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# TRAIN-STORIES-DEPOT

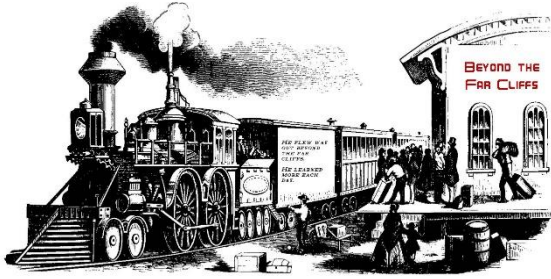
*I just want it to look like nothing else in the world.  
And it should be surrounded by a train.*

Walt Disney



STORIES FROM THE

**TRAIN 'N STATION**



Training and Development Journal published "Train'n Ain't for Everybody" in May 1984. It told the story of a passenger at a railroad station, wanting "train'n" but not knowing where to go. *"If we would let only those people who really need training on to the train, we would all be better off."*

The story was just perfect for the training I was conducting at that time. I contacted ASTD and received permission to reprint the story.

As time passed, I used the idea from this story to create four additional stories taking place at the railroad station, prefaced with:

*Well, I was at that railroad ticket booth that same morning. I've been train'n all around the country the last few years, so it's taken some time to tell the story of the prospective passenger I saw at the next train'n station.*

- I. Train'n Ain't for Everyone (The Original)
- II. Where Is this Train'n Going? (Management)
- III. A MAP for Train'n (Assessment)
- IV. The Train'n Platform (Quality - Customer Service)
- V. Thinking about Train'n (Thinking Skills)

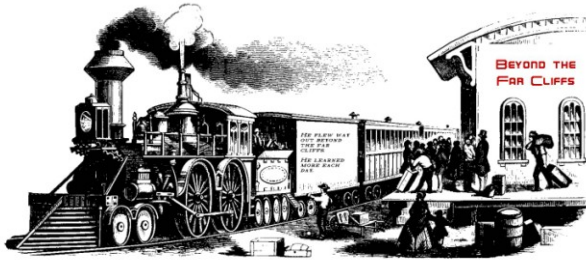
JAMES W. SCHREIER, PH.D., SPHR

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TRAIN-STORIES-DEPOT.COM

## FROM THE TRAIN'N STATION #1

# TRAIN'N AIN'T FOR EVERYBODY



*Setting: A railroad station ticket booth. It is mid-morning, and the ticket agent is busy filling out reports and counting money. The morning rush is over, and the agent is absorbed in getting reorganized.*

*A prospective passenger approaches the ticket booth. The agent suddenly looks up and is startled by the presence of the customer.*

Agent: May I help you?

Customer: I'd like a train ticket, please.

Agent: Where to?

Customer: Oh, I don't know. I'd just like to take a train for awhile.

Agent: But I can't sell tickets without being told the destination!

Customer: Well, what's available?

Agent: I beg your pardon?

Customer: What's available? Where do all the trains go?

Agent: Well, trains can help you get to almost any place you want. Our company alone has direct routes to more than 50 cities. By making a few connections with other railroads, we can help you get to more than 10,000 cities in the United States. So where would you like to go?

Customer: (With a touch of confusion) I never expected this to be so hard. I just wanted to get some train'n experience. I've heard it's a lot of fun.

Agent: (Sighs with frustration) So that's what you want. You want one of those luxury liners.

Well, we don't have that kind of train here. This company is in the transportation business. We help people get where they want to go.

(The agent settles back in his chair while the customer begins to fidget uncomfortably. The agent resumes with self-assurance.)

We're no cattle-car operation, though. We offer all of the conveniences necessary to make your travel comfortable and stimulating. There's nothing worse than a boring train ride, you know.

But if you just want to get away from where you are and don't have any place to go, talk to one of those "vacation train" outfits. They'll be glad to sell you a ticket without knowing where you're going.

