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A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR FIRST-LINE MANAGERS IN OKLAHOMA ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Oklahoma State University   ED.D.   1983

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A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR FIRST-

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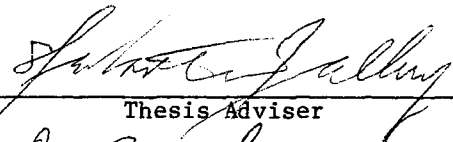
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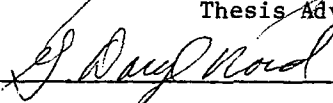Oklahoma State University
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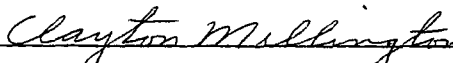for the Degree of
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Communication problems in business have long been identified as major causes of the failure of individuals, groups, and even entire organizations. Businessmen often identify communication courses among the most important courses in a business graduate's curriculum. Paradoxically, they simultaneously identify weak communication skills as a common characteristic of employees at all levels.

Most problem areas in business are eventually addressed through some kind of training and development programs. Millions of dollars annually are poured into an endless variety of training programs in organizations across the country. Some of this training is directed toward improvement of communication skills. Employees at all levels of organizations are often exposed to some form of communication training.

First-line managers comprise one of the most important groups in an organization since they serve as linking pins between operative employees and other levels of management. Thus, communication skills or communication deficiencies in this group could have a far-reaching effect on the achievement of organizational objectives.

Statement of the Problem

Communication is recognized as an important element in an effective organization. Numerous studies indicate that managers at all levels spend the major part of their time in some form of communication.

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Hinrich's study in 1964 showed that first-line managers spend 74 percent of their time communicating. In a study of 160 managers by Stewart (1967) an analysis of the managers' time utilization indicated that 78 percent of their time was spent communicating.

Likert (1961) emphasizes that a supervisor is a special kind of manager. He serves as a linking pin between employees and management. In this position, he must be able to lead, motivate, and communicate.

However, 44 percent of the training directors surveyed by White (1979) said that the major cause of communication breakdown was lack of communication ability of first-line managers.

Thus, a pertinent question for educators, consultants, training directors, and managers arises: What is the current status of communication training for first-line managers?

The principal purpose of this study was to examine communication training for first-line managers in Oklahoma organizations represented by members of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD).

First-line managers were selected for the study because of their critical linking-pen relationship in integrating the efforts of labor and management.

The study was limited to the state of Oklahoma to provide specific results designed to assist training directors, managers, consultants, and educators in their efforts to promote organizational efficiency and encourage new business investment in this sparsely industrialized state. By limiting the study to a single state, the diversity of employee backgrounds should not be large enough to confound the results. Methods and content appropriate for communication training in a midwestern state could conceivably be significantly different from other areas.

A questionnaire was used to obtain information from ASTD members representing organizations in Oklahoma. The information requested dealt with communication training methods, content, and effectiveness measures and other items related to communication training for first-line managers. The purpose of securing this information was to determine the current status of communication programs and to determine the relationship between perceived needs and actual training.

Results of this study should enable training directors, managers, consultants, and educators to be more aware of current programs and take steps to promote communication training that would have a positive effect on first-line manager performance.

The nature of this research is descriptive. The survey was designed to show relationships between organizational factors and training factors. Careful analysis of these relationships may assist in identifying training deficiences and designing training programs to help first-line managers become more effective managers.

The results may lay the groundwork for future research to test hypotheses of effectiveness of various training methods and content.

Research Questions

The following 16 research questions are addressed:

1. What is the relationship between communication skills and the selection of a first-line manager?

2. What is the relationship between a first-line manager's communication skills and the performance appraisal of that manager?

3. What is the relationship between management style and the importance of communication training for first-line managers?

4. What is the relationship between communication training for first-line managers and communication training for employees and other levels of management?

5. What is the relationship between company size or classification and the existence of a communication training program for first-line managers?

6. What is the relationship between the lack of communication training for first-line managers and certain company characteristics?

7. What is the relationship between the first-line manager's total training program and the portion devoted to communication training?

8. What is the relationship between the oral communication activities presenting the most problems for first-line managers and the actual content of training programs?

9. What is the relationship between the perceived importance of oral communication activities and the actual content of training programs?

10. What is the relationship between the written communication activities presenting the most problems for first-line managers and the actual content of training programs?

11. What is the relationship between the perceived importance of written communication activities and the actual content of training programs?

12. Which types of written communication training programs, techniques, sources, and locations are most commonly used?

13. Which types of oral communication training programs, techniques, sources, and locations are most commonly used?

14. Are companies measuring the effectiveness of communication training by using subjective criteria which they consider most important?

15. Are companies measuring the effectiveness of comunication training by using objective criteria which they consider most important?

16. In the opinion of the ASTD members, how effective is the communication training for first-line managers?

Importance of the Study

An assessment of communication training for first-line managers could be beneficial in the following ways:

1. Create a greater awareness of the communication problems and needs of personnel in many organizations.

2. Encourage organizations to initiate communication training for first-line managers.

3. Allow training directors to compare their programs with other programs.

4. Provide consultants with subjective data regarding effective methods and content useful in designing communication training programs.

5. Identify content and methods that could be incorporated into university business communication programs.

6. Promote increased cooperation between education and industry in providing and evaluating training.

7. Identify the measures of effectiveness used in existing
   training programs.

Definition of Terms

Communication -- all methods of transmitting information from a
sender to a receiver.

Communication Training -- activities supported by the organization
which are designed to improve communication skills and techniques.

Communication Training Content -- specific topics which are an
integral part of the communication training program.

Communication Training Methods -- specific techiniques employed in
the training sessions.

First-Line Managers -- those managers at the lowest level of the
managerial hierarchy who assign tasks to and evaluate performance of
operative employees.

Effectiveness -- the extent to which a desired result has been
obtained.

Limitations

This study was limited to businesses in Oklahoma. The results can
be useful in assessing the status of training in this area of the
midwest; however, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other
areas.

The population was limited to organizations represented by ASTD
members. These organizations may be more aggressive in promoting pro-
fessional development of employees in general and providing communica-
tion training in particular. Therefore, the prevalence of training in

these organizations may be greater than in Oklahoma organizations in general.

This study does not attempt to screen organizations by size or type. Meister (1978) found that only five percent of manufacturing firms with less than 100 employees surveyed in Illinois had communication programs for first-line managers. This should not imply, however, that training is not or could not be beneficial in all types or sizes of organizations. Therefore, all organizations represented by ASTD members were included in this current study with the realization that many of the organizations may not have training programs.

Communication training is often an integral part of a larger managerial development program. The difficulty of clearly identifying in such programs what is and what is not communication training limits the uniformity and accuracy of the responses.

Although all respondents have demonstrated an interest in training through membership in ASTD, some respondents may not be closely enough connected to training in their organization to respond accurately.

A limitation inherent in any questionnaire survey is that each respondent is affected by his personal biases and views the situation from a limited perspective.

Plan of Presentation

The remaining chapters of this study address the analysis of the problem in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

Chapter II reviews literature related to the problem. First, the role of communication as a key factor in management is assessed. Second, managerial communication training is examined. Third, communi-

cation training designed specifically for first-line managers is considered. This review served as a basis for this research study.

Chapter III describes the procedures used in the study, including a discussion of the questionnaire which served as the primary instrument for obtaining data.

Chapter IV summarizes and analyzes the results of the study.

Chapter V states in concise form the conclusions that can be drawn from this study. Recommendations for future research are also given.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is an increasing awareness that the success of any organiza-
tion is directly related to effective communication. Only in recent
years have most corporations, institutions, and individuals begun to
acknowledge the fact that many of their problems stem from misunder-
standings in communication. Communication skills are not only essential
to be effective but to survive in today's world--as an individual or as
an organization.

