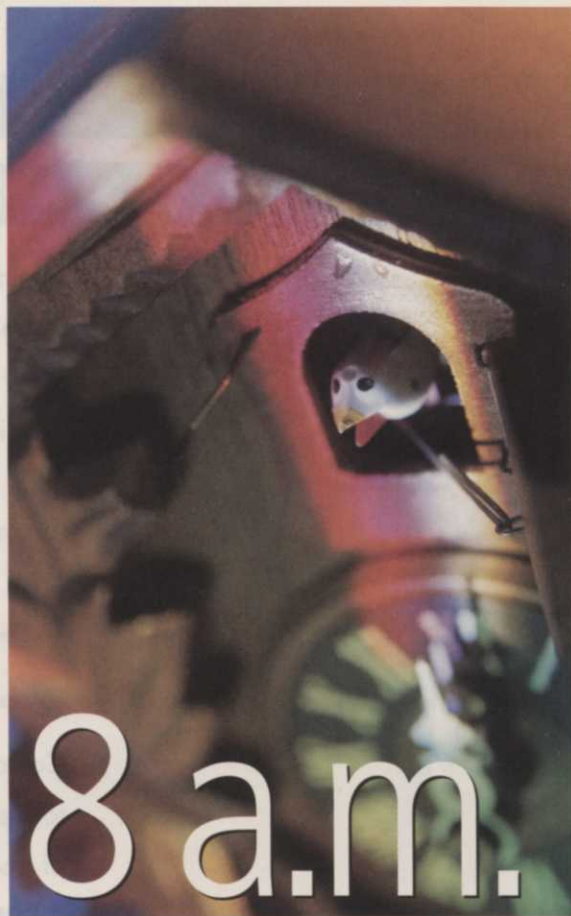


They say you learn something best when you teach it. Your employees may be the ideal teachers

BY PHIL FOGARTY

All before 8 a.m.

Develop skills and create energy



It's 7 a.m. and the group heading into the meeting room hears country music playing. "That's right, it's Steve's week to train! He should have been a cowboy."

Nods of recognition accompany a few grins. "We didn't even think that he could talk and here he is on his third session. And he's not bad, either."

Steve hits the button on the CD player, stopping the background melody. "Okay, listen up. Bob has the mission statement." Bob's recitation from memory is greeted with groans and sarcastic applause. "Show off!" "Brown noser!" Bob sits down after being handed a new company hat with movie tickets protruding from the brim.

Steve keeps things moving. "Good job, Bob. We're talking about routing today and we need everyone's input. Does anybody have any thoughts on why good routing is so critical?"

Quick and consistent

Another Skills Development Series session is on its way.

The combination of brevity and consistency works a little magic in the participating companies. Thanks to positive peer pressure, everyone gets together each week and they wouldn't dare miss with American Cyanamid's purse at stake (see sidebar).

Standings are faxed around the country after each session so all those competing know what the score is. One training combatant says, "Besides, this thing brings us together each week and everybody's the same for that hour."

Of the 12 Skills Development Series companies participating, all but one have trained every week and documented it with a fax-back form that shares feedback with the SDS group. The 12 routing discussions provided feedback like this:

► "We followed a customer's path from an estimate to a sale, from invoice to service. It helped everyone understand all the parts of the system that affect routing."

► "We learned how to route with a new software program today."

► "We initiated a new procedure today. We'll take recommendations from our employees on better ways to route a customer."

One percent of your time

A company dedicating only 1% of its time each week for training gets other benefits as well. One Skills Developer said, "If we can excite people about learning once a week, they are bound to do some learning on their own above and beyond what we provide."

The *Landscape Management Skills Development Series* is moving its member companies a little closer to being learning organizations each week. Now more than 25% complete, SDS participants will never go back to training "only when they have the time."

Steve feels good about the 35-minute meeting. What great ideas came from this one! He remembers a quote that summed up the session: "Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may not remember. Involve me and I'll understand." **LM**

American Cyanamid's SDS prize package

PARSIPPANY, NJ - American Cyanamid, the sponsor of the first *Landscape Management Skills Development Series*, announced the grand prize package to be awarded to the company who trains for all 52 weeks in the contest. In the case of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine the winner of products that are valued at more than \$1,500.

"The SDS has put a spotlight on regular training for LCOs across the country, and AMCY is excited to sponsor such a unique learning program," said Joe Visaggio, market manager, Turf and Ornamental Products at American Cyanamid. AmCy, makers of the popular lawn care products Amdro Pro, Image, Pendulum and Pendimethelin, also provided products to all companies that enrolled in the program, which started in February. JP Horizons, an Ohio-based consulting firm, designs weekly training session outlines for companies to download from www.jphorizons.com, plus coaching and networking support.

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