

# Lights! Camera! Training!

Believe it — role playing makes training sessions fun and memorable, and you don't have to be good at acting

BY PHIL FOGARTY

“**Q**uiet on the set, please!” The curtain goes up, the audience waits in anticipation and your next training session begins. Do you think you don't have the time or expertise needed? It's easier than you think. Try using a few well planned role playing scenarios.

## Don't be afraid — it's fun

Don't think role playing has any validity?

While the mention of role playing might frighten some people, remember that we live many of these roles daily in our own lives. We have all been the customer, the service rep, the employee and the manager at one time or another. And who hasn't secretly wanted to play the roll of trouble-maker or complaining client?

With very little preparation, role playing will build confidence and create stronger skills for the whole team. Here are a few easy guidelines to follow:

1. Have all “parts” written out ahead of time so the scene is clearly understood.
2. Give a few minutes of prep time and a little coaching. Leave plenty of room for personality and creativity.
3. Give the audience instructions on their “role.” Getting and giving constructive feedback makes for great team building.
4. Make sure everyone eventually gets a chance. Even introverts have a little actor in them.
5. Have fun and applaud every performance enthusiastically.

## Roles your employees can play

► **Receptionist & customer.** A customer calls to complain about weeds and wants to know how she could have this problem after all the years of your service. Explain why the problem developed as well as how and when you will take care of it.

► **Customer & manager.** You've had Gangrene Lawn care for 10 years and know you're paying more than your neighbors for lawn care. You feel it has the best reputation but from the looks of it, your lawn has more dandelions than last year and more than your neighbors' lawns. You're mad and feel Gangrene may be slipping.

► **Technician & neighbor.** While visiting a new customer's property on a routine inspection, a neighbor charges out of her house on a property full of weeds. She is upset and accuses you of polluting her “nontoxic” organic environment.

► **Assistant manager & customer.** A second-year customer has received an unsolicited quote from a competing company. The quote is for half of what you charge. She calls to say she is going to leave you if you can't justify why you are more expensive.

—The author leads the Skills Development Series training system, sponsored by American Cyanamid and Landscape Management. Role playing techniques will be covered Nov. 7 at the GIE Show by Jim Paluch. For more information on SDS training or the seminar, call JP Horizons at 440/254-8211 or email: [pfogarty@stratos.net](mailto:pfogarty@stratos.net).

