

Don Kirkpatrick Checks In

I WAS INTERESTED in the “Last 60 Years” of T+D articles. [Every month this year, T+D looks back at different topics.] It is unusual that you would mention ROI and not my “four levels” for evaluating. If you look back at the 1959 journals, you will find four articles that I wrote that changed my life—not really—but heavily influenced the future. The articles described four ways to evaluate training programs—reaction, learning, behavior and results (which included ROI).

At that time “evaluation” was a very ambiguous term and its meaning depended on to whom you talked. My four levels were immediately picked up and they became known as Kirkpatrick’s “Four Levels.”

The rest of the story is history. The book, *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*, has been a bestseller in the training field and the second edition was translated into Spanish, Polish, and Turkish. The third edition has just been published.

Don Kirkpatrick
Past (ASTD) president

Viable Advice?

I AM COMMENTING on an article published in your January edition. The article was written by Robert Troutwine and entitled “Ruling by Fear and Intimidation.”

When I began reading Troutwine’s article and began to chuckle, I was certain I was reading a satire. It soon became apparent to me that this laughable load of trash was actually being put forth as viable advice for future managers.

I must tell you that upon completing the article I sincerely expected a commentary from the editor saying that this is a prime example of how NOT to run your business. I looked hard to find a banner running across the page with a big WARNING! sign. Something! Anything to discredit these ideas as being nothing but a joke.

I have circulated this article around my office as a classic example of what not to do. I implore you to issue a full recall on these ideas in your very next

issue. Declare the concepts therein as an exercise in comedic writing that failed miserably.

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Surely, It Must be a Joke

I ALWAYS APPRECIATE receiving T+D magazine, as I know there’ll be great timely and practical information for those of us in the learning community. Today, I took a few minutes to step back and refresh by venturing into the pages of the January 2006 issue.

After reading the Editor’s Note, I flipped a few pages to the Intelligence section and was intrigued by the title “Ruling by Fear and Intimidation,” by Robert Troutwine. Out of sheer curiosity I began to read. As I read along, memories of past leaders I had worked with, for, or known, sprang into my head—very BAD memories—and I wondered when I’d get to the “punch line.” It must be in here, of course, it must because, after all, this surely must be some kind of joke.

However, rather than ending this article with, “Now that you’ve read how NOT to LEAD, here’s how YOU REALLY want to lead,” it just plain stopped. I still have to believe this was some kind of joke.

How did this article make it into the sacred pages of T+D?

Kristi Whitely

Response

The editor of T+D, Rex Davenport, responds: To Ms. Whitely and Mr. Brandon, we send our apologies. Humor, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. We are not sure how anyone could have read the piece and not recognized it as satire. The point of satire is to not follow it with three lines of bold, red-letter type that proclaims: THE ABOVE WAS JUST A JOKE.

We thought Robert Troutwine’s piece was more than a bit funny and apropos in this day when bullying leaders still reign in more than a few organizations.



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