

## XII

### TRAINING—ALWAYS

TRAINING is looked upon by American employers from many different viewpoints. There are different opinions even as to the meaning and content of the word. There are sharp differences of opinion as to the relation of the training function to the management job as a whole. There is limited agreement on the significance of training in the composite effect which we call good employee relations.

In its relation to collective bargaining, there are very few employers or personnel administrators who will hold that collective bargaining is a substitute for training, or that training can be accomplished through collective bargaining. Unfortunately, there is a defeatist minority which complains that collective bargaining, the union contract, or the attitude of the business agent, has made any effective training program impossible.

The proposals offered in this discussion are fairly simple. The first is the generally accepted one, that collective bargaining is no substitute for training. The second is the partially contested assertion that collective bargaining is no obstacle to an effective training program. The third is that new emphasis must be placed on the importance of training, entirely beyond the area of collective bargaining, and partly because of collective bargaining.

Beginning with the new employee, it is difficult to conceive of a job in which initial training is not necessary, and in which it is not supplied in some form or other. In the chapter entitled "Starting the New Employee," it was impossible to avoid reference to some phases of training. The simple act of imparting the knowledge which he must have in order to find his way around the plant is training in itself:

instructions as to the proper entrance, the use of the time clock, where to hang his coat and hat, where he is to work, with whom he is to work, and who is his boss. Of course, all these are steps in the simplest induction program, but they are the beginning of the training experience which actually should continue forever.

After the induction process has been completed, the situation calls for one of the most critical steps in the training program. The first instruction on how to work, how to perform the job for which he has been directly employed, has a far-reaching effect on the relations between the new employee and his new employer. From the standpoint of physical and technical efficiency, a well-done job of training at this stage will usually save several days' wages, and in some cases, a comparable value in wasted materials. It will greatly hasten his sense of being "at home" on the new job. It will contribute to his efficiency by relieving the strain of uncertainty. It will help to win respect for the new employer, the foreman, and the straw boss, for knowing their business and being able to pass on the know-how.

The war production experience in World War II was characterized by the presence of more new employees on new jobs than had ever been seen in the world before. This condition was accompanied by an unprecedented pressure for speed. The traditional jobs of skilled craftsmen were broken down into an amazing number of separate and simple operations, so that a new worker could learn quickly to do one of the operations. The planning of these job dilutions, the simplification of machinery and processes, the conversion of plants and the laying out of new ones, called for the services of engineers far beyond the numbers available. Men and women from totally unrelated occupations were drafted to perform the functions normally expected from industrial engineers and production engineers. Trainers, training supervisors, training directors were created out of any available

personnel. Vocational schools and trade unions multiplied their facilities for the preparation of people to help with the jobs of electrical work, welding, pipe fitting, and dozens of other occupations which had previously been in the class of high skills.

In the urgent, impatient, but fumbling efforts to achieve production, it soon became evident that the final and effective training must be given on the job, at work, as part of the work. The Job Instructor Training program of the Training Within Industry Division was created to meet the need. More than one and one-half million supervisors were given this minimum training in the one specific task of instructing one worker how to do one operation.

In spite of its emergency function, JIT emphasized elements which had been too often overlooked in the everyday task of putting new men to work, in everyday peacetime operations. Emphasis was given to such essentials as putting the new worker at ease, approaching the instruction from his own background, giving significance to the task. The adaptation of JIT to the general and continuing problems of employment in industry, and its further adaptation to the particular needs of each establishment and each job, provides one of the challenging opportunities of today. A new employee, carefully selected, respectfully introduced and inducted, properly instructed in his first work assignment, provides the essential beginning for good employee relations between one employee and his employer. Regardless of the scope of the union contract or the form of union security, this opportunity belongs to management, this responsibility rests upon management.