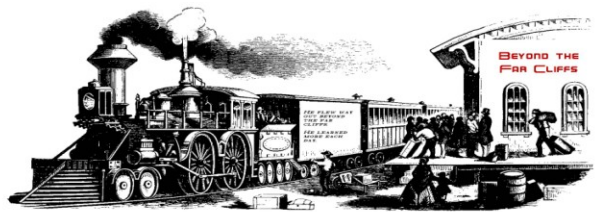
Customer: That sounds great! Put me on a train to one of their stations.

Agent: I suppose I could do that. You realize, of course, that your "vacation train" will cost anywhere from \$500 to \$1,000 or more.

Customer: You're kidding! I can't afford that much. Don't they have one that is just one day, for maybe \$100?



## TRAIN'N AIN'T FOR EVERYBODY



Agent: (Leans across the counter and speaks in a reflective tone)

Sounds like you need to see a transportation consultant, or somebody like that. Or you could take our train to Bethel, Maine. I'm told they have folks there who help people discover where they've been and where they're going.

Customer: No, that's not for me. I don't want to get into that kind of thing. I just want some train'n.

Agent: OK, but where do you want to go?

Customer: All right! Give me a ticket to "I don't really need to be hereville."

Agent: OK, but most train passengers make that into a two-day trip.

Customer: Well, how about a one-day trip to "Unaccountableville"? (Pause)

Agent: It's a great place, all right. Everybody should visit that town every now and then. But really, you don't need a train for that.

Look, from what you've said, you don't have the time or money for a "vacation train." And no bona fide train will get you to "Unaccountableville." It's a nice place, mind you, but this railroad is in the transportation business. We help people get to places where other forms of transportation are too slow, inconvenient, expensive or not available.

(Leans forward and continues)

Please. I have customers waiting. I don't think a train is for you. Not at the moment anyway.

Customer: (Resigned and then with bewilderment) Maybe you're right. Thanks for your help. This train'n business is interesting, but there are more things to consider than I thought.

(The customer begins to walk away, pauses, and turns to ask...)

By the way, where's the bus station?

Agent: Across the street. But if you decide to do that, don't forget to buy a round-trip ticket!

*(The scene closes, and a new character, the conductor, walks on stage.)*

Conductor: *This has been one of the many stories that gets repeated day after day in the training industry. But unlike our ticket agent, most agents are eager to sell tickets without regard to the customer's destination or needs.*

*If we sell tickets to people who really don't need a train, or who don't know where they're going, they just get upset and complain. They report they've been railroaded rather than trained.*

*That gives all trains a bad name and everybody stops using them. People who really need them forget that trains offer an effective means of transportation.*

*If we would let only those people who really need train'n on to the train, we would all be better off.*

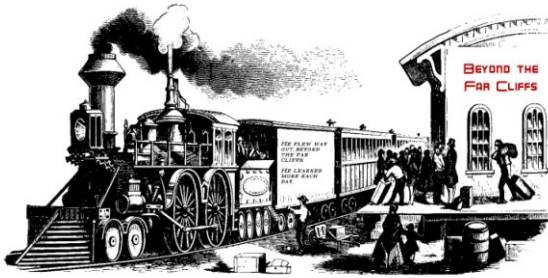
Training and Development Journal  
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David E. Morris, Exxon Corporation  
Florham Park, New Jersey  
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Beyond the Far Cliffs  
[www.farcliffs.com](http://www.farcliffs.com)

## FROM THE TRAIN'N STATION #2

# WHERE'S THIS TRAIN'N GOING?



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*Well, I was at that railroad ticket booth that same morning. I've been train'n all around the country the last few years so it's taken some time to tell the story of the prospective passenger I saw at the next train'n station..*

Agent: Well, hello Mr. Thompson. How can I help you today?

Customer: I'd like a train ticket, please.

Agent: Where are you going on this trip?

Customer: Well, you know I just got back from New Product Land. It was a long journey with all the changes we've been going through. But it was a trip worth the taking. What I'd really like to do now is go somewhere that's refreshing. I really think I should take that "Management Train'n" I took two years ago. Is that the same trip it was then?

