

# The National Conference In Las Vegas? Are You Kidding?

**Donald L. Kirkpatrick**  
1975 ASTD President

The following questions have been raised frequently by training people. And they will be asked even more frequently by their bosses as the date of the Conference approaches. Let me try to answer these questions so that you will want to go and also be able to sell the boss.

## **Why Las Vegas?**

The 1975 National ASTD Conference was originally scheduled for New York City. It was changed because of the problems that occurred at the 19th National Conference in New York City. Other sites were considered which met the criteria of outstanding Conference facilities plus availability of appropriate dates. The new MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas was selected. This hotel has an excellent combination of meeting facilities, exhibit space, and living accommodations at a reasonable cost (\$30 per room even if double occupancy). Also, Las Vegas has a very enthusiastic and aggressive ASTD Chapter.

## **Why Should I Go?**

The main reason for going is to get benefits that clearly outweigh the costs. These benefits can include:

1. Up-to-date subject knowledge in the training and development field.
2. Practical methods, techniques, aids, and materials that

can be used to improve training effectiveness.

3. Opportunity to hear the best training leaders. (For what they have to say as well as for possible use as consultants in any organization.)

As 1975 President (and a person who has a full time job in planning and running management development conferences), I'm vitally concerned that the Las Vegas Conference will be the best one ever. My criterion for "best" relates to the quality of the program. Therefore, the Conference design is critical.

## **The Committee**

I selected Ed Scannell, Coordinator of Continuing Education, Arizona State University, to serve as chairman of the Conference Design Committee. Ed has several qualifications that were needed. First, his business is adult education in general and running training programs in particular. Secondly, he was an active participant in the 1974 Conference Design Committee. Also, he has been a strong ASTD leader who has served as President of the Valley of the Sun Chapter and winner of the Gordon M. Bliss award. His carefully selected committee represents all aspects of training and development and people who are committed to an effective National Conference.

The Design Committee includes: Ada H. McClinton, SEDFRE, New York, N.Y.; Peter E. Hagan, III, New Orleans Public Service; Leise G. Robbins, U.S. Civil Service Commission, Seattle; Carolyn Ives, Connecticut General Life Insurance, Hartford, Conn.; Craig C. Lundberg, Oregon State University, Corvallis; Lee A. Beckner, Internal Revenue Service, Ogden, Utah; Albert M. Joseph, Industrial Writing Institute, Cleveland; Dwight Gosling, Ames Co., Elkhart, Ind.; Winston Crawford, U.S. Steel, Provo, Utah; Robert Ostrovsky, MGM Grand Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev.; and yours truly.

## **Practical Subjects**

The committee met at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas on May 31 to study the facilities and work out the conference design and brainstorm subjects and leaders. The second meeting was held in Madison on August 13-14 where the subjects and speakers were finalized based on input from the ASTD Board of Directors as well as the committee members. Emphasis was placed on practical subjects and leaders who combined subject knowledge with communication and teaching effectiveness.

In summary, emphasis has been placed on the selection of the site, the optimum use of facilities, the

Conference design, and the careful selection of subjects and leaders. The overall objective is to provide maximum benefits at a reasonable cost. In other words, Las Vegas is the place to be from May 11-15, so plan now to be there for the best Conference yet!

### How Can I Sell My Boss?

Obviously, the approach must be tailored to your boss and the organization you represent. Here are a few suggestions that might help:

1. Pick the right time to approach the boss. Look for a time that the boss is receptive to the time and money it costs. If the money must be in the budget, do it before the budget is set in committee.

2. Be enthusiastic about going. Your enthusiasm is one of your best sales tools.

3. Know what benefits you plan

to get. Be willing to stick your neck out about ideas that you can bring back and apply in order to improve your effectiveness.

4. Give specific information on the program that will impress the boss. (Mention leaders like Peter Drucker, your own special interest group, a specific "hot" topic, the exhibition of equipment that will interest him or her, etc.)

We are going to do everything we can to convince you to attend and also to help you sell your boss. For example, we will communicate progress through the *Journal* and other media. Also, we will try to get the subjects and leaders that will impress your boss. And finally, our printed bulletin and other material will highlight Conference benefits. You will be able to show the bulletin to your boss. He or she will see that the ASTD Conference in Las Vegas is serious business and not a

vacation.

Let us know anything else we can do to help you get to Las Vegas to attend the best Conference yet!



May 11 - 15

## Letter to the Editor

### CREATIVE MALARKY

Sir:

Your June 1974 issue is a gem. Never have I seen such a collection of creative malarkey.

First you have two articles which tell us nothing new. "The Effective Management Development Facilitator" and "A Time Capsule . . ." merely belabor the obvious.

Then you print a short (fortunately) article purporting to discuss "Management Training for Women" which does nothing of the sort. It simply describes one training program through which, apparently, some women have passed. There isn't one concrete fact relating this program to women. (Some statistics would have helped.) In fact, women are mentioned only four times in the entire article.

However, the highlight of the issue is "An Experiment in Managerial Creativity." Quigley and

Stupak are to be congratulated for their satire. I doubt that they intended it to be satiric, but it is difficult to take seriously such extraordinary use of jargon. "Systemic incrementalism . . . dysfunctional particularisms . . . imploding technetronic conceptualization . . . positivistic 'scientism' advocates . . . a plethora of participatory learning devices." And I only kept a list for half of the article! Their message, whatever it was, was extremely cloudy.

May I suggest a reading of *Telling Writing* by Ken MacCrorie for both your authors and your editors.

The training profession suffers far too much from pretentious language. It's a wonder the trainees ever learn anything. And who can tell if they do?

Sincerely,

ELENITA SCHWEITZER-MUNIZ  
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