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'THE GOOD COOKS GUIDE TO TRAINING'

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It may seem an odd title for a workshop in Management training: 'The Good Cooks Guide to Training'. The analogy is with a chef, and, indeed, in many ways a trainer has the same sort of tasks to undertake. For the purposes of this paper and workshop we use the word 'Trainer' to mean everyone involved in a training or learning process whether based in Learning Institutions such as Colleges, Universities and Management Centres or those based in Industry, Commerce and Business. The Trainer, like the Chef, cannot produce the same material time after time, but must vary the diet. But this variation can only be made within certain limitations - the ingredients may differ from time to time, but they are not unlimited.

We can look at these ingredients as in the Figure overleaf. The Trainer finds that although his facilities and resources change, they are not unlimited: His costs must be contained, his time limited. There is a close link between these limitations and the participants on his course - is he to treat them as individuals, teams, or groups or all three? Furthermore, what is he to teach - analysis or action; numeracy or lateral thinking? Will he use structured training methods, or experiential methods?

All these questions must be answered before the Trainer is in a position to decide whether he is going to lecture, or to "play games", and when the decision is made, he must search for materials or must go through the exhausting process of constructing his own.

This workshop is based upon a recent publication called 'The Management Trainers Cookbook' (c) written by the two presenters. The 'cookbook' provides the trainer with about thirty 'ready to go' examples of different types of training exercises, problems, simulations and games. It aims to provide the trainer with simulation models which can be used as a basis for constructing other exercises and as the workshop will show, provide a mix of ingredients which together -in the appropriate proportions -can help to bring variety into training courses.

The workshop will be conducted in three stages

Firstly the presenters will introduce the seminar by looking at different styles of management, games/simulations and consider how these can be used effectively as part of an experiential learning programme.

Secondly the participants will be divided up into small groups representing Junior Managers and compete with each other to solve a series of management tasks. The tasks have been chosen to cover a range of management problems to ensure their appeal to an audience with very diverse needs. We hope that all delegates will be able to relate to some of these problems which will include 'thinking' type problems involving logical/lateral thinking, strategic management and human resource management problems. Each task will be taken from 'The Cookbook integrated and developed as part of a learning scenario. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the method of solving the problem or management strategy used to arrive at the most suitable solution. Each group will present a short report to all participants and show how those strategies used to solve the problems might be incorporated into a real life situation within a large company.

Thirdly the presenters will de-brief the participants by concentrating on the important management issues developed in solving the tasks. It is hoped that this will open out into an informal discussion forum and provide valuable feedback to all those taking part.

Finally, the presenters will try to gain some feedback themselves on the value of the workshop as a learning experience and the value of the 'cooking model' as a framework for developing other innovations.