Agent: Mr. Thompson, the name of the trip is still "Management Train'n," and some of it's the same. But there are a lot of new stops along the way -- and some of the places that look familiar have been changed in a lot of ways. Here's the brochure showing the route, the stops, and some of the new equipment we're using in train'n these days.

Customer: New equipment?

Agent: Yes, almost every car is equipped with video and some trains even have cars equipped with games and exercise equipment. And there's one train with computers that lets you pretend you're running the train -- it's called a simulation. But tell me, Mr. Thompson, what have you been doing the last year?

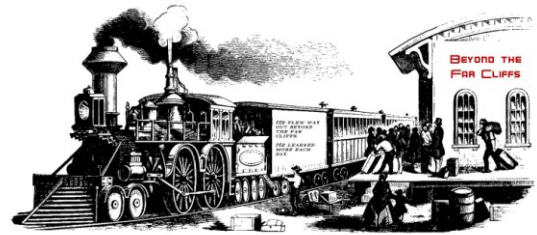
Customer: Well, you know what its like when there are lots of changes -- just like when the railroad keeps changing the routes and the schedules. I've been so busy working on new product designs, manufacturing schedules, promotional plans, I haven't had a chance to really look at how well I'm managing things. I feel a little like a professional athelete in the middle of a long season -- too many games and not even enough time to give the body some relaxation or practice.

Agent: I know how you feel. I noticed the other day that I hadn't been able to just practice on the computer -- trying out some new ways of helping customers. Caught myself working with a customer and making some mistakes I hadn't made in years. I need to get away for some train'n myself. So what do you think of this year's "Management Train'n" schedule?

Customer: Sounds good to me. But it looks like I've got a busy two weeks just visiting some familiar faces.

Agent: And meeting some new folks along the way. A lot of people are starting to take our longer trips. Just a few minutes ago, one local company bought tickets for all of their first line supervisors. During a one month plant conversion next summer, the managers are going on a special one month "Management Train'n" excursion. They're going to spend more time at each of the stops along the route -- and really explore how they can take some of the ideas back into their renovated manufacturing facility.

## WHERE'S THIS TRAIN'N GOING?



Customer: Wow! That sounds fascinating! I'm looking at all these new stops. I don't see how I can cover all these places in only two weeks this year?

Agent: Well, it seems that more and more of our regular customers are taking longer trips these days. It's funny - but sad when people come in looking for an economy trip to one of these places - - like Motivation Mountain. They think they can learn everything about motivating their employees in a day -- on a discount ticket. But I don't think that describes you, Mr. Thompson. Is there any other information I can help you with?

Customer: Well, it looks like a few of these new stops might be very important. But I've never heard of Conflict Canyon. Although if it's got anything to do with managing conflicts, I may need to spend a couple of weeks in just that one place. We've had lots of conflict in our organization the last year or so.

Agent: Well then, Mr. Thompson, that's definitely a place for you. You'll find out some new -- almost magic ways -- of resolving conflict among your people and in your organization as a whole. You'll recognize some things you've known for a long time but they'll take on a new light when you can get away from the day to day pressures and center on some new experiences.

Customer: What about Motivation Mountain? That mountain railroad has always been a favorite of mine.

Agent: It's changed a lot. You know that mountain is always changing. As it gets older, that railroad is always taking new twists and turns. It seems that Motivation Mountain is never the same -- almost from day to day. And you'll definitely want to spend some time at Future Falls. With so much changing in management these days, you need to look ahead at what your organization and your skills might be facing in the next few years.

Customer: That sounds great! I think you'd better put me down for this trip next month.

Agent: Mr. Thompson, you really enjoy train'n don't you?

Customer: You bet. I take train'n every day to get to work. It's so important. I wish I had even more time to spend train'n. It always seems to help me get somewhere. I'm even surprised by what I learn when the train'n gets stuck -- or takes a detour. And sometimes, I just like to go to the places I know so well, like Communication Caverns. Seeing how powerful the forces of communication are, it revitalizes my spirit and helps me concentrate on making the right decisions back on the job. Thanks a lot for filling me in on what's been happening in some of these places.

