

How To Deal With "Shanghaied" Students

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A problem that confronts most training men is what to do with the employees who have been "shanghaied" into attending a course. By "shanghaied" employees, I mean, employees who have no desire to attend a course but who are pressured or forced by their supervisor to attend.

An Example of the Problem

The training department requests each unit of a certain division to submit the names of employees to attend a clerical improvement course. Mr. X, supervisor of unit Q, received this request and selects two of his employees who need this type of training. Mr. X calls each employee into his office to explain the purpose of the course and why they have been selected. Employee Number One is very enthusiastic and thinks this course will be beneficial to her on the job. (Employee Number One is the type of student a training man enjoys having in his course.)

Employee Number Two said he did not want to attend. He said this type

of training was not for him and he had all the training that he needed. Mr. X told Employee Number Two that he would attend the course with no questions asked. When Employee Number Two got to class, he showed no interest in the course and seldom participated. He acted for the most part like a "bump on the log." Employee Number Two was the "shanghaied" student.

If nothing is done to alleviate this problem, Employee Number Two will gain very little by attending the course. In fact, he may have an effect upon the other students and you, the instructor.

What Can Be Done?

There are a number of methods that may be used in alleviating the problem of the "shanghaied" student. I will attempt to give you a few methods which have been effective for me.

1. *Eliminate the problem before it begins*

A training man can eliminate the problem before it begins by educat-

ing the supervisors. This can be accomplished very adequately through the use of a case study in a supervisory course. The case which I have used as an example in this article could be used with modifications.

2. *Plan before the course begins*

If the problem has not been eliminated before the course begins, then in order to alleviate the problem as completely as possible and get the "shanghaied" students interested in the course; you should begin your planning before the course begins. Here is what I mean.

- A. Know the objectives of the course.
- B. Organize your subject matter.
- C. Adapt the subject matter to the needs, abilities and interests of the students.
- D. Anticipate problems peculiar to the subject.
- E. Prepare a lesson plan.
- F. Practice so that you will know your subject.
- G. Arrange for space, equipment and materials needed.
- H. Make a final check to see that all the above have been covered.

Being fully prepared will build confidence in yourself so that you can competently contend with the problem. Also, the "shanghaied" students can develop respect for you and take interest in the course.

3. *When the course begins and throughout the course*

At the beginning of the course, put the students at ease with friendly in-

formal comments. Then make known the fact that you are aware some people have been "shanghaied" into the course. Ask who they are. Ask why they did not want to attend the course and explain why they are in the course and the benefits of the course. In other words, sell the course.

Throughout the course keep your enthusiasm high and appeal to your students' egos.

The above procedure is usually very effective in obtaining the "shanghaied" students' interests in the course.

4. *Last resort*

If by no method can you change the attitude of the "shanghaied" students, it sometimes becomes necessary for you to eliminate the students from the course. This should be done privately.

When the course is of any substantial length, you can discuss the problem with the students and give them a period of time to improve. If they do not improve, you will have to eliminate them from the course.

Eliminating students from a course can be a difficult task on the part of a training man but one that at times must be done.

Summary

In this article I have raised the problem of the "shanghaied" student and have given you a few methods of alleviating the problem. By alleviating the problem, you will receive better results from your courses and your job as a training man will be easier.