Another conclusion which might seem obvious, but which was emphasized by the war production experience, was that this job instruction must be given by a man on the job, a direct work supervisor. Efforts to detach this particular training function from the responsibilities of line supervision brought almost inevitable failure. Such efforts emphasized the fact that

training is an inseparable part of the job of line supervision, and a major element in the function of line management. The preparation for good job instruction for the new employee on the new job was the adequate training of the work supervisor who had the responsibility for assigning the work to the man and supervising the results of his work.

Drawing another lesson from the war production experience, it became necessary to provide other emergency forms of training for line supervisors. Job Instructor Training was necessarily supplemented by skills in planning the work in the direction of simplicity and economy. Job Methods Training was the wartime emergency answer. The demand grew for further assistance in the supervision and leadership of people, as people, on the job, rather than as units in a production machine. Job Relations Training supplied the wartime emergency requirement.

A further lesson was that the preparation of line supervisors for these particular responsibilities required the understanding, support, and participation of higher management. Presidents of large corporations, general managers, plant and shipyard managers, and superintendents "took" the ten-hour sessions. Although a staff man was often named as training director, even better results came where an assistant manager took that function. He thus emphasized the identity of training and management.

The "J" programs of the Training Within Industry Division made a great contribution, although they were far from perfect tools, even for the war emergency. They needed radical adaptation for the more leisurely but continuous and equally pressing demands of peacetime production. Fortunately, they are being subjected to the necessary research, modification, and development for the use of industry generally.<sup>3</sup> At best, they will never be patent medicines for the

<sup>3</sup> Refer to publications of Training Within Industry Foundation, Summit, New Jersey.

needs of any single industrial establishment. They are mentioned here at considerable length because they emphasize the scope of the task which management must undertake, in improving the efficiency of its own team, at the supervisory end of the line.

At best, any such program is valuable as the beginning of a long period of growth and improvement in the skills of supervision and management. Some industrial and commercial companies are committed to a formalized training program which takes on almost academic character. Others are equally committed to a program which never uses a training program in name, and refuses to admit the possibility of separating training activities from all the other daily functions of management and supervision. No matter what the policy of a company may be, as between these two, there is almost universal recognition of the responsibility of management for the continued improvement and development of its supervisory personnel.

The ability of a line supervisor to instruct a new employee clearly about the performance of a new job is one of the objectives of this development. The ability to plan his work and revise his methods in the interest of simplicity and the ability to achieve teamwork in his relations with the workers under his supervision are other objectives which were sought through the TWI programs. The needs of a continuing industrial or commercial enterprise present other objectives. The ability to acquire information about the company organization, finances, products, services, sales programs, policies, history, future plans; the ability to comprehend this information and interpret it to employees; the ability to stimulate the interest and to answer the questions of employees—these are also essential objectives in the development of effective supervisors.

Management is gaining an increasing awareness of the need for the development of abilities by which supervisors

can improve their contacts and teamwork with other supervisors. There is an increasing interest in the extent to which supervisors must understand the organization of the establishment and the company as a whole, the responsibilities of, and the relations between, the respective members of the management team. This development is accomplished through training in the broad sense of the word. It can be accomplished, at least theoretically, through lectures, manuals, bulletins, and letters of instruction. It can be accomplished practically by demonstrations on the job and by adequate opportunities for conferences which have a purpose, discussions which follow a plan. The prejudices of supervisors against training as a specific activity disappear when the same supervisors engage in conferences of their own which have a purpose directly related to their work. They sometimes resent the implication that they need to be taught certain things which they do not know. They welcome the opportunity to discuss their own practical problems, the opportunity that meets a recognized need in their daily work.