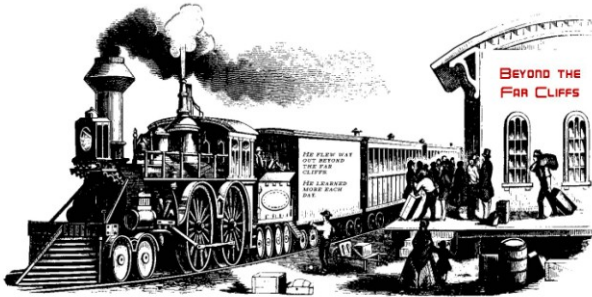
*(Again, the conductor walks out):*

*Another train'n station another story. But this time the agent knew more about the train'n he was providing. And the passenger had a higher opinion of train'n and how it affected him. Train'n has changed a lot. The people that sell tickets need to know a lot more about the destinations and services on the trains. Train'n consultants aren't separate in many cases. We expect this from the ticket agent.*

*In this case we've looked at a manager who believes that train'n is valuable all the time. At the next station, I ran into a prospective passenger who had no idea what she needed -- and a ticket agent with some interesting programs that helped her decide.*

James W. Schreier, Ph.D., SPHR  
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# A MAP FOR TRAIN'N



In May 1984, Training and Development Journal published, "Train'n Ain't For Everybody" It told the story of a passenger at a railroad station, wanting "train'n" but not knowing where to go. It concluded "If we would let only those people who really need train'n on to the train, we would all be better off."

*Well, I was at that railroad ticket booth that same morning. I've been train'n all around the country the last few years so it's taken some time to tell the story of the prospective passenger I saw at another train'n station.*

Agent: Good Morning, M'am.

Customer: Good Morning. I hope you can help me?

Agent: Well, if you're looking to take some train'n somewhere, I'm sure I can.

Customer: Well, I'm not sure I need to take some train'n to get where I need to go. Some people at work have suggested that management is just like white water rafting. And they say there's not much I can do except jump right in.

Agent: Management can be a pretty hectic trip.

Customer: Yes, and I'm new to management. My company just promoted me this week. I'm not even sure yet about all the responsibilities. But I know I'll be supervising eight people, making decisions about new hires, evaluating my employees performance, and doing a lot of the planning, scheduling, and problem-solving for my department.

Agent: Sounds challenging! And it also sounds like a lot of the new managers we see here every day.

Customer: Great, then maybe you can help me get started. I was looking through this schedule of management train'n. It looks like I've got to take a couple years to travel all over the place -- or I've got to find a way to plan my train'n experiences.

Agent: You've got that right - both ways. In one sense you're right about taking a couple of years to travel all over the management world. We've got train'n trips of all types, to hundreds of different locations, trips ranging from one day to two weeks, and so many different engineers that you really have to choose how you want you're train'n conducted.

Customer: You said I was right in both ways.

Agent: Yes, you will probably be taking train'n throughout your career - if you want to keep going places. But you not going to get off to a very good start if you don't have some idea what to do first -- and then what to do after that. Let me get a colleague to help some of these other managers so you and I can talk about some of the options.

Customer: Thanks a lot. It sounds like you know a lot about management train'n.

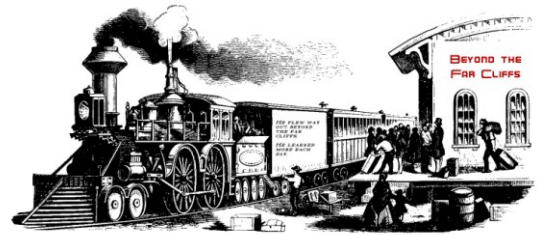
Agent: Yes, M'am. It's part of my job to make sure people like you don't get on the wrong train'n. You might end up wasting your time -- and you might decide you don't think the train'n took you anywhere. Then you're a dissatisfied customer, one that won't come back. If I can help you make some good decisions about your management train'n, I'll be seeing you regularly over the next few years. In fact, the customer I was helping just before you was a regular. He comes in three, four times a year and takes train'n to get somewhere with his job.

