Book Reviews

Samuel B. Magill, *Editor*

Total Job Training

by Paul M. Stokes

American Management Association
$6.00   158 pp.

Reviewed by:
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This text is sub-titled "A Manual For The Working Manager" but I rather imagine that the sub-title was added by the American Management Association rather than the author as it is obviously written for the industrial trainer rather than the working manager. The author states in his preface that "American industry without being formal about it operates the biggest educational institution in the world" and he goes on in his book to provide a very good primer on industrial training. The book is thorough, well written, and highly practical. This work is either the product of a battalion of trainers or the result of extensive first-hand experience with industrial training. The approach is obviously that of an industrial trainer but it is not insensitive to the problems of the line and staff manager nor the problems and anxieties of the trainee.

In the first two chapters he provides some good bench marks which will not be news to any experienced industrial trainer but which should probably be reviewed prior to every class by most of us. Many of us are still training oriented rather than learning oriented. In Chapter 3, he not only reminds us of the importance of planning in good training but gives many practical ideas to help us in the planning stage including a very good check list for setting standards for the trainee. In Chapter 4 he emphasizes the importance of proper placement in job training and again provides an interesting check list of employee characteristics to be used in effective placement. In the next two chapters he provides a good distinction between specific job training and related or job theory training and has several good ideas about how to effect or how to do the best job in both categories. In Chapter 7, entitled "The Learning Process" he provides one of the most succinct learning theory explanations that I have seen. This chapter by itself could be used very effectively as an introduction to a J.I.T. or similar program. In Chapter 8, he provides a good rundown on various teaching methods and when to use which. I thought the absence of a specific reference to overhead transparencies may have dated the author but the presence of many other up-to-date techniques and sources of material exploded that theory.

Chapter 9, entitled "Developing The Desire To Learn" includes many standard considerations in motivating employees but it also includes a few that may be new concepts or new approaches to old concepts to some readers. It certainly provides an excellent review of the instructor's role in motivation. In this chapter he says, "The strongest link in the chain between the trainee and the employer

is the trainer. He can build the positive motivation of the trainee right from the beginning." In an organization where the trainee doesn't even meet his supervisor until he has completed training, I suppose this particular problem cannot be avoided. In most organizations however, the trainee is exposed to his supervisor before or at the same time he is placed under the tutelage of the trainer, and in such a situation the author has identified a sad but frequently true commentary on employer-employee relations. There is no question about the importance of good relationships between the trainee and the trainer but there is something amiss in the organization where the line supervisor permits the trainer to pre-empt him as the strongest link in the chain between the trainee and the employer.

Chapter 10, entitled "Principles of Employee Discipline" was a little bit of a surprise. Rather than a rundown on the considerations of discipline for the training man, it seems to be a lesson in employee discipline. It is the longest chapter in the book being almost twice as long as the average chapter. I felt the question of employee discipline during the training period was belabored. In Chapter 11, "The Climate For Learning" he reviews both the physical and psychological conditions of the training environment he is a little bit redundant in that most of the important things that have to be said on this subject had already been said in the area of planning and motivating the worker. Chapter 12 is a good rundown on testing. Chapter 13 provides some guides for recordkeeping in the training department and the book concludes with a chapter emphasizing the importance of keeping up to date and a review of the many sources available for the man who wants to up-date his job skills.

I thoroughly recommend this text for anyone who is involved in the planning or execution of employee training in industrial or service organizations, not because of its profundity but because in short, snappy fashion it provides one of the best check lists for total job training that I have seen recently.

I would recommend that it be read by the training man towards the end of the year for the purpose of reviewing his progress during the past year and establishing his objectives for the coming year.

Management By Objectives

A System of Managerial Leadership by George S. Odiorne

Pitman Publishing Corporation $5.95 . 204 pp.

A source of considerable misunderstanding when talking about management appraisal systems is the failure to identify the organizational levels to which they are being applied. One is often unsure when picking up a book on management whether the author is referring to the top banana of the outfit, the administrative group just below the top, or the various echelons of middle management. Much still needs to be done in defining the terms of our trade, especially when referring to the techniques of managerial action. But, when the writer moves from one point of view to another, he weakens his argument. The ancient inventor of the lever who said "give me a place to stand and I will move the world," was not referring to a moving platform.