The review of literature will be divided into three sections: (1)
the role of comunication in management; (2) communication training for
managers; and (3) communication training for first-line managers.

Role of Communication in Management

As Barnard (1938, p. 32) stated many years ago, "The executive's
first function is to develop and maintain a system of communication."
He realized the essential nature of communication in supervising the
work of others.

Almost 30 years ago, Katz (1955) developed one of the most widely
quoted and well-thought-out theories of executive skill requirements.
He suggested skills could be conveniently categorized in three general
areas--technical, human relations, and conceptual. Communication is an
essential element of each of these areas with the human relations area
almost totally dominated by communication activities.

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Drucker (1954) states that 60 percent of management problems are caused or affected by faulty communication. He believes that communication is the essential factor on which all managerial activity hinges. Drucker notes that much of the problem lies in the complexity of the language. Meanings are often unclear since most words have multiple definitions.

As the educational level of employees rises, it becomes increasingly important for the manager to be able to communicate effectively. Employees want and demand more information and more involvement. Communication difficulties can occur as information is passed through several managerial layers. Better communication is sought at all levels but particularly at the first-line level where most direct employee communication takes place. Bird's (1976) study of 94 lower-level managers reflected the recognition by these managers of the importance of their communication with employees.

Stewart (1967) collected data by the diary method from 160 managers in a British company. The study indicated that 78 percent of the manager's time was spent communicating, including 50 percent talking and 28 percent reading and writing. A later study showed professional, technical, administrative, and clerical people spent 50-80 percent of the workday communicating (Klemmer and Snyder, 1972). Two-thirds of that time was devoted to talking.

The results of Hinrichs' (1964) study involving research managers showed that first-level supervisors spent 74 percent of their time communicating, second-level managers spent 81 percent, and third-level managers spent 87 percent.

The time spent communicating becomes of great concern when we

consider research findings such as that by Duerr (1974). Duerr found an unusual degree of consensus among 98 business leaders surveyed from 41 countries. The consensus was that young business graduates entering the business world suffer from a serious lack of communication skills.

In a study of communication skills at the job-entry level conducted by Huegli and Tschirgi (1974) almost all of the supervisors interviewed responded that entry-level employees were deficient in application of communication skills. However, since there was no measure of the communication skills of the supervisors, there may have been a supervisor skill deficiency which contributed to the communication problems of the employees.

A survey of 250 personnel officers of companies in the Fortune 500 showed that communication skills were rated of extreme importance by executives of large organizations, some believing it to be the single most important function of management personnel (Belohlov, Popp, and Porte, 1974).

A survey of 50 executives of manufacturing firms by Rainey (1972) identified communication skills as essential for successful managers. Forty percent of the executives indicated that "poor written communication" resulted in significant business losses. Eighty percent of the respondents indicated that a course in the preparation of business letters, reports, and proposals would be equal to or greater in importance than a course in analysis of financial statements. Over half stated that report and proposal writing ability is of crucial or great importance.

Communication and human relations skills were by far the skills most frequently used by 240 U.S. managers included in a survey by Simonds (1960).

Wiksell's (1967) survey of several hundred employees in diversified industries showed that 90 percent felt that improving company interpersonal communication was extremely important. The same percentage believed that when communication is inadequate, frustration and misunderstanding exist. This condition reduces productivity and thus has an adverse effect on corporate profits.

Hunsicker's (1978) basic premise is that successful managers are one of the best sources for identifying basic skill needs. Research was conducted at the Air University of the U.S. Air Force at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. The study included all management levels except very top level and first-level supervisors.

Communication, human relations, and managerial skills dominated the list of six basic needs. Communication skills were given the most weight by lower-middle management. The data clearly supports the need for management development programs to include practical instruction in the basic communication skills of speaking, writing, and listening.

The apparent reason for this strong need lies in the fact that first-line and lower-middle managers are often promoted because of their technical competence. They often feel less comfortable with communicating than those higher in the managerial hierarchy. Management development programs should reflect an increased emphasis on development of basic communication skills.

Bennett's (1971) study of 35 California business executives reflected the significant role of effective communication skills in advancement to top management positions. All of the 35 respondents felt that these skills had played an important part in their advancement to a top executive position. Ninety-four percent stated that they used oral

communication skills extensively in their present positions and 83 percent said written communication skills were extensively used. The majority of these executives advocate formal training in business communication for those aspiring to management positions.

Simons (1961) investigated the communication behavior of a group of supervisors in a large, urban hotel. The main objective of the study was to determine whether, in terms of selected communication attitudes, skills, and practices, there were significant differences between supervisors categorized as "more successful" and "less successful." "More successful" supervisors were rated higher than "less successful" on seven of eleven overall evaluations on communication behavior, reflecting once again the apparent relationship of communication skill to managerial effectiveness.

In a somewhat conflicting study, Webber (1966) found little difference in average behavior between more successful and less successful managers. However, he did find that the more successful spend significantly more time advising and discussing issues with people who come to them. In addition, they receive more communication from their immediate and higher supervisors. These activities at least indirectly indicate the need for effective communication skills.

In his effort to assess the appropriateness of the collegiate business communication curriculum, Lewis (1975) summarized numerous studies identifying communication skills at or near the top of the list for success in the business world.

A study by Falcione (1972) of 145 respondents in four interrelated departments in a large industrial organization reflected a direct relationship between "communication receptivity" and satisfaction with immediate supervision.

Openness of communication in an organization was the subject of a study by Burke and Wilcox (1969). Greater openness of communication by the superior or the subordinate was associated with increased satisfaction. Openness resulted in greater satisfaction of the subordinate with the company, job, performance appraisal, and supervisor.

Perhaps the most important and less obvious ramification of poor communications is the effect on morale. Among supervisors and middle-level managers, for example, low morale is an almost certain consequence of ineffective communication (Kirkpatrick, 1978).

Communication Training for Managers

By coupling knowledge gained from general research on managerial communication skills with a specific needs analysis, an organization can design a training program with high potential for success. By involving the managers in the need analysis, the managers are more likely to consider the skills covered in the training relevant to their problems and their success on the job.

For training to be beneficial, management at all levels must actively support the training programs and the use of the specific communication skills on the job. Therefore, the success of the training depends not only upon the effectiveness of the training but also on the reinforcement received on the job.

Since managers at any level serve as models for other managers, participation in training by managers at all levels is desirable.

The objectives of the communication training program must be clearly defined, directly related to managerial behavior, fully understood, accepted as viable by all participating managers, and supported by top management.

Recognition by some companies of the on-going need for managerial communication training is reflected in Rainey's (1972) study of 50 manufacturing executives. Thirty-four percent of the respondents' companies had made an attempt within the past five years to provide in-service training for those managers with major communication responsibilities.

However, there is still failure of upper management in many companies to properly support specific managerial communication training. Wasylik (1976) obtained data from a survey of trainers involved in in-house training in 97 companies. Eighty percent of the trainers indicated that communication training was considered by their corporations to be more important now than in the past. Yet, the main barrier to implementing communication training programs was identified as upper management's lack of recognition of communication problems or lack of action toward solving such problems. These trainers were able to deal with upper management's resistance, however, as 83.6 percent of the line managers in these organizations participated in training.

Over 90 percent of trainers in Wasylik's study firmly believe that communication ability can be increased through training. The organizations the trainers represented established increased job performance and productivity as the major goals of communication training. Listening and writing were identified as the most important communication skills.