Customer: Well, where do I start? Can I get a ticket and get on one of these train'ns that are leaving today?

Agent: Yes, you could but we'd have to choose pretty carefully to make sure it would be the right trip. I'd rather talk to you about a couple of other options first. One thing you could do is take one of our introductory specials on management or supervision. They're special excursion trains that move pretty quickly through certain parts of the management territory. For example, we've got a very popular trip entitled "The Management Journey." It's a fast moving journey that makes quick stops at Current Issues Canyon, Policy/Procedure Pass, Communication Caverns, Decision Desert, Motivation Mountain, and ends up at Leadership/Style Station.

## FROM THE TRAIN'S STATION #3

# A MAP FOR TRAIN'S



Customer: Sounds like a busy schedule.

Agent: You're not going to spend more than a few hours at each stop. It's not like Mr. Thompson who just booked a two week trip to Motivation Mountain.

At each stop you'll get a brief tour, get to hear about the key points of interest, and discuss with other passengers what some of your concerns are about being a manager at your organization. But keep in mind, it's only a start. It's one of our most popular trips. But when we see a customer who takes this train'n - and never comes back for more - we know they didn't understand the real purpose of the trip. Most of the people who take this train'n come back ready to book longer and slower train'n to almost every destination on the itinerary. It really gets them thinking about what they need to know as managers.

Customer: That's sounds like a really interesting trip. Maybe I should make a reservation for that train'n as soon as possible.

Agent: Maybe, but I think you should examine some other possible trips before you make a final choice. Your first trip is a very important one.

Customer: OK, I guess I'm just a little anxious. It's really nice to have someone who isn't willing to sell me a ticket even if it isn't the right one.

Agent: Here's a brochure on another one of our very popular train'ns. It's a little like the "The Management Journey" trip but it goes to a few different places. We call it our "Changing Role of the Supervisor" excursion. I'll bet it looks at some issues you're going to be facing in your new job, especially if your organization is changing the job of supervisors and talking about things like participative management, teamwork, and coaching.

Customer: I just got out of a meeting where that's all they talked about - in addition to quality and customer service. Sounds like another train'n trip I should consider scheduling soon.

Agent: Some people think you have to hire an expensive train'n consultant to find out what you really need. If your organization supports that kind of analysis it's great. But we have a special two day journey that's designed to find out where you need to go - and give you a MAP to plan your future journeys.

Customer: You mean you have a service that will get me a personal MAP to plan all my train'n?

Agent: It will give you a good start. And you'll have to make a lot of decisions yourself, about what the priorities are, what's most relevant to your new job. You'll probably want to review this MAP with your boss before you make your first train'n trips.

Customer: Isn't this a train'n?

Agent: Yes, but it's a very special trip. You see, you'll actually get on the train'n for a while. But we're not really going to go anywhere. You're going to spend a day watching some other managers in action, then evaluating what you think they did right and wrong. Then you're going to find out how your answers compared to over 25,000 other managers.

Customer: You've certainly been a big help. I think I want to make a reservation for this MAP program. I'd love to find out what my strengths and weaknesses are.

Agent: Here's some information on the programs we've looked at. Why don't you look them over, and call me if you have any questions.

Customer: Thanks a lot. I'll be looking forward to your help as I make my plans for management train'n over the next few years.

*(Again, the conductor walks out):*

*Another train'n station another story. This time the agent knew about the train'n he was providing. And he knew how to help a customer who didn't know exactly where she needed to go. As train'n continues to change, the demands on ticket agents, engineers, and conductors have changed too. Train'n has new equipment and new destinations. The engineers and conductors have to be prepared to plan new routes quickly. If they have good MAPS to work with, the job is a lot easier.*

The Managerial Assessment of Proficiency (MAP) is an assessment of twelve competencies and ten measures of management style. It is a product of HRD Press/Training House.