This shift in viewpoint is especially noticeable in books which are based on notes taken from a series of conference groups. George Odiorne is Di-

rector of the Bureau of Industrial Relations of the University of Michigan and a skilled conference leader. The term "Management by Objectives," originally used in a book by Peter Drucker in 1954, has been taken over by the Bureau so effectively that now it is almost synonymous with their management development activities. Many top firms are using the method in preference to all other appraisal programs, and find that it is practical, easy to administer and to understand, and productive of good results. This book, therefore, despite its digressions, fills a long-awaited need.

Odiorne is a trainer; a pro;—one of us. He knows what it means to sell programs to management, and he has experienced the pleasures of seeing them succeed and the discomforts of having them fail. He lights the way with guideposts. He uses lists and he numbers them one, two, three, in a way that an overripe behavioral scientist would scorn to do. He tells you what he is going to tell you before the event, and attempts to summarize his points afterwards.

But if Odiorne has the virtues of a trainer, he also has some of the faults. He uses sarcasm, he colors his statements with biasing adjectives; he uncovers just a portion of his canvas at a time. But then he throws in a jumble of digressions as if to show that he has more, much more, on his palette than he wishes to show just now. Perhaps he does this to fill up the space. But, if so, the reader is left to wonder why. Is Management by Objectives really so thin a topic? Or is the author just not going into the subject in depth and pertinent detail?

This is a good book and even after discounting the tendencies mentioned above, a thought-provoking one. It explains many topics and sub-heads relating to management appraisal in significant detail, and a staff man in

planning or training will find it very useful.

S. B. M.

Fire Prevention
by Dorothy Wilson

Franklin Watts, Inc., N.Y.C.
$2.65   Hard Covers   71 pp.

Good safety men know that they are not hired to preach sermons over the corpus of an accident which has already happened. Nevertheless, this is the time when they get the best audiences. Why can't people learn to avoid fires before the event, and give thought to the actual steps they should take when an emergency arises?

In small units fire is so harmless that one becomes contemptuous of its power. Even large fires, when properly contained, are friendly. Yet anyone who has experienced the frustration and horror of witnessing a large conflagration knows that fire can be a vicious and demonic monster. The ancients invested fire with a life of its own, and looked upon it with awe.

This recent book on fire prevention in the home deserves a look. The author is very sincere and treats fire as a deadly earnest subject. It explains what to do when fire breaks out, the dangers which lurk in oily rags, in lighted matches, and in overloaded wiring. It recommends periodic home fire drills, and tells what steps can be taken to save one's life if an individual becomes trapped in an upstairs room.

There is also a carryover into the business environment which will not be lost on safety officers. If the home contingent can be persuaded to work on the breadwinner to practice safety on the job it reinforces the safety man's story.

Incidentally, thinking of the busi-

ness environment, how many of your employees know where the fire alarm is located? The extinguisher? Is the extinguisher in working order? What should workers do if the fire is between them and the usual means of getting out? Has a fire inspector looked your place over recently? The answers might affect somebody's life.

A number of ways suggest themselves for using this book. It is attractively bound and inexpensively priced. It could be given out as an award or a door prize. Some firms might have sufficient belief in its message to make it available to all their workers. At least one large metropolitan fire department is considering its use in their fire prevention activities in schools and clubs. Even though one might not have present use for the book its existence should be noted for possible future referral.

S. B. M.

Computer "Pictures"
Plotted Via Teletype

The Calcomp Teleplotter, in operation at the Fall Joint Computer Conference in San Francisco, received "pictures" via teletype for the first time. Data received from General Electric Computer Centers in Phoenix, Arizona, Los Angeles and Washington, D. C., was printed in standard typewritten form and plotted simultaneously as charts, graphs and drawings. A product of California Computer Products, Inc., Anaheim, Calif., the new device was developed for use with teletype equipment at time-shared computer communications terminals. Entire process, from teletyped query to printed or plotted answer, requires less than two minutes.