

# Training Tools

**With the movement of learning into the strategic arena, there is a rich future for the inventors and suppliers of training tools.**

TRAINING TOOLS HAVE COME A LONG WAY in 60 years. And T+D magazine has traced that evolution.

From flannel boards and audio cassette recorders to laser pointers and learning management systems, training tools have evolved into sophisticated interactive devices that aid workplace training and performance professionals on the job.

Many of the tools in the early years were basic equipment that was “kind to training aid budgets.” The whiteboard, flannel board, projector stands, speaker’s timer, and portable lecterns were lightweight training tools created to aid facilitators in small meetings and classroom events.

The “New Training Tools” column debuted in the May-June 1957 issue of the *Journal of the American Society for Training Directors*. This first column highlighted “new publications, aid, materials, equipment and services of interest to training directors.”

That same year, the American Visuals Corporation advertised the *10 Minute Trainer*, a book that “packs more than 90 minutes of ordinary classroom instruction into 16 highly condensed, expertly visualized pages.”

This four-page insert, on green paper, includes information about the development of the publication, how it was built, and how it can be ordered:

*American Visuals’ new 10 Minute Trainer has been developed to meet the increasing demands of modern management for training methods that are quicker, more effective, and less costly than conventional techniques and elaborate expensive equipment.*

*Best of all, it has been thoroughly tested in practical, commercial use. With its specialized technique of “progressive visualization,” the 10 Minute Trainer has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to teach even complex technical subjects, jobs, duties, and assignments in less time at less*

*cost than usual training methods.*

## **Diversity training**

T+D also traced the evolution of diversity and sexual harassment prevention training. Over the years, the training tools advertised in T+D have reflected historical and cultural changes in society.

While the civil rights movement was taking hold, ads began to crop up in the magazine highlighting diversity training. In the June 1968 issue of *Training and Development Journal*, Stuart Reynolds Production placed an advertisement for a training film on perception of others called the *Eye of the Beholder*.

This training film, in use in some universities, high schools, government agencies, industries, hospitals, and churches, highlights sensitivity training and discrimination along with in-service training, human and employee relations, and sales and marketing training.

This ad by the HarBeck Company in the November 1996 issue of T+D focused on effective sexual harassment training tools:

*The keys to sexual harassment training are right in front of you. View hostile environments and quid pro quo sexual harassment (right from your computer). No matter what level of employment, this program can serve an effective role in your sexual harassment training. Give your employees the benefit of convenient desktop training.*

## **Technology**

Learning technology revolutionized the workplace learning and performance industry.

Transparencies for overhead projectors and simple, portable white boards evolved into PowerPoint Slides and then into sophisticated, multi-media, e-learning programs.

In the 1990s, ads in T+D reflected a move toward

computer-based tools and courses on CD-ROMs. Many of the ads showcased software for administrative tasks such as registering employees for courses, screening applicants for prerequisites, and producing class transcripts.

As learning technology began to spread across the enterprise and branch out from single courses and administrative tasks, new terms emerged, such as total training management, learning management systems, and learning content management systems. An advertisement in the May 1999 issue of T+D for Pinnacle Learning Manager software highlighted its versatility and breadth, a theme that is still evolving.

*There are few great experiences that suddenly change your life. No matter what steps you've taken toward building a training program, the Pinnacle Learning manager is the one [software] purchase that will allow you to manage it all immediately, effectively, and efficiently. That's because PLM is the only product that allows you to use training software from virtually any CBT courseware vendor, and keep track of all your trainees' progress—all with one database.*

### **Conference centers**

State-of-the-art conference centers and meeting rooms began to crop up on corporate campuses, at specialty hotels, and in business districts. When conference center advertisements first started to appear in T+D, they highlighted where the resorts were located, the recreational facilities available, and the proximity to airports.

But as needs changed, so did the conference ads. An AmericanAirlines Training and Conference Center ad in the May 1999 issue of T+D highlighted the needs of the workplace learning executive.

*We'll send your employees home full of information (not souvenirs). Instead of seashells, t-shirts, and key chains, your employees will come back charged with knowledge, enthusiasm, and new skills.*

### **Sophistication**

By the beginning of the 21st century, training tools were becoming more technically sophisticated, and training delivery was being liberated from the limits of time and place by tools such as PDAs, iPods, and game-like simulations.

A technology roundup in the March 2006 issue analyzed the different wireless devices available and how they are changing workplace learning and development.

*From a training perspective, wireless technologies create endless possibilities for delivery of learning and performance content.*

*The advantages of wireless wonders include access to information from practically anywhere at any time and just-in-time data that can impact business and other decisions.*

Simulations now lead the pack of learning technologies to watch. They're now used in many different industries, from healthcare and medicine to aviation, transportation, and nuclear energy, but in 2006 they are still a relatively new form of learning, according to a May 2006 T+D article by Clark Aldrich.

*More organizations are bringing simulations into their curricula to improve both the effectiveness and appeal of formal learning programs. And that's a good thing, but simulations can be disorienting.*

*Simulations could very well be the third great formal learning movement.*

For now, the world of workplace learning and performance is all about finding the right tools to handle an increasingly wide range of tasks, from recruiting, to performance consulting and improvement, to knowledge and talent management. The combination of more versatile and powerful technology, with the movement of learning into the strategic arena in many organizations, promises a rich future for the inventors and suppliers of training tools. **TD**

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