Weinrauch and Swanda (1974) conducted a study to determine the communication patterns of South Bend, Indiana, area business personnel. The study included responses from 46 participants representing a cross-section of business functions including both line and staff personnel. Noteworthy is the fact that 20.3 percent of the time spent in communication was of the indirect type. Specifically, mental effort and

preliminary development of messages were the major forms of indirect
activities. In terms of direct communication, listening ranked first
consuming from one-fourth to one-third of the communication time.
Speaking, writing, and reading ranked second, third, and fourth,
respectively.

Woodcock (1977) completed a study concerning common oral and
written business communication problems of selected managerial trainees
in the Memphis-Sherby County, Tennessee, area. Information concerning
communication problems was obtained from trainees, their secretaries,
and their immediate supervisors. The problem area identified as most
important by all three groups was oral communication. The responses
also indicated that the trainees had a good background of writing
principles but were lacking in their ability to apply the theory to
practical supervisory problems.

Public speaking skills are deemed important by many companies.
Knapp (1969) provides information concerning the nature of public speak-
ing courses in a business organizational environment. The data gathered
in the article come from case study reports, surveys, and information
gathered from America's largest business organizations. The location,
length, frequency, instruction, content, materials, and evaluation of
public speaking programs are discussed in addition to reasons why some
companies choose not to provide public speaking training.

Specific methods used in communication training vary considerably
in actual practice. Bakker (1964) presents a communication model and
applies it to training. Message systems, individual communication
behavior, uncertainty, conflict reduction, and the need for linkage
between personnel policy and training are included. Another approach

seeks to incorporate process evaluation into a normal training program through the use of a business game (Hesseling, 1965).

Coming from an economic viewpoint, Odiorne (1970) sets forth a "systems" approach to training. He not only explains how to establish behavioral objectives, but how to construct managerial training programs to fulfill these objectives. Even more specifically, Freshley (1960) gives 25 principles (previously validated by testing) to be used as possible foundations for discussion groups, or lectures, in human relations training programs.

Ylvisaker (1977) describes the strong commitment Gould Corporation has to management development which seemingly has been a major factor in the success of the company. Outside programs were used initially but because of poor results the company developed its own special management program designed for their specific needs and housed in specially designed facilities. Each module can be covered in a 3-5 day period with a high integration of theory and application. Programs can be devised for any need that arises. The apparent success of this approach has contributed to a positive organizational climate.

Angrist (1953) examined the frequency with which executives used various communication acts, the value of each of these acts to the success of their jobs, and the ease of performing the communication acts. The study included 273 executives representing all levels of management. The variables were size of company, level of management, age of manager, and experience of manager.

A significant difference in the frequency of communication acts was reflected by age and experience only. A significant difference in the value of communication acts was found in all four variables. A

significant difference in the ease of performing communication acts was found in all but the age variable. Systematic information for use in training managers obtained through such research as this can assist in identifying the specific managerial groups to be included in training and the content of the training.

Communication training, as is the case with any training, must be directed at specific skills needed by the participants if it is to be effective. However, this is not always the case.

Paul and Porte (1967, p. 250) view much of the industrial communication training as "irrelevant, impractical, and steeped in misapplied theory." They maintain that communication courses in business and industry must be grounded in meaningful theory which can be applied to communication problems.

Dimock (1960) states that communication and interpersonal work situations can be improved if training programs will center on behavioral change in the communicators.

However, according to Byham (1977) there are very few research studies which actually show behavioral change resulting from training or development. Wohlking (1970) explains that many companies train managers through lecture, discussion, and case study with the goal of changing attitudes and behavior. But he adds that after studying hundreds of experiments on the impact of management development programs, researchers have concluded that managerial training results in very little change of attitudes and almost no alteration of on-the-job behavior. Wohlking believes the heavy reliance on methods such as communication courses or on-the-job coaching needs to be re-evaluated and new training concepts developed.

A study by Thorley (1971) contradicts the findings of Wohlking (1970). Thorley researched the evaluation of management training by devising a questionnaire which was given to 234 managers after attending a training course given by their companies. The study showed improvement ranging from 25 to 75 percent in the areas covered in the training program. Thorley points out that this type of research does have a problem of determining accurately if the change was a direct result of the training or from factors other than training.

Evaluation is one of the most difficult aspects of a supervisory communication training program. Because it is difficult, it is often not done.

A review of the literature and a study of programs indicates that little has actually been done to measure managerial communication training in terms of its effect upon the efficiency and morale of an organization.

A training program, no matter how effective, will not be successful unless it operates in the proper management climate. Thus, evaluation results are estimates only and should be viewed accordingly.

A minimum test that should be applied is that the participants believe and can support through evidence that they have gained skills from the training that improved their effectiveness in their jobs. A second basic test is the judgment of upper-level management. The most scientific evaluation is the field study with surveying techniques used before and after the training.

As Mager (1962) indicates, training objectives, once set, should serve as the criteria for measuring the effectiveness of the course. Once the objectives are set in terminal behavioral terms which are

measurable, comparison of the objectives of the course versus the ter-
minal behavior after instruction with a validated measuring instrument
can be a useful evaluation technique.

Neinstedt (1979) was successful in evaluating perceived changes
resulting from training by using a pretest and a six-month posttest of
both participants and their supervisors. Primary results indicated:
(1) Measurement of leadership effectiveness showed significant improve-
ment six months after the training and (2) participants perceived
improvement in their behavior and attitude between the beginning and end
of the training program. These higher levels were sustained at least
six months.

Landrum (1974) initiated a study with the objective of determining
if a "custom-tailored" training program would cause a significant
improvement in supervisory performance. A "Subordinate's Performance
Rating Scale" was administered before and after the training.

A significant difference was found between the experimental and
control groups in eleven of the thirteen individual performance charac-
teristics. Thus, Landrum's study supports the idea that supervisory
training programs can result in improvement in job performance.

Although communication training is often helpful, managers should
not automatically jump to the conclusion that training is always the
correct solution to a communication problem. Jones (1978) conducted an
in-house survey in an organization which had an ongoing management
development program for second- and third-level managers.

The results of the survey clearly indicated a communication
problem. Need for improved communication ranked high for all levels of
managers. First-line supervisors put need for leadership training first
and communication training second.

A close examination of the situation, however, indicated the communication problem was more of an organizational problem rather than an individual problem. Instead of a communication training program, the company took the following steps: updated the organizational chart, revised evaluation procedures, and developed a manpower plan. The problem may be a communication breakdown caused by organizational factors rather than individual factors to be rectified by a training program.

Since communication problems are at the crux of the majority of manager-subordinate problems at all levels, the Paul Revere Life Insurance Company has used an MBO program to overcome the communication barrier (Lea, 1977). Rather than establish specific training programs, MBO has helped the company develop an organizational climate and system conducive to good communications at all levels.

Greenlaw (1964) points out that training not accompanied by changes in the organization may never come to fruition in application because the changed behavior is not supported by supervisors of trainees. The training efforts fail because the designers of training programs do not give adequate consideration to the impact on performance of elements other than those directly involved in the training effort.

A reminder that training in itself will not be sufficient if other factors are lacking is given by the prominent management professor, author, and consultant, Peter Drucker:

> The key to making the human resource more productive is not training. That comes second. The first requirement is to make sure that people can do the work they are being paid for; then you can train them. If you start with training first and don't let them do the work, if you put up obstacles, you create frustration and resistance and quench motivation ("A Candid Talk About Training," 1977, p. 58).

Communication Training for First-Line Managers

The role of the first-line manager is a unique one. This level of manager is the only level supervising exclusively non-managerial personnel. Often the first-level manager is a competent employee who is rewarded through promotion. As a worker, the individual had been following orders and plans formulated by someone else. Now he has assumed responsibilities which are quite different. He must give directions, make decisions, and formulate plans. He must learn how to communicate with others and how to elicit support from his workers. To provide a reasonable chance for success, the organization should be committed to providing training to help in his transition and insure reaching at least the minimum level of competence. In almost all cases, this training should include a major section on interpersonal relation-ships with heavy emphasis on communication skills.

