

The TLC Manual:
A training activity resource for all training professionals

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11/17/05

Presented at the National Communication Association annual conference, 2005 to the Training and Development Division special panel titled "Innovative Techniques for Training Professionals"

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The TLC Manual: A training support model resource for all training professionals

A continuing major issue associated with the training and development industry is the decision-maker's ability to demonstrate a sufficient return on investment of time, finances, and resources in the workforce development program. The special challenge being faced by both internal and external trainers and workforce development experts is that organizational leaders tend to avoid sharing responsibility for the quantity and quality of outcomes with the program providers. The position has been that the trainer is being paid to produce change and improvement by the participants when they return to the working environment. Thus, the challenge, especially for external trainers, is one of appropriate placement of responsibilities. Since in the vast majority of cases, the organization requires employee involvement in the training program but actually provides minimal positive support for employee learning efforts and outcomes, the trainer is typically reluctant to provide guarantees of outcomes relative to common ROI factors.

This paper presents an overview of the content and rationale for the *TLC Manual*. *The TLC Manual* is short for *The Teamwork, Loyalty, and Commitment Development System: A Guidebook for the Concept Keys Program Coordinator and Team*. The function of this manual is to provide a "best practices" overview for organizational leaders and facilitators (and external consultants/trainers) representing a specific path by which organizations can provide continuing internal support for workforce development oriented around the Concept Keys developmental model. This model can be applied to any continuing workforce development program.

The rationale for organizations leading an internal workforce development support program is rather simple: Few busy adults are self-motivated to improve themselves. Two key factors produce motivation and incentive for such efforts in people who perceive themselves as having already been educated, developed, and proven themselves as valuable: 1) A clear understanding that self-improvement is of major importance to the organization and the careers of everyone involved in the organization and 2) The change effort must be enjoyable rather than a hassle that restricts personal productivity.

The objective of this manual is to provide trainers, facilitators, leaders, and whomever is held responsible for a successful workforce development program with a wide variety of proven actions and activities that motivate and produce an environment with positive incentives for visible engagement in self-improvement. The guidelines and activities must consume minimal financial, time, or operational resources. Although every guideline and every activity has been successful in the past, all are presented as optional elements that may be selected by a project team

or leader in creating a specifically designed internal support and facilitation system for a specific organization with a specific organizational culture.

TLC Manual Section Overview

The first section contains a set of step-by-step Project Guidelines for a Concept Keys workforce development program such as the following:

Step 1: Form A Project Team!

Step 2: Understand Your Mission

Understand the 7 Basics

1. Everyone in the organization should participate in the project
2. Employees should help plan and administer the project
3. Each employee processed on key and micro-lesson each day
4. Each employee should apply the daily key as appropriate
5. Each employee should participate in work-group discussions
6. Each employee should participate in planned events
7. Everyone should keep the focus on what people are doing right

Understand ROAR

Preview Concept Keys Materials

Read the Resource Section

Step 3: Adopt a Success Philosophy!

Step 4: Complete An Event Schedule

Step 5: Determine Program Assessment Procedures

Step 6: Implement Plan!

It is recognized that not every organization can complete every support step at the maximal level, but the closer they can achieve that level, the greater the opportunity to achieve the changes desired in the workforce skill area and the workforce culture.

In Step 2: Understand Your Mission, a set of Seven Basics is presented. Again, it is important to understand that not every organization can fully implement each of the Seven Basics but the more that they can do so, the greater the opportunity to achieve the desired changes.

The key to success is to do all that can be done to communicate effectively to the entire workforce that professional understanding and improvement is critical to the success of the company and the employees and to develop an atmosphere where learning is valued and enjoyable.

The second section of the *TLC Manual* contains a number of resources for project planning and reinforcement such as the following:

- Widget, Inc. is a sample case study of a fictional organization that draws upon true experiences in a number of different actual organizations to provide an overview of what often happens and how those special challenges have been successfully met in the past
- Types of Awards and Recognitions present a series of sometimes surprising awards and recognitions that involve minimal financial or time commitments.

- Planning Skeleton simply lays out a schedule of what is going to happen when and who is going to be involved where.
- Discussion Group Information offers guidance for small work group leaders in terms of potential decisions that can be made at the work group level and a set of sample discussion questions

The third section contains over 50 Concept Keys Ideas and Activities. A sample follows:

- Activity # 4 Employee-Based Wooden Nickel Give-Away Contest
- Activity # 6 Communication Cartoon of the Week
- Activity # 15 Newspaper Clipping of Best Example of Poor Communication
- Activity # 17 Dear Dr. Communicate Column
- Activity # 33 Best Use of Concept Keys in a Decoratively Prepared Food Dish
- Activity # 50 Key Involvement for Customers

These activities have all worked very successfully somewhere. The idea is to present such successful improvement project support ideas as options from which the planning committee can select those that have the greatest chance to be effective in the particular working environment and culture that dominates their organization.

In conclusion, the manual provides leadership with a fresh overview of activities and procedures designed to support the training effort and to enhance the workforce continued development of professional skills in an enthusiastic manner.