

# Developments In Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 20, 1993

## THE USE OF EXPERIENTIAL TECHNIQUES IN CORPORATE TRAINING

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Richard Wagner, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater  
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The focus of this presentation will be on the use of experiential techniques in corporate training, a rapidly growing phenomenon in during the last five years. With this growth has come a great deal of controversy about the value and design of these programs. Many of the early proponents of these programs have come from the field of activity-based programming (therapy and recreation), and have relied on anecdotal evidence to validate the impact of these programs on corporate clients.

At the same time, a number of well-known people in the field of management development (including Peter Drucker) raised concerns as to the value of these programs for working with corporate clients. Starting in 1989 a major effort to evaluate the value of these programs and to begin development of a theoretical model for the use of experiential programs in management development was undertaken. This effort has grown to be international in scope, and has involved all of the people on this program, as well as many others.

This symposium will focus on a discussion of the findings of this four-year effort. By combining the viewpoints of the consultant (program providers), the corporate training director, and the academic researcher we hope to be able to offer some unique insights into this type of training.

### BIOGRAPHIES

Dennis Fahey is Manager of Communication and Training for Greenlee Textron, a Rockford, Illinois based manufacturer of equipment for the electrical industry. Dennis has attended a number of outdoor-based training programs, and has designed and implemented a number of these programs for Greenlee.

Virginia Hayes is a Consultant with TeamPerfect, a Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania based provider of experiential team building programs for industry. As a consultant to many organizations TeamPerfect and Virginia have a strong overview of these programs.

Susan Mamet is Vice President of OD with Travelers Insurance in Hartford, Connecticut. She had been responsible for guiding Travelers through an unprecedented period of change, and has been a leader in the use of experiential training to facilitate this change process within Travelers.

Russ Millholland is Training Director for Saint-Gobain/Norton Company in Northboro, Massachusetts. He was an early proponent of corporate experiential training, and has used experiential programs in training managers for over 17 years.

Ed Quinn is a Consultant with InnerWork Technologies, Inc. of Philadelphia. As a provider of experientially based training, both Ed and InnerWork are leaders in the development of programs to facilitate organizational change.

Chris Roland has been a leading developer and researcher in the field of experiential education since his graduate school day in the late 1970s. Roland/Diamond Associates, Inc. is a provider of unique, custom developed programs for many leading companies, and is known for its innovative approach to the field of experiential training.

Richard Wagner of the University Of Wisconsin-Whitewater is a former Corporate Training Director who has combined his academic and work background to become a key researcher in the field of experiential training & development.

Robert Weigand is the Manager of Training & Development for St. Luke's Hospital in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Bob has developed a large-scale experiential training program for the managers at St. Luke's and has been active in developing programs to evaluate this type of training.

### PROGRAM

Session #1: presents an overview of corporate experiential training, including the history of these programs and a discussion of the various models currently used.

Session #2: discusses the use of these programs, including: why corporations select adventure based programs; what types of programs they use; and how these programs are designed to achieve corporate training goals?

Session #3 discusses the facilitation of corporate culture change using experiential training.

Session #4: discusses current research and model development issues.