
CLIMBING THE SUCCESS PYRAMID AT TRAINING, INC.

Training, Inc., is located in Boston's downtown business district, immediately conveying a sense that it means business. With an 88 percent placement rate after five cycles and an 87 percent retention rate after one year, Training, Inc., fulfills its mission of training the unemployed or underemployed.

The most recent class of men and women ranged in age from seventeen to sixty-two and entered directly from the welfare rolls, the unemployment ranks, or plant closings. Referring agencies paid \$3,000 per student (not the full tuition cost)—but they will pay less if the graduate does not get a job.

Training, Inc., provides Boston businesses with well-trained employee candidates who have developed the skills, appearance, and manner appropriate for an office environment, at no cost to the potential employer. They can work well with customers, co-workers, and supervisors; they can manage their time and solve problems. They are enthusiastic, confident, and eager to learn new skills and office procedures.

TI concentrates on preparing people for careers, not just for entry-level positions. Of those who find employment, 93 percent advance through raises, promotions, or new positions. The TI curriculum provides hands-on experience for its thirty or so participants in each cycle. Each classroom is set up so that students learn by doing. The accounting room consists of a large table with thirteen adding machines/calculators spaced around it; the typing room has thirteen typewriters, each set on its own desk; the computer room has thirteen terminals and end tables.

Students are given the message that they are independent learners, working apart from the class but at the same time a part of the larger group. The self-paced work routine varies from an

written by Presidential Candidate, Michael Dukakis

accounting Professional Packet of typical accounting chores at a doctor's, dentist's, and lawyer's office to a simulation exercise called Lester Hill. Here the trainees each apply and are hired for a position in one of six departments in a hotel/motel supply company, and for two weeks perform the duties required of their position. These simulated exercises are augmented by business excursions to local companies, where trainees see people performing business tasks and observe office procedures without fear of making a mistake, asking a dumb question, or being thought of as unproductive.

Everything at TI reinforces the message that success stems more from personal strengths than from practical skills. A Success Pyramid illustrates the skills TI considers essential for career success, starting at the base with "dependability" and rising to "ability to suggest improvements." A Cycle Chart, for example, lists each trainee by first name and leaves room for the name of his or her first employer to be posted beside it. A variety of industry types offer positions to trainees; many of them are well-known national and local companies. Across from this information about current TI participants is a wall displaying eight-by-ten-inch glossy black-and-white photos of TI graduates in their new jobs. Everyone looks very professional, poised, happy, and productive—an incentive for newcomers to the program or for graduates just entering their new jobs.

The best part of the Training, Inc., story is the people themselves, people who have gained hope along with their skills, self-confidence along with their jobs and earnings.

- Although Susan had been a bank teller before coming to TI, she was very nervous in the program. She had been on welfare for the past ten years and was afraid of stepping out on her own. Her ex-husband resented and discouraged her ambition. Following TI graduation, Susan stepped into a receptionist position at Brigham and Women's in the purchasing department. When TI needed a receptionist for their office, they called in five graduates, one of whom was Susan. She

took the job, is now the TI office manager, and actually does some typing instruction. In March 1987, she married Bob, a man she met in her Training, Inc., course.

- Ed has muscular dystrophy and came to TI to develop skills that would enable him to work despite his loss of muscle coordination. A "people person all the way around," he found his first job as a customer service representative at Sperry TopSider, part of the Stride Rite Corporation. He is earning \$100 more a week than when he started two years ago and looks forward to a supervisory position in the near future. Ed has contributed artwork and articles for internal corporate newsletters and was recently instrumental in hiring another TI graduate from the last cycle.
- Kathy's son is a hemophiliac, and she had missed a lot of working time caring for him. At TI she was a loner, "a hard worker and quick, but not bright and cheerful." To help Kathy make the transition into the working world, TI hired her as a receptionist. Kathy gained confidence and eventually went to work for the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. She has had two quick raises amounting to more than a 16 percent pay increase. "Now she calls in regularly to see how we're doing, and I can hear the smile in her voice," said Sandy Moore, TI's chief job developer. "Her husband had just been put on unemployment and was thinking about entering one of our cycles."
- Julie made it through TI "by the skin of her teeth. She came in and tried hard but reached a point where her learning capacity froze; she just couldn't remember things or perform machine skills well." TI staff helped her and tried to make the painful learning process easier. Julie refused to give up, entered another training program after graduating from TI, and after a one-and-a-half-year job search, found a job at an investment firm and loves it. Moore says that "Julie's new-found pride in a good day's work made the time and effort building up the skills necessary to procure a job worth it to Julie."

In 1987 a grateful graduate visited TI the day she got her first paycheck and donated half of it on the spot to the program—TI's largest alumni donation yet.

SUCCESS PYRAMID

The business world's criteria for success:
used in evaluating participant's performance