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## THE TRAIN'N PLATFORM



In May 1984, Training and Development Journal published, "Train'n Ain't For Everybody" It told the story of a passenger at a railroad station, wanting "train'n" but not knowing where to go. It concluded "If we would let only those people who really need train'n on to the train, we would all be better off."

*Well, I was at that railroad ticket booth that same morning. I've been train'n all around the country the last few years so it's taken some time to tell the story of the prospective passenger I saw at another train'n station.*

Agent: Good Afternoon, Ms. Rodriquez. How are you this afternoon?

Customer: Fine, I think Jim. But I'm not sure. I hope you can help me today like you did a few months ago.

Agent: Well, I see from the brochures you've selected that you're looking at heading toward the Quality Quad Center or Team Territory. Didn't your organization take that journey a couple of years ago?

Customer: Well, we did something to start the journey. But I'm sure we never got there. It seems like we know where we're going -- but we can't seem to get there. That's why I wanted to talk to you.

Agent: Let's get started. It's still clear in your mind that you want to get to the Quality Quad Center or Teamwork Territory?

Customer: Absolutely! If we're going to compete successfully in the global economy, we must get to world class quality. And the only way we're going to get there is by empowering our employees and developing some high performing teams.

Agent: You said you've taken this journey before. Maybe it will help if you tell me about it.

Customer: Well, I thought we needed some real "train'n" to get to Quality Quad Center or Teamwork Territory. But my bosses were anxious to get there and thought that "train'n" would take too long." So we rushed out and bought tickets for everybody on the National Airline. We tried to get there quickly -- it seemed like just in a few hours. But now it seems like we're right back where we started.

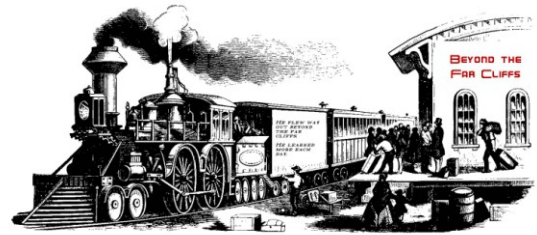
Agent: Ms. Rodriquez, you know I'm dedicated to "train'n." But planes can often get us where we need to go -- and do it very well. I wonder if there might be another factor.

Customer: What's that?

Agent: You know, planes and train'n often ignore how people prepare for a journey -- and they pay very little attention to what each passenger brings along on the journey. We've decided it's important to examine what competencies and traits people bring to the train'n. In fact, maybe you've noticed our expanded platform area. We've even given it a new name, ACT I, to show people how important it is -- and how it's connected to the next parts of the journey.

Customer: Sounds fascinating! Tell me more.

## THE TRAIN'N PLATFORM



Agent: Sure. Over the last few years, we've noticed more and more people returning from Quality Quad Center or the Service Suburbs, or Team Territory without really enjoying the trip. Or they were clearly frustrated because they didn't really get to where they wanted to go. We investigated the problem, did a lot of customer surveys, and discovered a very interesting situation. We found that many people brought the wrong things along on the journey. Others brought too much or too little. So we developed a program -- one that we could conduct very quickly -- right on the platform -- before people began their QUEST for quality, empowerment, service, or teamwork.

Customer: You've mentioned service. I came here to talk to you about quality and teams. But you've mentioned several times that service is part of this platform too. My husband's company is having the same problems with service that we've had with getting to quality and continuous improvement. There are times we seem to be struggling with the same issues. We're both frustrated in that some of the trips we've taken haven't been very successful.

Agent: There are a lot of things in common with quality and customer service. Isn't service the key area in your husband's company where quality is measured? Some of the important principles: continuous improvement, team work, communications, problem-solving, awareness of customer needs -- they're the same whether it's a manufacturing company, an entertainment facility, or a hotel and restaurant.

Customer: And your new emphasis on helping people prepare for the journey includes these things?