Likert (1961) emphasizes that a supervisor is a special kind of manager. He serves as a linking pin between employees and management. In this position, he must be able to lead, to motivate, and to communicate.

Mayer (1971) points out the difficulties of the technical person who is promoted to a managerial position primarily because of his tech-nical skills. Technical competence is obviously important for first-line managers, but more is needed. Yet management is practically the only job of any consequence or complexity that can be entered by people with no preparation for it whatsoever. The basic problem is making a transition from dealing with things to getting work done through other people. Thus, the technical skills and the organizational skills usually present little difficulty, but the human relations skills,

including communication, are not normally learned by the technically-
oriented person without some specific training in that area. Even
though human relations skills and communication skills can be learned
through experience, that experience must be properly structured
initially for positive learning to take place.

Supervisors frequently suffer what Benson (1976) calls "heap
reversal." An employee excels in his job, is considered the best in the
group, and enjoys high status—he is on top of the heap. The employee
is then promoted to supervisor and is at the bottom of another heap.
Unless he receives proper training, communication breakdowns will
rapidly occur with both his superiors and subordinates.

In view of the prevalence of managerial communication, a way needs
to be found to make sure the vast amount of time spent communicating is
spent wisely. Many organizations have responded with training programs
to strengthen the manager's communication skills. These programs, how-
ever, have often been designed more for middle and executive managers,
while neglecting first-line managers. This seems rather ironic, since
it is these first-line managers who directly affect productivity and
have a very real need for clear communication.

According to House (1967) management development for the supervisor
is faced with two major problems: (1) All too often first-line managers
are trained, but their superiors are not prepared to accept the ideas
and techniques the new supervisor attempts to put into practice and (2)
management is still primarily an art and very few studies show that real
and permanent behavioral changes comes about through the formal
supervisory training programs.

Terry (1977) pointed out social and environmental changes that will

be affecting the supervisor. The percentage of younger employees is
increasing. Employees will have more formal education. Progress in
eliminating discrimination will bring more women, handicapped, and
disadvantaged into the work place. The typical employee will want
interesting work, some control over his job, feedback, and job security.
Therefore, a skill essential to the proper supervision of the new
employee will be communication--forthright communication with free and
open feedback.

Modern organizations cannot risk allowing supervisors to develop by
chance (Coleman and Campbell, 1975). Supervisors spend a large portion
of their day dealing with those who carry out the work and the
supervisors are the crucial link in the organizational lifeline. The
supervisor impacts tremendously on a worker's productivity.

A survey of manufacturing concerns in Illinois by Meister (1976)
revealed that 33.6 percent of the companies surveyed had formal communi-
cation training for their first-line managers. However, of the total
time spent in formal managerial training, 82 percent of the companies
specified that less than 25 percent of the total training time was spent
on communication. Yet, according to Hinrichs (1964) first-line supervi-
sors spend 74 percent of their time communicating. As might be
expected, companies with larger numbers of employees spend a greater
percentage of time in communication training. Forty percent or more of
the companies indicated that common communication deficiencies in their
first-line managers included listening, writing, or management-employee
relations.

Of the 228 firms surveyed in a study by Wikstrom (1973), 89 percent
conduct some supervisory training. In general, the programs are well

received; the trainees react favorably to them; the trainers believe they are achieving their objectives; and line managers above the first level have confidence in the programs. However, relatively few companies report having any hard data to confirm this impression that they accomplish what is intended.

Lusterman's (1977) study of 610 companies with over 500 employees showed a prevalence of formal supervisory training programs ranging from 29 percent of the companies in the 500-999 employee size to 90 percent of the companies employing over 10,000 employees. Over 54 percent of the executives responding to the survey referred to language skills as areas of deficiency. Supervisors were included in the training because of their inability to organize and present ideas well, orally or in writing. In-house training was most prevalent, utilized by three out of five companies.

Supervisors do not work in isolation from either their subordinates or their superiors. While the study by Huegli and Tachirgi (1974) indicated that supervisors thought entry-level employees were deficient in communication skills, a study by Calhoon and Jerdee (1975) points out that this belief holds true for all levels of the organization. Weaknesses in performance of first-level supervisors reflect deficiencies of second-level supervisors. And so it goes, up through the organizational hierarchy. This study provides strong evidence of the need to approach training by examining and fostering communication skills at all levels of management in order for the first-line training to be effective.

Too often supervisory training gets bogged down in specific communication skills without integrating those skills with reality (Charron, Evans, and Fenner, 1976). Instead a conceptual framework should be

developed which provides the supervisor not only with the tools but with the concepts and experience with which to put those tools to work effectively.

Smith (1975) states that communication training for first-line managers is inadequate. He points out that first-line managers are given a job that is very complex, encompassing the pressures of management, unions, government, and assembly-line boredom. Although these first-line managers are admittedly the key to production, few are given proper training in human relations, communications, and personnel functions.

Not all would agree that training is the best way to prepare supervisors to operate effectively. Smiley and Westbrook (1975) believe that the training approach to supervisor efficiency is the wrong approach. They contend that the key problems of the typical supervisor are basically organizational in nature and that these problems will continue until changes are made in the organization. Attempts to remove the problem through selection, training, communication, or compensation will continue to prove ineffective unless the accompanying organizational issues are addressed and resolved. Their solution is to remove one or two layers of management above the supervisor and redefine the role of the first-line supervisor.

Imberman (1975) states that many researchers today have concluded that much of the traditional first-line manager training fails to result in improved supervisory performance. He believes that what is needed most in communication training is "how to listen" techniques--not just for first-line managers but all levels of management.

Clinard (1979) points out that there is a universal need for better skills in listening, constructive confrontation, influencing,

appreciation, expression, and problem solving. This need is evident regardless of the managerial level, industry, or country.

A study by Claycombe, Bird, and Bennett (1976) dealt with a state governmental agency and attempted to locate strengths and weaknesses in management skills and provide a basis for developing specialized supervisory training courses. The study included ratings of supervisors by employees and a "package" approach of evaluation forms to get as accurate assessment of supervisory skills as possible. The supervisor's business communication was evaluated as good with no formal training recommended. However, the most serious weakness appeared in recognition of accomplishment; and training in personal communication with emphasis on motivation was advised.

As communication consultant, Keppler (1978) points out, if communication between worker and supervisor is ineffective, productivity will usually suffer. Therefore, when RF Communications, a 1,700 employee manufacturing firm in Rochester, New York, wanted to improve the human relations skills of its first-line managers, the intangibles of communication became tangible program goals. It was felt that if communication barriers were removed, it would be less likely that workers would look to an external source to express their grievances. An outside consultant was used because the supervisors felt an impartial consultant gave them an opportunity to speak more freely and candidly about the problems they faced. The program was successful in enabling first-line managers to work more effectively with their subordinates. One of the biggest benefits of the program, which was not originally a specific objective, was that the supervisors improved communication among themselves so there was much better horizontal coordination within the company at the supervisory level.

Interested in getting more mileage out of existing management
resources, Barron (1975) established a three-year, 150-hour supervisory
training program in his middle-sized engineering company. Ninety of the
150 hours were devoted to communication and the human aspects of
supervision.

Lusterman (1977) described briefly supervisory communication training
at two large corporations. In the Kodak Park Training Department, the
most comprehensive management training course, Basic Training for Supervi-
sors, consists of three-hour sessions held twice a week for nine weeks.
Special courses are designed to train supervisors to appraise and review
individual job performance, develop writing skills, improve reading, and
meet many other specific needs of the individuals in the program.

General Electric uses a supervisory program consisting of 15 mod-
ules. Three of these modules deal directly with comunication training
and several of the others are closely related. The three modules cover
14 hours of the prescribed 60-hour program.

