian, Negro, etc.

The seminars came about, kicked off by

a brief taped introduction by Governor Evans, who noted the importance of our combined efforts to find solutions to a difficult problem. The conferees from the Department of Public Assistance and Employment Security, who had experience with helping the disadvantaged, provided a wealth of information.

Later, the five conference leaders and representatives of the central offices were gathered in a Seattle hotel room to hammer together a curriculum. The conversation began to generate progressively more "semantic heat" as the men tried to boil down the definitions of the new terminology which was developing. This prompted the writer to say the group was getting bogged down unnecessarily with detail and were actually missing the bigger picture.

Then the thought that we were working on something both public and private organizations could use, followed. A barrier in our thinking fell away.

From there on, the ideas began to flow. It was decided we were not dealing with a greatly different problem, but new techniques supervisors need add to their repertoire.

We realized the new overlay to all other supervisory problems would be complicated by the intake of the disadvantaged. We felt a "good" supervisor with "good" basics could probably readily adjust, but that "poor" supervisors with a "poor" grasp of the basics could not easily adjust. At the same time, we realized certain basics of today would be questioned and maybe altered in time.

The whole evolution of our thinking was interesting from a training standpoint and the writer wished to share it with you.

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