Agent: Yes, ma'am. Since last month, our train'n journeys to quality, service, team work, and empowerment begin with a thorough look at what each person brings to the journey. While people are waiting for their train'n, they evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. They find out how well they communicate, how well they solve problems. They get to be part of a meeting where they have to facilitate the process and decide what they'd say. They also get feedback on their personal and communications style.

Customer: That group over there -- they seem to know each other. Are they taking this journey together?

Agent: Absolutely! Most groups take the journey to quality, or teamwork, or service, with others from their own organization. That way they can see how the strengths and weaknesses of individuals combine. Preparing people for the train'n begins to build some team work before the journey begins.

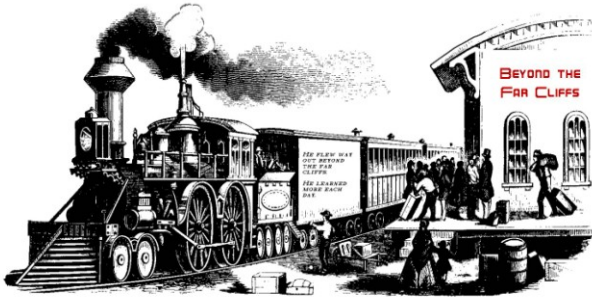
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*ACT I is an assessment developed and produced by HRD Press/Training House. It measures participant's strengths and weaknesses in twelve competencies and traits plus personal and communication style.*

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## THINKING ABOUT TRAIN'N



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*Well, I was at that railroad ticket booth that same morning. I've been train'n all around the country the last few years so it's taken some time to tell the story of a different passenger I saw at another train'n station.*

Agent: Good Morning, Sir. How may I help you?

Customer: Good Morning. I hope you can help me. I'm a little confused.

Agent: Well, if you're looking to take some train'n somewhere, I'm sure I can help.

Customer: Well, I'm not sure I need to take some train'n to get where I need to go. I've seen your flyer, Thinking about Train'n. I'm not sure why I'd want to go somewhere to learn how to think. Why the big deal about "thinking?" I've been doing that all my life.

Agent: Yes, you certainly have. But management guru, Tom Peters, says that *"many of us, advisors and practitioners alike, are having the devil's own time trying to figure out how to think systematically about this world gone soft and fickle."*

Customer: I understand that things are pretty crazy. But I've got too much work, there are too many changes going on at once. I think I should be looking at your "time train'n" to learn time management.

Agent: Dr. Edward de Bono, who Tom Peters calls "the world's leading authority on creative thinking and thinking skills," says *"The quality of our thinking will determine the quality of our future."* Maybe we all need to look deeper than "time management skills" or "stress management skills" and take a look at our underlying thinking skills?

Customer: You mentioned "quality." My organization has been stressing quality for years. It's paying off in a lot of areas but it looks like we've got a lot more train'n on our quality journey. It's been a rough trip so far.

Agent: Well, de Bono raises a very clear issue about the relationship between quality and thinking. He asks the question, *"Is it not strange that while so much attention is being paid to 'quality' in all matters that we have not yet paid attention to the 'quality' in thinking?"*

Customer: Is this 'train'n about thinking' journey filled with as many quotes as your answers to my questions?

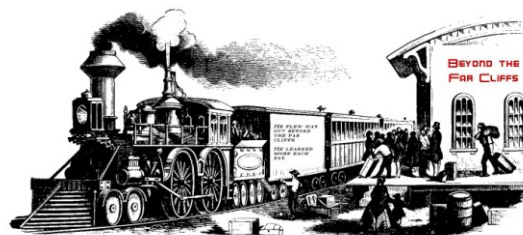
Agent: Actually it is. There are a lot of people who have challenged us to look at how well we think. Albert Einstein said, *"the significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking that created them."*

Customer: Now that's thought provoking. I see that all the time in my job — and in my organization. Just yesterday I was trying to figure out how to handle a very difficult situation with one of my employees. Then I realized that I was the one who hired and trained this person. If I created part of this problem, how could I figure out how to solve it.

