

Meeting of the National Association of  
Training, Inc.'s and Related Programs

May 1-2, 1986  
Starved Rock, IL

TRAINING, INC. PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The lady sitting to my right, and I don't know how else to talk about her except to say she is responsible for all of our being here. It is all, no, it's not her fault, it's through Carol Walters' visioning and hard work that Training, Inc. ever came to be in the first place. She has been and is, our colleague, our mentor and our friend and every place she goes, in the world, you can be assured she still tells the Training, Inc. story. It is not what "they" are doing, it is what "we're" doing. She has claimed for herself that until she no longer is able to tell the story she is going to be very much a part of Training, Inc. and that certainly is to our advantage. She's always a great consultant no matter when you come upon her. And so, Carol, if you would take over.

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I realized a few minutes ago, when my face relaxed for a few moments, that I've been smiling ever since I got on the bus in Chicago this morning. It's hard on your face muscles! I am so delighted to be here with you.

There is a picture on the DuPage Montage of pictures from the past ten years under the heading "1976" with four people sitting at a table. I'm the one with red hair. The four people were the staff of Training, Inc. The total staff of Training, Inc. and related programs, that year. And to go from that table of four to this table of forty-nine and realize there are others who couldn't be here today, is overwhelming. I am honored to be in your presence.

I know a secret about Training, Inc. and this is the story I share with others. The secret has to do with knowing what makes this program really work--what makes it a success. There are many people trying to figure that out. Surely you've been asked during site visits, at graduations, and by reporters what the key to your success really is. YOU, the staff, are the key. You make it work. You are the magic.

Training, Inc. 1986 is not Training, Inc. 1975. If it were, we wouldn't be here. Training, Inc. is designed in such a way as to utilize the creativity and talents of the staff in designing the program to fit the needs of the trainees and the business community at any given time. You are charged with continuing to determine what is needed and to be flexible enough and visionary enough to meet those needs. It is this you have done <sup>and</sup> are doing.

Back in 1975, we didn't have any computers at Training, Inc. and if we still did not have them, we probably wouldn't be here. Training, Inc. has evolved and changed with the times. People are usually quite surprised when you tell them how long this program has been operating. They have not known many job training programs which have lasted. The programs seem to come and go, especially when the federal funding guidelines are changed. But this program came into being to serve a particular need. And that need has not changed: A job training program for the hard to employ which communicates a positive self-image of competence, employability, and self-sufficiency and works to see that every participant can obtain marketable skills and find employment.

Let me say once again, I'm honored to be in your presence. The reports this morning were music to my ears. We could go on telling stories like that for the next two days. And in a way, we will. You have given me an opportunity this morning to tell stories about "where we've come from". We also want to peer into the future a bit in a workshop and talk about "where we're going".

Before I begin to relate our history, I would be delighted if we would take time to sing "Blue Skies". The Indianapolis team has put us into a singing spirit. We were just about ready to join them in the chorus of their new song the second time through. So let's sing "Blue Skies" and hear what a group of 49 of us sounds like--loudly enough that the people in the lodge can hear us. (Group singing) The style and spirit of that singing only reinforces my point about what makes this program work.

I've been asked to share with you some images out of the past that have brought us to this point. We began in 1975. I'm glad Oak Brook brought some pictures from all of those years. It's alright to look at them as long as you don't say "Golly, you look so young!". And please don't tell me where you were in 1975. Especially if you were in elementary school. Otherwise, anything goes and you can ask questions and make any comments you would like. Did you notice things like how the dress style has changed, or the variety of offices we've located in.



I've made some notes, but as the morning has gone on, I've made more notes in the margins than I had in the text which is printed in the smallest type I could get from my computer printer. The notes are to keep me focused. It is dangerous when I get started on this subject, it is easy to spin off in several directions on so many topics. You may have to blow the whistle when my time is up.

Training, Inc. began in 1974. It was in the Fall of 1974 when CETA funding was just becoming available to do job training for the hard to employ. The RFP's (Requests for Proposals) went out in DuPage County. DuPage County was the third wealthiest County in the country. Many people believed there were probably not many CETA eligible clients to be trained. But they were wrong. We've graduated 4 classes a year for the past 11 years. The Oak Brook Association of Commerce and Industry entertained the idea of providing office skills training in the business community of Oak Brook. The Affirmative Action Committee was eager to see a program come into being which might provide qualified minorities for employment in their businesses. They were aware of countless applicants who were screened out from available jobs because they didn't have the skills or the ability to market their skills. There were so many people who "just didn't fit in" and they were afraid this "fitting in" might not happen just through being hired. There were many people who needed a way to transist from home to the work place or from school to the work place.

