

Book Reviews

Samuel B. Magill, *Editor*

A Time To Train

written by the training team of
Richard Thomas & Baldwin Ltd.

Pergamon Press, Inc.
\$6.00 Soft Covers 246 pp.

One of the largest industrial construction projects ever attempted in Great Britain was the creation of the Spencer Steel Works in South Wales. Starting with a swampy plot 3½ miles long and four thousand feet wide, the company created a 1.4 million ingot ton production unit employing 6000 people, in a little over two years.

Seldom has the opportunity for developing an entire program come so neatly to hand. Our American space programs, or some of our gigantic power projects, might have furnished equally good examples but so far as is known, the results were never written up from the point of view of the training director. Perhaps the persons who could have developed such reports were too busy doing things to have the time to write about them.

This book is an interesting and useful addition to the case study literature on program development, and the persons who wrote it deserve thanks for making the effort to get it in readable form.

The merit of this report is in its comprehensiveness. It covers all aspects of the training function from pre-planning, need determination, goal

setting, securing top-management support; through the construction phases, the actual course outlines, application and use made of the training; and into the evaluative stages to the point of full production.

This study points up certain differences in training outlook between our countries, but this is not a serious drawback. For example, the British Industrial Training Act of 1964 made it compulsory for employers to train their people under penalty of paying for having the training done externally.

A feature which would be considered unusual in a book published under American industrial auspices is a chapter on trade union training. Another very interesting section deals with the gradual changeover of the training space into production and office facilities.

There have been many times when we could have used such a comprehensive study of training, either to show others what was being attempted in its larger framework, or as a road-map for our own guidance.

S. B. M.

Filing and Records Management

by Irene Place, Ed.D.
and Estelle L. Popham

Prentice-Hall, Inc.
\$6.60 290 pp.

It comes as a surprise to many businessmen to learn that modern records management in a large corporation or government agency is the responsibility of a trained administrator who occupies a very important position on the management team. The image persists of filing as being a break-in job for the youngest and newest female employee.

The reader might like to test his knowledge of the various systems and sub-systems of alphabetic, numeric,

geographic, subject, and functional files which are explained in this book, and with the mechanisms for storing, holding, and retrieving this information. Even the conventional file folder and the storage cabinet have undergone a transformation.

There are at least two national professional associations in this field which hold regular conferences, publish reports and develop standards. The more generalized office management associations also devote considerable time to this topic.

Two types of readers will profit from this book. One is the well-versed professional manager who, we think, will read it with approval. The other is the less well-informed individual who may feel genuine amazement at many of the techniques which are documented herein. Your reviewer was in the latter category.

In just one section of the book did the authors stub their distinguished toes, and this was on the difficult topic of retention. No rationale was given whereby a person could generalize the time periods or adapt them to his own needs, and the distinction between "ordinary" records and those having historical, reference, or legal value was ignored. Also, some of the items granted permanent retention by the authors could well be disputed.

S. B. M.

Teaching Driver & Traffic Safety Education

By American Automobile Association

McGraw-Hill Book Co.
\$7.95 478 pp.

With the rising tide of automobile accidents has come a growing realization that driver safety training cannot be left to chance. Some highway officials now advocate such training as a pre-requisite to obtaining a license

to drive; and schools, civic groups, large truck fleet operations and a scattering of other corporations, are actively conducting courses. Many observers believe that this is the most significant new training project of our time, and it behooves the training specialist to acquire a knowledge of the training resources which exist in this field.

This book covers the subject as it would be given in schools or in adult education courses. It devotes just six pages to the professional driver, and identifies trucks only as those things one tries to get around on the highway.

Nevertheless, the book does contain material which would help an industrial instructor to develop his own course, or to use as a background for presently existing programs. A list of section headings will illustrate its scope:

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Human Characteristics Related to
 Driving
 Classroom Instruction
 In-car Instruction
 Organization and Administration
 of the Training Program
 Elements of Knowledge
 Competency

Improving Professional Leadership

The many photos and charts add to the clarity and interest of the presentation.

S. B. M.

Training Within the Organization

by David King

Educational Methods, Inc., Chicago
 \$7.95 274 pp.

When a consultant writes a book he inevitably puts a lot of himself into it. While the American specialist tends to write for a knowledgeable and sophisticated audience, his British counterpart frequently includes more foundational material such as definitions, principles, function lists and selling points. This adds very little bulk to the size of the book, but can be valuable to readers in other countries or newcomers to the professional field.

Most of Mr. King's professional career has been in Great Britain and continental Europe, but he is becoming known in this country through his lectures on management.

In the first four chapters of his book he cites three Norwegian companies which he served; one for vestibule training of sewing machine operators, another for supervisory development, and a third for training applications and work methods. Mr. King's use of the needle trades is very interesting, because this industry has traditionally been very resistant to the use of modern training techniques. The fashion cycle is so short that by the time a worker is fully trained the need for

her services might be over. It has always seemed easier to steal an experienced operator from another shop than to take the time to develop one. With everybody pirating from each other it is easy to see how a chronic shortage of skilled personnel can result.

By the use of what he calls "systematic" training, Mr. King was able to bring workers up to production in less than half the time required under traditional "sit-by-me" methods. This reduction of time, plus the fact that a substantial number of trainees rose into the "C" category of exceptional producers was said to have repaid all of the costs expended on training. Another advantage was that semi-skilled operators were in good supply after the word got around that the companies offered effective training programs.

A notable feature is the extensive use made of charts and graphs. Over thirty tables and nearly fifty figures are shown. One interesting chart is a learning curve constructed from the times required to translate 300 Norwegian words into their English equivalents over a series of trials. There are practically no footnotes, which contributes to ease of reading. The index is complete. A bibliography is given which cites many books and articles on training published in Great Britain.

The rest of the book explains the author's views on training methodology. One part deals with fundamental issues in establishing a training "scheme," another discusses the creation of policy, and a final section describes the procedures used to set up a program within a company. The book was designed as a guide for operating managers and, especially in its earlier chapters, is a mine of information about procedures used in the clothing industry.

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