

We Are Progressing — Why?

(This is the first of a Series of Informative Articles on the Progress of the American Society of Training Directors, written by its Secretary-Treasurer.)

"The officers of the American Society of Training Directors ought to go on the air at least once a week to brief all the folks interested in business and industrial training in regard to the fast moving developments, the progress, real and potential, in the services of the American Society of Training Directors."

The occasion for this declaration was the fact that we had just returned from an 8000 mile motor trip. It had afforded us the opportunity of meeting nearly two hundred training men and women working in and near the cities of Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Spokane, Minneapolis and St. Paul. We had thought of distance and other barriers as obstacles to membership and had earnestly discussed with training people of these cities the vital importance of ASTD in their profession.

And now, following our return to Detroit, I was talking to a member of the local training directors association about this trip and wondering how successful it would be. But what was he saying, this neighbor, working on the home ground of the headquarters office, with no distance, deserts or mountains betwixt us,—what was he saying? Listen!

"This ASTD. Isn't it somewhat of a duplication of organization and effort? What can it offer beyond the activities and services of the local association?"

Came then the observation quoted at the outset of this article and, with it, the realization that this belonging to one's national professional society is not primarily a matter of location, or distance, but rather of information.

Before I realized what I was doing, I heard myself asking my interrogator, because he seemed to want an answer, the same question I had asked on the Pacific West Coast:

Did you know:

1. That ASTD Membership in 1948, in eight months only, has grown at the average rate of 50 a month, nearly 400 in excess of 1947?

2. That the four most recent additions had raised the total of affiliated ASTD associations in the past 8 months from 6 to 14. During the past 4 months, these were the four associations which had joined the Society:

- a. Training Directors Association of Illinois (headquarters, Chicago),
- b. Central Ohio Society of Training Directors,
- c. Canadian Industrial Trainers Association (Province of Quebec; headquarters, Montreal),
- d. Philadelphia Chapter of the Pennsylvania Society of Training Directors?

3. That the roster of ASTD Memberships will not only be swelled by at least two hundred additional members from these four affiliations, but that roster already contains the names of individuals who are leaders in the training profession and companies which are pace-makers in the economy of the United States and Canada?

4. That national conventions such as the Fifth Annual ASTD Convention scheduled to be held at Cleveland, Ohio, March 3, 4, 5, 1949, could not be successfully operated without this leadership and the loyal support of ASTD members? Or have you thought how much more the training supervisor gains when he and his company throw the weight of their membership and skills into this vital convention activity of ASTD!

5. That men and women are writing the ASTD offices every day for information, membership, application blanks, subscriptions to the Journal of Industrial Training, or asking to be placed upon ASTD general mailing lists? And had you thought why? Would it be because they are discovering that ASTD members are proud to point to the many other evidences of the Society's progress? For instance, to their publications:—

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We Are Progressing — Why?—continued

a. *THE JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL TRAINING!*

The official, professional bi-monthly publication of, for and by ASTD members!

b. *INDUSTRIAL TRAINING ABSTRACTS!*

Spreading rapidly in circulation and participation among ASTD members!

c. *ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS!*

Used and re-used by training directors staffs as sources for ideas, experience, facts and inspiration!

d. *PROGRAM INFORMATION EXCHANGE! SUMMARY!*

In which already more than 100 ASTD members participate, stimulating the greatest exchange of program materials and experience this profession has ever known!

e. *KIT FOR NEW ASSOCIATIONS!*

Prepared by the Chapter Promotion and Service Committee for 16 or more chapters now in the making!

f. *ASTD BROCHURE, June 1, 1948!*

Covering aims and activities and services, membership, chapter organization and affiliation, ASTD history and complete roster of officers, Board and Committee Chairmen!

assist their members in undertaking training in their companies and institutions?

8. *That the Program and Regional Conference Committee* is preparing a summary of successful chapter and local association programs for the benefit of all training associations?

9. *That the Research Committee*, among other tasks, is studying a plan to coordinate and make effectual a great deal of scattered and quickly lost research activity in the training area.

"Certainly", I said to my home town training associate as I had said to the Rocky Mountain groups this summer, "this information, alone, should convince any person and company interested in training that to be on the mailing list of ASTD for its periodic releases would be desirable, to say the least. To be a Journal subscriber and reader would be a 'must'. To be a full active member entitled to and participating in its many services would pay dividends of calculable, personal and company wide value."

Yes, information is a pre-requisite to membership in ASTD. Our offices should broadcast, by every available means, the facts about ASTD progress.

On the other hand, there are people and companies, who, no matter how well informed, seem content to stand just outside the sphere of the service and the participation which constitutes a progressive, national society. In most cases, pre-occupation with detail, failure to put first things first, seem to be the reason. Upon these people minutia maintains a grip which information alone will not relax. Only a vision of what the job could be, of what the attainment of basic training objectives is doing elsewhere, or could do in their cases, will break down the barriers that hamper training directors' efforts, constrict their plans and thwart their objectives.

That need and the vision requisite to its fulfillment we discussed at each step along the way. We hope to deal with it in our next installment of "We Are Progressing—Why?"

Furthermore, did you know:

6. *That the Standards Committee* is working on membership standards; a selection of courses on college level to recommend for students preparing to enter the training profession; ethical standards; performance, or proficiency standards; and, with the help of a leading university, is devising means of securing interest and aptitude criteria for use in connection with tests for the selection of training personnel?

7. *That the Inter-Organizational Relations Committee* is interpreting ASTD and its objectives to many other organizations as well as working with national groups to