A new supervisory training concept called interaction modeling
(Byham and Robinson, 1976) initiated in the mid-70's shows great
promise. No theory is taught; instead, for each situation practical
steps for handling the situation are given. Positive models of behavior
are presented and on-the-job application is stressed.

One of the most widely used interaction modeling programs is the
Interaction Training System. The system consists of 20 skill modules,
each dealing with a specific, difficult interaction situation faced by
supervisors. Although communication as such is not identified, each
module presents an opportunity to improve some aspect of communication
skills. Initial research indicates the system has more impact on on-
the-job behavior than does a traditional supervisory training system.

Rosenbaum (1979) uses the term "behavior modeling" to identify a currently popular supervisory training technique in use by more than 300 large companies. Among the principles taught in these highly successful programs are active listening and the utilization of open communication in establishing and measuring goals for each subordinate.

Ferguson (1971) describes the Motorola Supervisory Development Program designed to bridge the gap that existed when employees were promoted to supervisor. The program includes seven categories, with communication being one of the seven. Individual supervisors pace their own development within a time frame of one to five years. Commitment of the company to the program is indicated by the 100 percent tuition refund and semi-annual courses offered in the plant at no cost.

The Problem Solving Discussion Skills (PSDS) program, developed by the Xerox Corporation, has been used by Ford Motor Company and Western Electric Corporation with apparent success at unplugging communication lines ("Role Playing Unclogs," 1968). By using videotapes and role-playing, PSDS teaches middle managers down to first-line managers effective problem solving skills.

Hardt (1966), a highly experienced training program developer, explains possible approaches, objectives, principles, etc. that constitute an effective training conference for first-line managers. Also, the director of management training at a Dow Chemical Company describes a participative work improvement program to increase human relations skills among first-line managers and employees (Heisman, 1966). The underlying philosophy is that each job can be improved, and those working on the job are in the best position to bring about the improvement. The author makes strong use of the "Johari Window" concept to illustrate human interaction.

Hanna (1978) obtained responses concerning the importance of oral communication from the chief executive officers of 55 companies ranging in size from eight to seven thousand employees. The respondents indicated that skill development training was needed in motivating, delegating, listening, direction giving, problem solving, telephoning, and giving and getting feedback.

Timm's (1977) study involved communicative behaviors of supervisors in clerical workgroups. Three dimensions of communicative behavior were manipulated: (1) Supervisor's receptiveness to questions, (2) Timeliness of giving task-clarifying information, and (3) Expressions of verbal approval. By responding differently to individuals in the three groups (experimental-deprived, control, and experimental-reinforced) a clearly inequitable situation was created.

Findings indicated with a high level of significance that inequitable communicative behaviors were perceived. Strong correlations were found between high perceived inequity and low ratings of supervisory effectiveness. High inequity was associated with strong tendencies to withdraw from the work situation.

The top training need of lower and middle managers identified by Brannen (1976) in his study of a nationwide sample of training and development professionals was people management skills.

Boisselle's (1979) study involved a study of company representatives, supervisors, and higher education representatives. Among the top five subjects which should be included in a training program were (1) communication skills, (2) human relations, (3) motivation of subordinates, and (4) group dynamics.

In a study by Buchanan (1958), the effectiveness of the first-line

supervisory training program was evaluated by determining whether or not each trainee was judged by his superior and by one subordinate to have modified his behavior in an identifiable manner as a result of the training program. The study suggests the following implications: (1) What trainees say at the end of a training course about its usefulness has some validity. (2) The environment in which the trainee works influences the usefulness of a training course to him. It is important for the training staff to work with the superiors of those who take the training.

Summary

The review of literature indicates there is general agreement on the importance of communication skills for all managers, including first-line managers.

There is also general agreement that oral communication skills, with an emphasis on listening, rank first in importance. Limited skill in written communication can cause some problems for the first-line manager, but becomes more important in the higher managerial ranks.

Beyond the assessment of the importance of communication and the general areas of deficiencies, there is a wide disparity concerning what action to take to rectify the communication difficulties of managers. Communication training is the most widely used method, but there is no unanimous agreement that training is actually beneficial. Evaluation methods do not allow complete assurance that any improvement is caused by the training.

Even among those who are convinced that training is beneficial, there exists a wide variation in methods used and content covered in the

training programs. Hopefully, this research project will shed some light on the methods and content currently in use in Oklahoma organizations and the approaches that are perceived to be most effective. A desirable outcome of this project would be that more attention be directed to communication training for first-line managers if, indeed, such training is perceived necessary.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study was designed to examine communication training provided

for first-line managers in organizations represented by members of the

American Society for Training Directors in Oklahoma. Details of the

procedural steps in the study are included in this chapter. Topics

included are description of the population, survey instrument, survey

procedures, and data compilation.

Population Selection

The population for this study consisted of organizations in

Oklahoma represented by a national or local ASTD chapter member. ASTD

members have demonstrated a professional interest in training by joining

a local or national chapter. Therefore, they would likely be interested

in assisting with a research project involving training.

Many of these members are directly involved in some aspect of

training and would be willing and knowledgeable respondents. This

should promote a high response rate as well as complete and accurate

responses to a survey instrument.

An additional benefit of using ASTD member organizations is the

variety of organizational types and sizes represented in the study. A

1976 study by Meister was limited to communication training in manufac-

turing firms in Illinois. Although manufacturing firms are generally

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known to provide training, much of that training is technically oriented. Meister found that only 11 percent of firms with fewer than 100 employees had communication training for first-line managers. However, communication training increased with company size, with 35 percent of firms with 101-500 employees providing communication training for first-line managers.

This current study will examine training in all types and sizes of Oklahoma organizations represented by ASTD members. The National ASTD directory and Oklahoma ASTD chapter directories for 1982-83 from Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Lawton were used to identify members and organizations. These ASTD membership directories were carefully screened for the following purposes:

1. Elimination of members not affiliated with an organization.

2. Elimination of academic professionals.

3. Elimination of consultants.

4. Identification of one member as a primary representative of each organization.

Through this screening process, the total number of organizations represented was 143. Because of the limited number of organizations represented, a census survey was conducted rather than a sample survey. Thus, a member representing each organization was contacted.

Survey Instrument

A mail questionnaire was developed to gather data from an ASTD member in each organization in the population. Questions were designed to provide data relating to each research question.

One difficulty in developing questions involved terminology and

appropriate responses from which the respondent could choose. An effort was made to use terms consistent with current business usage. These terms were identified through the following steps:

1. Discussions with managers and trainers.

2. Discussions with management consultants.

3. Survey of articles in management, training, and business communication journals.

4. Survey of management development programs offered by the American Management Association.

These steps resulted in terminology and responses consistent with current business usage.

Survey Procedure

The Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978) for mail questionnaires was used as a guide in designing the questionnaire as well as the complete data collection process.

To simplify the completion of the questionnaire, the responses required either the circling of a number or the insertion of a number. This procedure was also beneficial in the tabulation of results.

Careful consideration was given to the attractiveness and the length of the questionnaire to encourage a high response rate. Because of the likely time constraints of the respondents, the questionnaire was designed for a maximum completion time of 15 minutes.

Through a copy reduction process, the questionnaire was reduced in size to fit a 6 1/8" x 8 1/4" booklet. The booklet consisted of a cover page, six pages of questions, and a back page for any additional comments the respondent might wish to add. Every attempt was made to

secure as much information as possible without making the questionnaire completion either a burdensome task or a task most recipients would reject.

The size of the booklet was selected to make the questionnaire unimposing and easily folded to insert into the return envelope. A typewritten copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

The complete mailing package included a cover letter; questionnaire; and a stamped, addressed envelope. The outside envelope was addressed to the ASTD member representing each organization in the population.