An entire chapter of this volume is devoted to the responsibility which rests on management, outside the scope of collective bargaining, to achieve safe working conditions and safe working habits. The available statistics, as well as common-sense reasoning, indicate that an overwhelming majority of accident injuries in industry are the result of human failure, directly, of human failure on the part of an employee, either the one who is injured or the one whose failure caused the injury. The avoidance of these failures by employees is definitely an objective of line supervision. It is as clearly a part of the supervision task as is the avoidance of failures to produce satisfactory work in terms of quantity and quality. The average supervisor, whether newly promoted or of long experience, is a living example of the need for continued development in the skill of supervising men and women in such a way as to avoid these human failures. Guiding em-

ployees to work safely is inseparable from the task of guiding them to work productively and efficiently. The ability to do this delicate supervision job is not the inherent gift of any supervisor. It is the product of knowledge, interest, experience, training. It is not something which can come to the supervisor as the result of a collective bargaining agreement, no matter how much emphasis the agreement may lay upon the importance and desirability of safe work and safe working conditions. It is one more field in which management has an endless responsibility for developing the skills and knowledge and practices of the line supervisors on the management team.

Whether these steps in the improvement of supervisors are called training or development; whether they are accomplished through methods which use the instructor, the classroom, and the textbook, or methods which are indistinguishable from the other perpetual tasks of management; whether the training responsibility is emphasized by the presence of a staff member to stimulate the program and provide technical guidance, or the superintendent or manager combines this staff function with his line duties—regardless of any of these alternatives, the responsibility for training and improving every member of the organization is still the responsibility of management. It is a responsibility which represents one of the greatest factors in the whole program of relations, good or bad, between the employer and his employees. It is one more responsibility, one more function, one more activity, beyond the scope of collective bargaining.

It is proper to consider how a collective bargaining relationship may obstruct or interfere with the function of training, and whether such obstruction or interference is necessary. This is a question different from that discussed in the preceding paragraphs. The fact that training is a need which cannot be supplied by collective bargaining does not imply that there is no relation between the two. Neither does it

justify the careless assumption that the training function can be carried on regardless of the collective bargaining function.

There is little heritage in the thinking of the newer labor unions, from the traditions of the original trade or craft unions. In the chapter entitled "Selecting the New Employee," considerable space has been devoted to the operation of the conventional closed shop, when its principal economic function was that of protecting the employment interests of skilled craftsmen, and furnishing craftsmen of guaranteed skill and ability to the employers who needed them. In that setting, the training of a worker in the basic skills of the craft was accomplished through an apprenticeship. The apprentice was approved and recognized by the craft union; he was indentured to an employer, to work with the skilled journeyman in the trade. The obligation of the skilled craftsman to his union included the obligation to devote himself, in certain specific ways, to the training of the apprentice. The craft union supervised and checked the training of apprentices entrusted to its journeyman members. The agreed ratio of apprentices and certain other specific provisions regarding them were found in the typical union agreement in the craft field. The apprentice rules of the union were adopted, either by specific reference or by verbal consent.

It is evident that in such a relationship, the craft union and its members undertook some of the functions and responsibilities of training, in co-operation with the employer. Time may show that this form of co-operation was one of the values to society which could be found in the old craft union, closed-shop relationship, before the closed shop became a political tool for the strengthening of unions in the unskilled and semiskilled occupations. However, such a co-operative relationship has not been confined to the employments under closed-shop conditions. The activities of the United States Department of Education and of the apprenticeship councils in most of the states, have preserved the essential values of



apprentice training, even in conditions where the collective-bargaining relationship does not include the craft unions in the "apprenticeable" trades.

Aside from the training of apprentices in the recognized crafts, almost no union agreements include definite provisions for employee training. Equally few include any implied restrictions on the function of training. The few restrictions which do appear are so significant that they deserve careful consideration.

In many agreements which incorporate wage-rate schedules, provision is made for "trainee rates" for particular jobs. It is not unusual in such an agreement to find restrictions upon the length of time over which an employee may be paid the trainee rate, or a requirement that at the end of a specified time he must be paid the full job rate. Assuming that agreement can be reached on the length of this trainee period, it is difficult to question the reasonableness of the union protecting its established job rates against the indefinite continuance of an alleged training period, and the delivery of a normal quantity and quality of work in return for the trainee wage.

