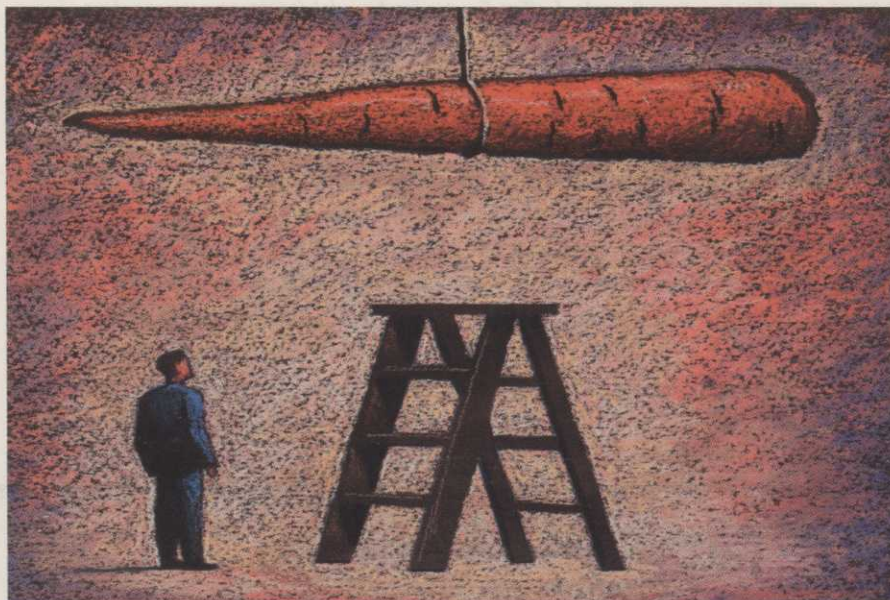


They don't participate

Some employees are reluctant to participate in training, yet may need it the most. Here are some tips to get them involved



BY JIM PALUCH

I often wonder why someone wouldn't want to participate in a training program. Many companies tell me they only have a few employees who won't participate, yet it's a problem.

Here are some reasons why they may not be "in the loop:"

- ▶ They don't understand the program.
- ▶ They're afraid of being called on and not knowing the answer.
- ▶ They may be lazy and not want to do thinking exercises.
- ▶ They may worry about others improving and passing them by, so they try to hold everyone back.
- ▶ They may have a learning disorder they want to conceal.
- ▶ They've never participated before – this is just another in a long line.
- ▶ They want attention, and get it by being

contrary.

- ▶ Their low opinion of training stems from a low opinion of themselves.
- ▶ They're tired of the same person training, yet won't offer any suggestions themselves.
- ▶ They're unaware of how training can control costs, improve service, reduce accidents and improve morale.
- ▶ They've always sat in the back of the room and don't want to change.

This list could go on, but I believe every non-participant can participate and would have incredible ideas if they had the courage to speak up. It's a fact that those who step to the plate and participate move ahead in life and their careers.

Some non-participants may want to join in but are influenced by others who are negative. I wonder what they think is more important — sitting silently in the back or im-

proving at work and earning their families' appreciation?

Rethink your sessions

There is no magic fix to motivating the unmotivated, but here are a few suggestions that might work:

- ▶ One of the worst things to do is pay too much attention to non-participants. That's what they may want. You might reverse the situation and ask them not to participate and give them a break from training for a few weeks. Tell them you're covering some in-depth stuff with key people who are participating in training and they don't need to be there unless they want to.
- ▶ Hold a session called "idealistic redesign." Tell everyone you'll redesign the meetings next week and brainstorm ideas to make them more effective for everyone. In the process, you may find ideas to improve your sessions and hear why some don't want to participate.
- ▶ Use a film clip (see LM October, page 40) to liven up training.
- ▶ Give non-participants some Silly String. When they hear a good idea, let them set it off.
- ▶ Give a certificate for training or offer motivational prizes.
- ▶ Hold a meeting on "Why I Hate Training." Play funeral music with the lights low. Try to get at least 50 reasons, then pick the top five and ask for ideas on how to fix them.

— The author is president of JP Horizons Inc., and is a well-known trainer and consultant to the Green Industry. He can be reached at: 440/254-8211 or email: jpaluch@jphorizons.com