

Dr. Richaard Camp is a consultant to many organizations in the USA and abroad. A few years back, an executive search firm hired him to train their employees on effective interviewing techniques. This was a key part of their work. Dr. Camp, in a meeting with the firm's management, discussed the importance of approaching the training as an organizational intervention, and the need to consider several organizational factors to ensure that the training transferred to the job. The client would be spending a great deal of money on the training and was willing to do what was necessary to assure transfer, which would be especially difficult because the international company is highly decentralized.

After a number of meetings with management, Dr. Camp designed a three-day workshop to provide the interviewing skills requested. The first group to go through the training consisted of all the top managers, including the president. This not only provided them with the necessary skills, but garnered their support for the process throughout the organization. He then began training all the other employees, from the top down. At the beginning of each training session, to indicate the importance of the training to the trainees, a video of the president of the company was shown. In the video the president indicates the importance of the training and how it would make them a more effective organization. Furthermore, a senior manager who also verbalized support for the training was in attendance at each training session. The manager was also able to provide real-life examples of when employees had used old versus new trained skills, and answered questions that arose about using the training back on the job. This put the training in a real organizational context for the trainees.

In each local area, "stars" were identified (those using the process very effectively) who were used as

resource persons to facilitate transfer. After training, employees were also assigned coaches (recall that everyone has received the training, so experienced coaches were available). To reinforce the importance of using the skills on the job, Dr. Camp developed a "one day refresher" training, and went to the various offices to provide this. Part of the "refresher" training was to share concerns about the difficulties in implementing the process and to generate ideas on how to make transfer easier. At the end of this training, Dr. Camp encouraged trainees to send him copies of the "outcome of an interview process" so he could provide them with feedback to again facilitate effective transfer to the job.

Dr. Camp then suggested that the company develop a task force to examine how effective the transfer of training was, and consider other steps that could be taken to assure that what trainees were learning was being transferred to the job. A representative of the task force began meeting with employees (while they were at different training sessions) to explore ways of facilitating the transfer. One of the ideas to come from these meetings was that each trainee team up with another trainee who was at the training session. When they got back to their respective offices throughout the world, they would stay in contact, providing support, feedback, and ideas for dealing with obstacles to using the trained skills.

How successful has the training been? Management has looked at some bottom-line results and has determined that the training has helped them become more profitable. Does everyone use the skills as effectively as they could? No, but the organization continues to work on ideas to encourage the transfer. Recently the task force has begun discussing the possibility of videos and online information to introduce the skills, and to reinforce their correct use.