Reference to a number of agreements carrying the mild restriction mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, does not produce any evidence of an attempt by the union to dictate the manner of the training. However, there are instances of requests for a premium rate to an experienced operator who is given a duty of training new operators. Such premium rates are occasionally paid, either as a result of the union agreement or as voluntary additions to the job rates specified in the agreement. The arrangement has attractive features, even from the standpoint of management. At first glance, it seems to ensure the co-operation of the experienced employee in the training of the new employee. It leaves to the judgment of management and supervision the selection of the experienced employee to do the training.

But at second glance it has an implication which seems to be unfortunate. That is the recognition of training as something distinct from and in addition to the normal duties of an employee. Logic would justify the impression that training is similarly something distinct from the responsibility of supervision and management. In many cases it might be a better investment on the part of management to detach an experienced worker from the production job while he takes the full responsibility for guiding and instructing the new employee on that same job.

Another and more frequent possibility of interference with a good training program is found in the unlimited seniority provisions which are frequently requested, and too frequently granted, in union negotiations. An absolute agreement that selections for promotion to nonsupervisory jobs be made strictly on the basis of seniority is unquestionably a handicap to an adequate training program. It assures the promotion of the senior worker, regardless of whether he has become qualified, or has even accepted the training offered to him. But it is not an insuperable obstacle. Even under the strictest seniority clause, the promoted worker must in some way qualify himself to perform the duties of the new job. A very limited number of failures by men promoted because of seniority, without the preparation which can be had from training, is likely to make training desirable in the eyes of other senior candidates for promotion.

The usual seniority clause, which in effect provides for the application of seniority when other things are equal, should offer no obstruction to a training program. As indicated below, any seniority clause is a spur to management to perfect its training program. This normal seniority clause, in addition to being the spur, also provides an incentive to the average employee to take advantage of every opportunity for training which is offered to him.

There are probably no typical union agreements which

prohibit training. There are probably none which attempt to give union officers any measure of control over the form or content of the training program. There are relatively few which impose absolute adherence to seniority in promotions. In short, any management which neglects its responsibilities for training because of the supposed obstruction or interference in the union contract, is unduly timid and negligent. Any management which shies away from a training program because of belligerent attitude of a business agent or union representative, has a challenge to begin its training program on that representative himself.

A brief consideration is due the proposition that the collective-bargaining relationship increases the need for adequate attention to the training function. The effect of seniority provisions has been discussed in the preceding paragraphs. A much more serious problem arises from the employee security clauses which are basic in almost all union agreements. Collective bargaining has definitely reduced the freedom of management to discharge an unsatisfactory employee. Most management representatives accept as fairly reasonable the provision for grievance procedures, appeals, hearings, and even arbitration, in the case of an employee who claims to have been unjustly discharged. Other management representatives feel that the efficiency of their operations has been materially reduced by such clauses. They believe that the annoyance and delay involved in proving their case, even on an obviously justifiable discharge, is so great that they can better afford to tolerate the continued employment of an unsatisfactory worker.

Without entering into a discussion of what management should accomplish in negotiating workable clauses of this kind, or how management should conduct itself under a clause which is burdensome, it is necessary to admit that the task of getting rid of an unsatisfactory employee is likely to be more complicated under a collective bargaining rela-

tionship than otherwise. This means that good management, to a greater extent than otherwise, includes the task of making a satisfactory worker out of one who is unsatisfactory. This is the diagnosis which calls for the special treatment known as training.

Whether it touches on one or all of the tasks of selecting a new worker, promoting a senior worker, or making a satisfactory worker out of every employee, the collective bargaining relationship places new emphasis on the importance of the training function.

Collective bargaining will not do the training job. It need not and almost always does not interfere with the freedom of management to do the training job. It forces management into its responsibilities in the field of training. By every measurement, training is a responsibility of management beyond collective bargaining, training which takes in every member of the management team, every new and old employee, every day, as long as the business continues to operate.