The Affirmative Action Committee urged the Board of Directors of the Oak Brook Association of Commerce and Industry to apply for a grant to do office skills job training. The Board with some reluctance decided to sponsor the program. The County of DuPage Offices of Employment and Training were pleased to see the support and interest of the private sector involved from the beginning.

The Affirmative Action Committee, headed up by Denis Detzel of McDonalds, decided to ask the YMCA Community College for help in designing this unique program to be located in the Oak Brook community. The College located in downtown Chicago responded by providing one staff person to recruit the staff and help with the practics of setting up the training program. The College was located several miles away and was really not organized to support an extension program of this nature. So we were given complete autonomy to get started.

The staff person they assigned to work on this project (Neva Forbes) was also a member of the Institute of Cultural Affairs.

She pulled together a small group of us (myself included) who were living and working in Fifth City at the time and laid out the opportunity to design the program, set it up, and be the staff.

While we were designing the program, reviewing curriculum materials, and requesting contributions of equipment, a proposal was written on our behalf which was designed to be priced under all the other bidders for clerical training programs in the County. This led to a proposal to train 20 students (60 per day) for three hours, three times per day for eight weeks.

We decided early on to locate in a very fine business setting and that the environment and setting of Training, Inc. would be designed to educate the imagination. We located in a busy office building. The idea was that the transition would be enabled if trainees did not have to wait until their training was finished to know what working in an office requires. We chose the Lester Hill Corporation Simulation as a vehicle through which to teach a variety of office skills (in the short time available) and typing classes.

Working with the eight week time period and with donated equipment proved to be quite a challenge. The donated equipment worked against us. Among the first typewriters, no two were alike. They all had different keyboards and worst of all different ways of replacing the ribbons which were always running out in the middle of a timed writing. Many of the typewriters had been shelved because they could only use polyethylene ribbons and because the mechanism to control how much the ribbon advanced between letters was worn out. Some of them had carriages 1 yard wide. This was murder on your hips in a small room with narrow aisles!

The first job search came around all too quickly. We invited 14 personnel interviewers to come and do "practice interviews" with the trainees. We were surprised when they all said "YES" to coming. We were also unprepared in terms of furniture and space. We had to borrow space and bring card tables from home to accommodate the interviewers. But this signaled the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship with the business community who really were interested in hiring our graduates.

The first graduations were coffee and cake receptions for the whole family at the County of DuPage Office Building. These were great occasions but you felt as if you were sending the graduates "back into the home" rather than into the business community for which they had been trained.



After three sessions of this model we needed:

1. More Training Time
2. More Space (3 branches of Lester Hill per day)
3. Newer equipment and
4. A second chance!

We rented more space in the same building and were given a grant by the County to bring back all the trainees who had graduated from the first three sessions and who did not yet have jobs. We trained them for 3 months in 6 hours of classes per day. This called for new curriculum. We added Speed Writing, Math, English and Office Procedures to the curriculum.

With a grant from the McDonald's Corporation, we purchased 12 new IBM selectric typewriters.

In September, 1975 we took one month off to MOVE to a new location (Butterfield Office Plaza with an atrium in the center) and to write a new proposal. We had to begin a fund-raising campaign in the business community to pay the rent. We were not able to write a proposal which doubled the per trainee cost. So we decided to try a program which would provide full-day training for those who were new to office skills and half-day training along with half-day work experience jobs for those with some entry level skills or experience.

The new proposal was granted. The administration of this type of program along with full day skills training for 1/3 of the group proved to be very demanding for the small staff of four persons. We experimented with audio-cassette labs in English, Math, and Spelling and Punctuation. The pictures you saw under "1976" of trainees with headphones on and eyes closed tells the story of how well this type of instruction was received after the imaginal and lively presentations and classes conducted by the Training, Inc. staff.

October 1975 - October 1976 saw 108 graduate with 88 employed within a short time following graduation.

Denis Detzel said in one of our Staff In-Service Days, "The beauty of Training, Inc. to me is that from its inception it has been serious people who are seriously interested in specific goals and bringing people to specific points and even indicating, in retrospect, what those points were. They are hired, or they are not hired. They have a job or they do not have a job. It is not "a good time was had by all and the money is gone. Now, that is an exceedingly easy concept to sell to the business community. After a lot of reistance on the front end in

Oak Brook, you come back a year later and they say, 'Oh, it's not another one of those.' And it is not. Never has been. It's a beautiful thing."

