

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

TO BE: MANAGERS OF CHANGE

BY JOE D. BATTEN

Human Resource Development is coming of age!

We can react to this with whoops of exuberance, wry cynicism, negative torpor — or — tough-minded *proaction*. The latter is, I believe, the best way to go. We have been *reactive* too long.

Let's examine three principal areas which are part of the HRD executive's future: problems and needs, opportunities and possibilities, and tooling for change.

Problems and Needs

It is crucial that we look squarely at such pressing and omnipresent factors as:

- *Inflation* — it will be with us for some time. This requires that we place appropriate emphasis on increasing our levels of productivity and motivation. These two elements make up the core of the solution. Fresh approaches are imperative.

- *Increasing proportion of "white collar" jobs and personnel in our work force.* For instance, it is projected that there will be a shortage of 3 million secretaries by 1980. Do we really have an excellent working knowledge of their wants, needs, problems, and opportunities? It is vital that we do.

- *Change in the average age of workers:* Gail Sheehy's book *Passages* and *Working* by Studs Terkel are only two of many recent texts dealing with the shifting wants, needs and problems of people in transition. These transitions are more than physical and mental.



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They are beyond "emotional states" *per se*. How many HRD executives are personally tooled to understand and deal with this? The new retirement age of 70 is only one of many factors in this context.

- *Whole person development.* It is truly startling and puzzling to realize that very few HRD functions in organizations across America are currently planning and tooling to help their constituents become better able to *live fully*, to be *fully functioning* and to cope; to live the "other 16" hours of the 24 in a way that is reasonably *renewing*.

- *Impact of government regulations.* The bewildering plethora of acronyms — ERISA, OSHA, EEO, etc., will probably not ease up, slow down, or go away. Are we thinking, researching, and confronting the possibilities inherent

in these future "organizational facts of life"? We must in no sense pull back in sullen resistance. That is not only unproductive, it is *counter productive*.

- *Adult learning on a society-wide basis.* An earnest warning is offered here. If we continue as a society to succumb to the numbing impact of network TV, the concept of future shock as future "schlock," the collective numbness, nausea and neutering that can ultimately make us a planetary excrescence, we as HRD professionals will have blown our possibilities. New methods of adult education are necessary. Managers of change are so sorely needed that if truly executed by the HRD pro, they could well become truly major figures in our society.

My colleague, Dennis Murphy, has said, "*Throw away last year's notes — but not last year's experience. The lessons you taught — not the lessons you learned.*" Needed: openness, vulnerability, and a committed sense of wonder.

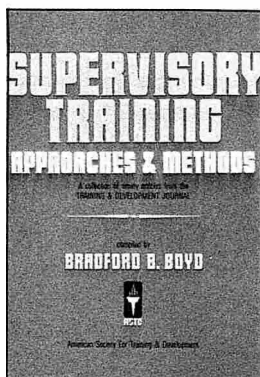
Opportunities and Possibilities

Our possibilities are so enormous. Let's explore them briefly. The HRD executive who wants to move out onto the cutting edge of achievement will find the following statements to be challenges which preclude complacency — and invite confrontation:

- When people determine what they want to BE, they find it relatively easy to determine what to DO. We must first determine what we are becoming, what kind of

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ientation; Clear and stretching expectations; Tough-minded vulnerability and openness; Proaction; Unsatisfaction; Identifying and measuring strengths; Organizational actualization

There are many refinements and key components of the foregoing which exceed the space (but not the scope) of this paper. It is so important, for instance, to visualize the organization as a *living system* and to be able to translate this to the CEO and his/her team in a way that is clear, stimulating, and operational. Increasingly people must, and will, come to understand the importance and tough-minded zest in working with women and all minorities on a basis of *real* equality where the only criterion of selection, promotion, judgment, or prerequisite is *performance*. The manager who does not understand and act in this manner will continue to dwell in the shadows of insecurity, inadequacy and disloyalty. Harsh words? Yes! They comprise a challenge and they premise the promise inherent in all of us — the actualization of our potential.

Other tough issues and tough-minded tasks remain. Human resource executives must strive for openness and objectivity as they confront the responsibilities and challenges inherent in all of the foregoing problems, needs, opportunities, and possibilities.

Things we can do now:

1. Budget for specific sessions on "How to Motivate Your Team."

2. Thoughtfully and thoroughly educate ourselves in strategic and tactical planning that is fully integrated with overall organizational objectives.

3. Develop imaginative instruments for truly determining the wants, needs, and problems of *all* people in the organization. Take a fresh look at all diagnostic psychometric and sociometric instruments available.

HRD as a function is *now* at a pivotal point in both the history of man and the history of organization. We can truly seize the minds of people — for growth — if we *care* enough.

I believe deeply that we can and will meet the test if we truly confront our possibilities! — Joe D. Batten