The cover letter used appeals of professionalism and cooperation. Benefits of the study were summarized, the respondent was encouraged to reply by a specific date, and a copy of the research results was offered. A copy of the cover letter is provided in Appendix B.

After the initial version of the mail packet was completed, two colleagues with extensive experience in academia and business were asked to test the packet. Assuming the role of a respondent, they completed the questionnaire. They then evaluated the entire packet both from the perspective of a respondent and of an academician.

Information obtained from this simulation exercise was used to revise the packet. The revised packet was then given in a similar fashion to two individuals involved in training in different organizations and their reactions were recorded. This additional information formed the basis for the final revision of the packet.

The cover letter was prepared on word processing equipment and individually signed to personalize the packet. The initial mailing was timed to arrive at its destination at midweek to avoid the Monday mail congestion.

Approximately one week after the initial mailing, a follow-up post-card was mailed to the non-respondents. Three weeks after the initial mailing, a second follow-up was sent to all non-respondents. This mailing included a new cover letter with a stonger appeal, a second questionnaire, and another stamped, addressed envelope. Copies of the postcard message and the second follow-up letter are included in Appendices C and D.

Approximately two weeks after the second follow-up, the ASTD membership directories were screened once again. An alternate ASTD member was selected for each organization with multiple ASTD members and from whom a response had not been received. A packet similar to the original packet was mailed to the alternate member. A slight change in the letter put greater emphasis on the importance of the inclusion of the member's organization in the study. A copy of the letter is provided in Appendix E.

The response rate for the mail survey was 72 percent calculated by the following method recommended by Dillman (1976):

$$\text{Response Rate} = \frac{\text{number returned}}{\text{number in sample} - (\text{noneligible and nonreachable})} \times 100$$

$$\text{Response Rate} = \frac{95 \text{ returned}}{143 \text{ organizations} - (5 \text{ noneligible} + 6 \text{ nonreachable})} \times 100$$

$$= 72\%$$

Compilation of Data

Data collected through the survey were analyzed on a computer using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) developed by SAS Institute, Inc. Documentation for this program was provided through the SAS User's Guide (1979).

As the questionnaire was developed, careful attention was given to the relationship of the data sought to the research questions. Also of prime importance was the intended method of entering and analyzing the data after collection. This careful planning assured proper coding and entry of data from the questionnaire. Since most of the data were recorded through numerical responses, entry and analysis were simplified.

The SAS program provided extensive statistical analysis allowing examination of all relationships addressed in the research questions. Statistical analysis of the two-way tables included Chi-square and several other statistical methods. However, the cells were so small that Chi-square was not a valid test. The additional statistical techniques also did not appear to be appropriate for this study. Therefore, the final analysis in this study utilized simple frequency tables for description of single items and contingency table analysis (cross tabulation) to describe the relationship between the two items. Results are generally reported in percentages--either percentages of all responses or percentages of those who gave a certain response to a certain item. This appeared to be the most logical approach to analyzing and presenting the data in a meaningful way.

Summary

This chapter described the survey instrument, the survey procedures, and the method of data compilation.

The extensive planning that went into the design of the instrument and the mailing procedures were detailed to show the researcher's effort to secure a high rate of usable returns.

The description of the statistical analysis was provided to establish a framework for the results reported in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data in this chapter were obtained through a survey conducted in
Oklahoma organizations represented by ASTD members. An examination of
various aspects of communication training for first-line managers was
the primary purpose of this survey. The data were analyzed by using the
Statistical Analysis System program and are presented through
percentages in simple frequency tables and contingency tables.

General Description of Respondents

This study was not limited to any certain type of organization.
Since organizations represented by ASTD members were used as the
population, a wide variety of organizations are represented, as shown in
Table I. Later in this chapter relationships between type of
organization and training factors will be discussed.

A wide range in size of organization also existed because of the
population used. Table II reflects the size of the organizations
represented by the respondents.

The question relating to size specifically requested that only
employees in Oklahoma be included in the response. This was necessary
since the study addresses communication training in Oklahoma and many of
the respondents represent organizations national in scope. Relation-
ships between the size factor and communication training factors will be
discussed later in this chapter.

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TABLE I

TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED

Company Category	No. in Study
Manufacturing	24
Distribution	3
Retailing	3
Banking	15
Insurance	4
Health	8
Other Service	7
Mining/Petroleum	9
Utility	5
Other	17
	95

TABLE II

SIZE OF ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED

Number of Employees in Oklahoma	No. of Organizations Responding
Less than 100	16
100 - 199	7
200 - 299	11
300 - 399	7
400 - 499	3
500 and over	50
Not indicated	1
	95

Since organizations represented by ASTD members were used as the population and ASTD members were the respondents, it was anticipated that most respondents would hold positions closely related to some aspect of training. Although exact titles vary considerably throughout the broad sector represented in this study, three common titles were selected with all others asked to write in their exact title. Table III shows that 43 percent of the respondents actually have these three titles. There were 29 different titles written in. The most common titles mentioned in addition to the three stated were Training Manager (11) and Employee Relations Director (4).

TABLE III

POSITION TITLES OF RESPONDENTS

Position Title	No. of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Director of Training and Development	25	26.3
Personnel Manager	10	10.5
Human Resources Development Manager	6	6.3
Other	54	56.8
	95	

Research Questions

Each of the 16 research questions will be discussed in this section. Data obtained from the questionnaire have been categorized according to the relationship to the research questions and presented in either the form of frequency tables or contingency table analysis.

Respondents did not always answer each question on the survey. Therefore, the total responses do not always equal either the number responding or the number offering communication training for first-line managers.

Analysis of the data on the ASTD survey utilized simple frequency tables for descriptions of single items and contingency table analysis (cross tabulation) to describe the relationship between two items. Results are reported in percentages--either percentages of the entire sample or percentages of those who gave a certain response to a specific item.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between communication skills and the selection of a first-line manager?

Respondents were asked to identify either technical, communication, or conceptual skills as most important in selecting a first-line manager. The categories were based on research by Katz (1955) which supported the division of all managerial skills into these three broad categories.

As reflected in Table IV, 40 percent of the respondents identified communication skills as most important when selecting a first-line manager. Technical skills are more highly rated with 51 percent of the respondents selecting technical skills. Conceptual skills are most important to only nine percent of the respondents.

TABLE IV

SKILLS MOST IMPORTANT IN SELECTING
FIRST-LINE MANAGERS

Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Technical Skill	48	51.1
Communication Skill	38	40.4
Conceptual Skill	8	8.5
	94	100.0

When asked to rate the importance of communication skills in selecting a first-line manager on a five-point scale, 62 percent of the respondents rated communications skills of high or very high importance as shown in Table V.

TABLE V

DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS
IN SELECTING FIRST-LINE MANAGERS

Degree of Importance	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Importance	17	17.9
High Importance	42	44.2
Moderate Importance	32	33.7
Low Importance	3	3.2
No Importance	1	1.0
	95	100.0

Responses comparing the importance of oral versus written communication skills show that 89 percent of the respondents consider oral communication skills most important. This correlates with the general nature of a first-line manager's job involving frequent interaction with employees and limited written reports. The emphasis on oral communication skills also reflects the trends evident in the review of literature.

Table VI shows that the first-line manager's job is communication intensive in the organizations surveyed. The vast majority (74 percent) indicate that their first-line managers spend more than half their work time in some form of communication. Only two percent estimate that their first-line managers spend less than one-fourth of their work time using communication skills. A significant factor is that almost 30 percent of the managers spend over 75 percent of their time communicating.