The Work Experience experiment failed. Trainees dropped the jobs early (but stayed in Training, Inc.) and told story after story about the futility of trying to learn in these situations. The most common complaint was lack of equipment and the monotony of a single task at which they were already pretty good. I think perhaps the real complaint and concern was over the messages that were communicated and conflicted with their new found and growing self-confidence and achievement in the Training, Inc. program.

The Contract for 1976-1977 was granted for full-day training for everyone. That year there were 107 graduates and 97 employed. The Accounting Clerk simulation "Mountain View" was used and we began to look to our expanded team within the business community for business excursions, training sessions, and the career development events. It seemed as though the intentional interruption of the time schedule every Wednesday with special events and excursions allowed a new relationship to be taken to what was going on in the day-to-day classes. Celebrations were placed periodically in the quarter's schedule to shift the mood and make it possible to look at the future with anticipation. Trainees learned to enjoy the unexpected, not fear it.

The business personnel offices began to call us when they had job openings. They counted on Training, Inc. as a dependable source of skilled workers who understood industry expectations and rules of behavior. Later, we joined the Oak Brook Association of Commerce and Industry and were invited to be on the Board of Directors (the same group who struggled hard with the decision to sponsor the program in the beginning).

December, 1978 saw the opening of the first replication of Training, Inc. in downtown Chicago. This program was located in the offices of the Sun-Times Building on the Chicago River. The first class enrolled 33, graduated 32 and placed 32. We were determined that each individual would win. Sam Bernstein (former director of the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training) said, "I was concerned that this program was going to be based upon the success of the Oak Brook Program and might not be replicable in the Chicago area. How wrong I turned out to be! I am so excited about what this school is doing I've challenged it to expand and will see to it that funds are provided for the expansion."



In January, 1980 the Fifth City Business Careers was opened on Chicago's West Side. This was the first program to locate in a community instead of a "downtown" site. This location transformed the inside of an old industry building into quality office space.

March, 1981 The second Chicago Downtown site opened on Wabash Avenue in the Carson's Building. This location pioneered in word-processing training in a 16 week cycle.

By this time, all the sites were equipped with computers and the curriculum was expanded to include Data Entry and Word Processing.

In May, 1981 the Indianapolis Training, Inc. opened its doors in the Majestic Building on Pennsylvania Avenue after many months of set-up and work with the business community and sponsoring groups. Trainer Training was designed to do staff training in replicating sites and In-Service Days were introduced as a way for staffs to get together to share learnings and curriculum breakthroughs.

The program took a great leap forward with this much creativity focussed on each curriculum area. The staffs of the various sites would come together (in Chicago on a weekly basis at first) and study and share their most effective teaching methods with one another.

During 1981 Training, Inc. received many awards. The Program was cited by the Department of Labor as an "Exemplary CETA Training Program"--one of the top ten we were told informally at the time of selection. The DuPage County site received the National Association of Counties award that same year.

During 1982-1983 the shift from CETA to JTPA funding was made.

In January, 1983<sup>4</sup> Boston Training, Inc. began as the first program to operate with a broad base of funding support.

July, 1985 the STEP program began in Sellersburg, Indiana.

It is not really possible for one person to tell the whole story. So let's fill in a few details from the '80's up to today.

How many graduates have there been? 4,089!

Boston-187; Dupage-1300, FCBC-647,  
Indianapolis-520, STEP-37, Chicago Wabash-480, and Chicago  
Michigan-918.

Who have been some of the graduation speakers?

Senator Dan Quayle; Governor DuKakis of Massachusetts; President of Independence Bank; Bill Pope, President of Chicago Bridge and Iron; Eleanor Blakey, a graduate; the Director of Public Aid in Chicago.

Who has been on a site visit?

Asst. Sec. of Labor; Lt. Gov. now Senoary John Carey of Massachusetts; USDOL Women's Bureau National Director; Sen. Quayle's staff; Indianapolis WIN Demo staff; National United Way; Oxford Corporation training staff; Stan Carson Center for Corp. Responsibility, Washington, D.C.).

Who has donated money or other support?

Indianapolis UMC Foundation  
Amoco Foundation  
Oak Brook Association of Commerce and Industry  
Nalco Foundation  
Ernst & Whinney  
Hancock Insurance  
Old South Church, Boston  
Coolidge Investments  
Edison Bank of Boston  
ADIA Personnel  
Daubert Chemical  
Eastman Kodak  
Fourth Presbyterian Church (bus tokens and clothes)  
Mary Kay Cosmetics

Perhaps the next step in recording our history would be to get our individual lists of these important milestone events and statistics together in one place and create our National Story of Success.