

MAILBOX

RESPONSES sent to Mailbox are considered available for publication and may be edited for length and clarity. Please send comments to

Email: mailbox@astd.org.

Provide your name, organization, and location. Your email address will be published unless you request otherwise.

Mail: T+D, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043

Fax: 703.683.9591

Website:

tdmagazine.astd.org

Author Guidelines:

 tdmagazine.astd.org

Submissions: Send to submissions@astd.org.

For made-to-order or electronic reprints: Call

The Reprint Outsource, 717.394.7350 (bulk) or to purchase single copies online, go to the ASTD Online Store at store.astd.org.

For permission to photocopy: Copyright Clearance Center, 978.750.8400, www.copyright.com

Request back issues:

ASTD's Customer Care Center, 800.NAT.ASTD

Questions about your subscription? Contact

800.NAT.ASTD or subscriber-service@astd.org.

Had to Respond

I just *had* to respond to Haidee Allerton's article on jury duty [Working, February]!

I also live in Washington, D.C., and, yes, I seem to get pulled for jury duty frequently just like she states in her article. I think we get pulled often for just that reason—that we live in the U.S. capital and maybe there's a sense that we're more politically and judicially minded.

But I must say that, being a trainer of business process analysis (among other subjects), the process we go through to serve on a jury seems like organized chaos. I don't mind the waiting (always a good time to sit quietly, read, think... I have a rambunctious two-year-old so moments of peace are a treasure.) And the DVDs [they show in the waiting room] are great.

Although I have served on a trial before, my day being blown entirely [going] through a selection process, in which I most likely [won't] be selected...is a waste, but it obviously works for the judicial system.... Most people feel honored [when they serve], but many don't [get to]. A lot of people are frustrated and curious about the outcome.

Thanks for allowing me to vent. Kudos, Haidee!

*Naomi J. Kinney
Providence Hospital
Washington, D.C.
nkinney@provhospi.org*

Future of the Profession

Terence Traut took issue [March Mailbox] with Pat Galagan's article, "The Future of the Profession Formerly Known as Training" [December 2003], regarding her observation of the potentially larger role of the training department moving into the area of knowledge and learning organizations. I can empathize with Traut's concerns. He has a point, but....

Peter Senge's body of work, along with that of others in the performance field, indicates that training will effectively improve about 15 percent of organizational performance problems. Other factors include communication within the work unit and organization, facilities, resources in dollars and people, and system-process definition and understanding.

Learning within most organizations is acquired in two ways: 1) about 20 percent through formalized training and 2) about 80 percent through information, such as word of mouth, informal observation, and organizational communication channels. In today's up-ratcheting pace of change, easy, fast, as-needed access to information has become and will increasingly be an organizational learning focal point.

Traut's point of view is probably valid in a larger organization that already has an OD unit, a KM unit, a competency-based HRD

system. But many, many large, medium, and small organizations are lucky to have a training unit alone. So, who has the vision, the basic competencies, the learning knowledge, and the teaching skills to help organizations evolve into learning organizations?

Organizations are thrashing about in an attempt to identify how to cut costs and improve performance to achieve the lowest rung on Maslow's hierarchy: survival. A training unit with vision and courage populated by willing learners who have a strong work ethic and flexibility in the face of adversity can morph themselves and their organizations into broad learning systems combining training, performance consulting, communications, and knowledge management. That type of training unit will multiply its organizational business value many times over. I know. We've nearly completed that morphing over the past seven years.

In my opinion, a narrowly focused training unit—in today's emerging, rapidly changing workplace—in many organizations can be too easily outsourced in the organization's thrashing to cut costs and improve performance.

*Jack Stucko
jstucko@fbinsmi.com*