TABLE VI

AMOUNT OF TIME FIRST-LINE MANAGERS SPEND
IN SOME FORM OF COMMUNICATION

Time Spent Communicating	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 25%	2	2.1
26 – 50%	23	24.2
51 – 75%	42	44.2
76 – 100%	28	29.5
	95	100.0

The data relating to Research Question 1 indicate that communication skills are a key factor in the selection process for a first-line manager.

Since a first-line manager works closely with operative employees performing the tasks directly related to the primary output of the organization, technical skills rank slightly higher than communication skills. However, when communication skills are isolated for evaluation, they are considered of high or very high importance by 62 percent of the organizations represented in this study. Oral skills are clearly more important than written skills. The high importance of communication skills stems from the nature of the first-line manager's job which requires that a high percentage of time be spent communicating.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between a first-line manager's communication skills and the performance appraisal of that manager?

Communication skill not only plays an important part in the selection of a first-line manager but is also a factor in the ongoing performance appraisal process. The data in Table VII supports this with 96 percent of the respondents considering communication skills to be of at least moderate importance. Furthermore, 61 percent rate communication skills to be of high or very high importance in the appraisal of first-line managers.

Thus, it appears that in order to be successful, a first-line manager must possess or develop a reasonable level of communication skills.

TABLE VII

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILL IN
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL OF
FIRST-LINE MANAGERS

Degree of Importance	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Importance	15	16.0
High Importance	42	44.7
Moderate Importance	33	35.1
Low Importance	4	4.2
No Importance	0	0
	94	100.0

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between

management style and the importance of communication training

for first-line managers?

To address this research question, management styles were categor-

ized and defined as follows:

Traditional--decisions made and passed downward

Consultative--employee input sought and considered

Participative--employees involved in decision making

The predominant management style used was traditional with 51 per-

cent of the organizations using that style. Consultative was the

management style used in 32 percent of the organizations, with only 17

percent using the participative style.

The importance of communication skills in the selection of

first-line managers varies among companies with different management styles. These relationships are detailed in Table VIII. Among companies with traditional management styles, 46 percent rate communication skills of high or very high importance. Consultative-style firms rate communication skills of high or very high importance in 80 percent of the responses. Seventy-five percent of the companies with participative management style rate communication skills high or very high in importance. The most common response for traditional companies was moderate importance (50 percent of responses), consultative-style companies chose high importance most frequently (70 percent of responses), and participative firms chose high importance and very high importance with equal frequency (37.5 percent choosing each category).

The relationships between performance appraisal and management style closely parallel the relationships of the selection and management style. As reflected in Table IX, 47 percent of traditional, 70 percent of consultative, and 81 percent of the participative organizations rate communication skills to be of high or very high importance.

Organizations with consultative style management are more likely to offer communication training for first-line managers than organizations with traditional or participative management styles. Table X shows that 87 percent of consultative-style companies train first-line managers compared with 73 percent for traditional and 69 percent for participative.

TABLE VIII*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILL IN THE
SELECTION OF FIRST-LINE MANAGERS AND ORGANIZATIONAL
MANAGEMENT STYLE

Importance of Communication Skill	Management Styles			Total
	Traditional	Consultative	Participative	
No Importance	----	1	----	1
	----	1.06	----	1.06
	----	100.00	----	
	----	3.33	----	
Low Importance	2	1	----	3
	2.13	1.06	----	3.19
	66.67	33.33	----	
	4.17	3.33		
Moderate Importance	24	4	4	32
	25.53	4.26	4.26	34.04
	75.00	12.50	12.50	
	50.00	13.33	25.00	
High Importance	14	21	6	41
	14.89	22.34	6.38	43.62
	34.15	51.22	14.63	
	29.17	70.00	37.50	
Very High Importance	8	3	6	17
	8.51	3.19	6.38	18.09
	47.06	17.65	35.29	
	16.67	10.00	37.50	
Total	48	30	16	94
	51.06	31.91	17.02	100.00

* The numbers in each column represent in this order: frequency of responses, percent, row percentage, and column percentage.

TABLE IX*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION
SKILL IN THE APPRAISAL OF FIRST-LINE
MANAGERS AND ORGANIZATIONAL
MANAGEMENT STYLE

Importance of Communication Skill	Management Styles			Total
	Traditional	Consultative	Participative	
No Importance	1	----	----	----
	----	----	----	----
	----	----	----	
	----	----	----	
Low Importance	4	----	----	4
	4.30	----	----	4.30
	100.00	----	----	
	8.51	----	----	
Moderate Importance	21	9	3	33
	22.58	9.68	3.23	35.48
	63.64	27.27	9.09	
	44.68	30.00	18.75	
High Importance	13	18	10	41
	13.98	19.35	10.75	44.09
	31.71	43.90	24.39	
	27.66	60.00	62.50	
Very High Importance	9	3	3	15
	9.68	3.23	3.23	16.13
	60.00	20.00	20.00	
	19.15	10.00	18.75	
Total	47	30	16	93
	50.54	32.26	17.20	100.00

* The numbers in each column represent in this order: frequency of responses, percent, row percentage, and column percentage.

TABLE X*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIRST-LINE MANAGER COMMUNICATION TRAINING
AND ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT STYLE

| First-Line Manager Communication Training | Management Styles | | | Total |
	Traditional	Consultative	Participative	
No	13	4	5	22
	13.83	4.26	5.32	23.40
	59.09	18.18	22.73	
	27.08	13.33	31.25	
Yes	35	26	11	72
	37.23	27.66	11.70	76.60
	48.61	36.11	15.28	
	72.92	86.67	68.75	
Total	48	30	16	94
	51.06	31.91	17.02	100.00

* The numbers in each column represent in this order: frequency of responses, percent, row percentage, and column percentage.

Some general comparisons extracted from Tables VIII, IX, and X point out some differences in approaches by those organizations with different management styles:

Management Style	High or Very High Selection	Importance Appraisal	Communication Training Program
Traditional	46%	47%	73%
Consultative	80%	70%	87%
Participative	75%	81%	69%

Traditional organizations tend to put less emphasis on communication skills in the selection and appraisal areas than do consultative

and participative organizations. However, almost three-fourths of these organizations then find a need to provide communication training.

Consultative organizations put high emphasis on communication in all phases. This emphasis relates directly to the nature of this management style which requires active solicitation of employee input to be used in decision making. In order to request and receive employee input on a regular basis, effective communication skills are necessary.

Participative organizations put high emphasis on communication skills in the selection and appraisal areas, but find less need for communication training than do the other two styles.

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between communication training for first-line managers and communication training for employees and other levels of management?

In general, organizations that train first-line managers are quite likely to train other classes of managers with employee communication training receiving less emphasis. Table XI details the training relationships between the various groups. For example, of the organizations who train first-line managers, 60 percent train top managers, 88 percent also train middle managers, and 44 percent train employees. Among organizations who do not train first-line managers, 83 percent do not train either top or middle managers and 96 percent do not train employees.

Apparently those organizations perceiving a need for first-line manager communication training also see a need to continue that training into middle management areas. The perceived need evidently decreases as advancement is made into top management. The lower prevalence of communication training for employees indicates a clear differentiation

TABLE XI*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXISTENCE OF COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR FIRST-
LINE MANAGERS AND FOR OTHER CLASSES OF MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES

| | | First-Line Manager Communication Training | | |
		No	Yes	Total
Top Management Communication Training	No	19 20.00 39.58 82.61	29 30.53 60.42 40.28	48 50.53
	Yes	4 4.21 8.51 17.39	43 45.26 91.49 59.72	47 49.47
	Total	23 24.21	72 75.79	95 100.00
Middle Management Communication Training	No	19 20.00 67.86 82.61	9 9.47 32.14 12.50	28 29.47
	Yes	4 4.21 5.97 17.39	63 66.32 94.03 87.50	67 70.53
	Total	23 24.21	72 75.79	95 100.00
Employee Communication Training	No	22 23.16 35.48 95.68	40 42.11 64.52 55.56	62 65.26
	Yes	1 1.05 3.03 4.35	32 33.68 96.97 44.44	33 34.74
	Total	23 24.21	72 75.79	95 100.00

between communication skills needed by employees versus managers who must get tasks accomplished through others.