Agent: Well, Wally Amos (we serve his new chocolate chip cookies on this train) says it in a way everyone should understand, *"If you keep on thinking what you've always thought, you'll keep on getting what you've always got."* We can't just change what we do — even though the skills are important. We've got to change how we think about these problems.

Customer: OK, enough already. Except that I'm glad you told me about the cookies. That's always to good reason to buy a ticket for one of your train'n journeys. They always take me to interesting places — with some fun along the way. So, without all the quotes, what's this "thinking train'n" all about?

## THINKING ABOUT TRAIN'N



Agent: Well, I see one way for you to find out about the 'thinking train'n.' Here comes Mr. Thompson. He's been taking train'n for over ten years. It's taken him from working in the warehouse of his organization to being the Executive Director. He just took his entire management team on the "thinking train'n." Mr. Thompson, would you tell this gentlemen about your recent journey.

Mr. Thompson: Be glad too. But you'll owe me a free pass for one of your Disney trains. (To the customer) C'mon, let's sit over hear where we can talk for a few minutes.

Customer: Thanks a lot. The agent says you just took your management team on the "thinking train'n."

Mr. Thompson: Yes, we did. And within one week of completing the journey, we were using the skills in our meetings with dramatic results. The conductor on our trip, Jim, showed us that on the train different people had different jobs: the engineer, the conductor, the porters, the brakemen. Each could be identified by their uniform, even their hats were different.

So Jim taught us about "Six Thinking Hats," a way of changing your thinking as easily as changing a hat. He showed us a way to encourage parallel thinking with everyone wearing the same hat for a period of time.

Customer: I don't understand.

Mr. Thompson: I'm probably not explaining it very well and of course, the journey took two days of pretty hard work to learn how to use the "Six Thinking Hats." But I think I can give you an idea. In most of our meetings, everybody ends up talking at once. Some are arguing for something, some against, some are asking questions, some people get angry, some are trying to control things — all at the same time. The "Six Hats" makes it possible to examine the facts, look at the benefits, then maybe the cautions — with everyone looking at the subject in parallel. It saved a lot time and gave us some real time to focus on creative solutions.

Customer: Sounds good. You said you were using it within a few days?

Mr. Thompson: A week after the "thinking train'n," we had a meeting where we used the hats and came up with a better decision than I expected in a lot less time than it usually takes us. We were able to use the hats to quickly clarify a very important issue and develop a strong consensus.

Mr. Thompson: We still have a lot to learn and we're going to take some shorter excursions on the "thinking train'n" to help us develop the skills.

Customer: Thanks a lot for your time. I know you've got to catch your train'n. I'm going to ask the agent about other places the "thinking train'n" goes. (To the agent) Where else can this "thinking train'n" take me?

Agent: Well, right now, the "thinking train'n" makes stops at four different stations. Mr. Thompson told you about Six Thinking Hats. We also having trains stopping at "D.A.T.T." new station everyone's talking about. It's a great place to learn some tools that direct your thinking for problem solving and taking action. Then there's our "mystery train'n" where you learn how logical thinking tools can get you out of the tunnel and "thinking clearly." And finally, there's our exciting journey into creativity, where your train'n actually shows you how to jump the track — and learn lateral thinking.

Customer: Sounds like I might be spending some time and money on this 'thinking train'n.' Is it really worth it?

Agent: Can I share another quote? George Bernard Shaw said, "*Few people think more than two or three times a year; I've made an international reputation for myself by thinking once or twice a week.*" We think that any time you invest in "thinking train'n" is well worth it.

Customer: But what about results?

Agent: On each journey, you'll hear about situations where creative thinking led to breakthroughs or new ideas, where parallel thinking prevented major problems from occurring, and where skills for identifying root causes of organizational problems were easily developed. It's a great journey.

*Another train'n station another story.*

Six Thinking Hats, Lateral Thinking, and D.A.T.T. are products of Edward de Bono Thinking Skills Programs. Beyond the Far Cliffs is a certified independent consultant, personally trained by Dr. Edward de Bono.

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