Research Question 5: What is the relationship between company size or classification and the existence of a communication training program for first-line managers?

As indicated by data in Table XII, larger organizations are more likely to train first-line managers than are smaller firms. Of organizations with 500 or more employees in Oklahoma, 94 percent train first-line managers in communication as do 71 percent of those with 100 to 499 employees in the state. However, only 31 percent of organizations with fewer than 100 employees in Oklahoma train first-line managers.

These findings are in sharp contrast to Meister's (1976) study which included only manufacturing firms in Illinois. According to that study, only 11 percent of firms having less than 100 employees had communication training for first-line managers and only 56 percent of firms having 500 or more employees had communication training. This difference could be attributed to an increased trend toward communication training since that study or to the fact that manufacturing firms are more technically oriented than many of the organizations in the present study.

In addition to total organization size, the number of first-line managers in the organization is related to the existence of training of first-line managers. The existence of training programs increases from 56 percent in those organizations having 25 or fewer first-line managers to 80 percent for those with 25-99 managers, and 100 percent for those with 100 or more first line managers.

While any relationship between organizational classification and

TABLE XII

RELATIONSHIP OF SIZE TO EXISTENCE OF
COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR
FIRST-LINE MANAGERS

Number of Employees in Oklahoma	Communication Training for First-Line Mangers		
	No	Yes	Total
Less Than 100	11	5	16
	11.70	5.32	17.02
	68.75	31.25	
	50.00	6.94	
100-199	2	5	7
	2.13	5.32	7.45
	28.57	71.43	
	9.09	6.94	
200-299	3	8	11
	3.19	8.51	11.70
	27.27	72.73	
	13.64	11.11	
300-399	3	4	7
	3.19	4.26	7.45
	42.86	57.14	
	13.64	5.56	
400-499	0	3	3
	0.00	3.19	3.19
	0.00	100.00	
	0.00	4.17	
500 and over	3	47	50
	3.19	50.00	53.19
	6.00	94.00	
	13.64	65.28	
Total	22	72	94
	23.40	76.60	100.00

the existence of training for first-line managers is difficult to
determine due to the small size of some categories, some general trends
are reflected. Organizations in the manufacturing, retail, health,
mining/petroleum, and utility sectors have a greater-than-average inci-
dence of training. The distributing and banking sectors are somewhat
below average in number of organizations who train first-line managers
in communication.

Table XIII reports existence of training in the various categories.
Over all categories, communication training is provided for first-line
managers in 76 percent of the organizations.

TABLE XIII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATION CLASSIFICATION AND
EXISTENCE OF COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR
FIRST-LINE MANAGERS

Organizational Category	Number of Organizations	Number Providing Training	Percent
Manufacturing	24	20	83
Distributing	3	1	33
Retailing	3	3	100
Banking	15	9	60
Insurance	4	3	75
Health	8	7	88
Other Service	7	5	71
Mining/Petroleum	9	7	78
Utility	5	5	100
Other	17	12	71
	95	72	76

Research Question 6: What is the relationship between the
lack of communication training for first-line managers and
certain company characteristics?

Of the 95 organizations represented by the respondents, 23 do not
currently train first-line managers in the communication area. Table
XIV summarizes the reasons cited for lack of such training.

TABLE XIV

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LACK OF COMMUNICATION
TRAINING FOR FIRST-LINE MANAGERS AND
SELECTED COMPANY CHARACTERISTICS

Reasons for Lack of Training	No. of Organizations	Percentage
No training department	5	22
Not considered necessary	4	17
No apparent deficiency in skills	3	13
Management insensitivity to problem	3	13
No funds for training	2	9
Training program in training stage	2	9
Not enough first-line managers	1	4
Inadequate training materials	1	4
Low motivation	1	4
No reason given	1	4
	23	

Although 24 percent of the organizations responding do not provide communication training, the reasons point to several possible conclusions. Thirty-two percent of these organizations cite reasons of "not considered necessary" and "no apparent deficiency." These organizations may utilize the selection process to identify and employ only those who already possess adequate communication skills. As reported earlier in this study, 62 percent of the total respondents do consider communication skills of "high" or "very high" importance in selecting a first-line manager. Effective screening for this skill in the selection process obviously could reduce the need for training.

An area of concern would appear to be the 18 percent of the organizations which report "management insensitivity to problem" and "low motivation" as reasons for lack of training. Apparently, communication problems do exist in those organizations but little concern is given to possible improvement through training.

Research Question 7: What is the relationship between the first-line manager's total training program and the portion devoted to communication training?

Survey results in Table XV reveal that 58 percent of the first-line manager training programs spend 25 percent or less of the total training time on communication skills. This in sharp contrast to the reported proportion of the on-the-job time which first-line managers spend in communication activities. As previously noted in Table VI, only two percent of the organizations have first-line managers who use communication skills for 25 percent or less of their work time.

Table XV also shows that only 19 percent spend over half of the total training time on communication skills. Yet, almost 74 percent of

the organizations report that their first-line managers spend 50 percent or more of their time communicating.

TABLE XV

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TRAINING FOR
FIRST-LINE MANAGERS DEVOTED
TO COMMUNICATION

Communication Portion of Training	Frequency	Percentage
5% or less	5	6.7
6 - 25%	38	51.3
26 - 50%	17	23.0
51 - 75%	11	14.9
76 - 100%	3	4.1
	74	100.0

Table XV addresses communication training as a percentage of the total training program. However, this often does not equate to very many hours of training time. Respondents indicate that 63.5 percent of the organizations provide less than 20 hours of communication training during the first-line manager's first year on the job. Almost 18 percent devote 20-40 hours to communication training during the first year, and 11 percent have a continuous program.

Twenty-three, or 31 percent, of the organizations have provided

communication training for first-line managers for five years or more. The remaining 51 organizations, 69 percent, have provided training for four years or less. Of these organizations, 13 (18 percent) have new programs of less than one year. These figures may reflect an increased awareness in recent years of the need for this type training.

Table XVI shows the relationship between the proportion of work time spent communicating and the total training time devoted to communication skills. For example, among organizations whose managers spend one-fourth to one-half of their job time in communication, 61 percent devote less than one-fourth of total training time to communication skills (column 2, row 1), 33 percent devote one-fourth to one-half of the training time (column 2, row 1), and the remaining 6 percent devote more than three-fourths of total training time to communication skills (column 2, row 4).

TABLE XVI

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION PORTION OF TOTAL
TRAINING AND TIME SPENT COMMUNICATING

Proportion of Training Devoted to Communication	Proportion Of Work Time Spent Using Communication Skills			
	% Less than 1/4	% 1/4 to 1/2	% 1/2 to 3/4	% more than 3/4
Less than one-fourth	100%	61%	55%	58%
One-fourth to one-half	0%	33%	23%	17%
One-half to three-fourths	0%	0%	19%	21%
More than three-fourths	0%	6%	3%	4%

There is little or no observed relationship between proportion of job time spent communicating and proportion of training time devoted to communication skills. Given the high importance placed on communication skills as a criterion for both selection and performance appraisal of first-line managers, it would appear that organizations expect these managers to possess good communication skills when hired. Organizations may, therefore, feel they do not, or should not, need to spend time trying to "build in" these skills.

If this is indeed the case, it reinforces the need for educational institutions to equip prospective managers with adequate communication skills to be selected for entry-level management positions.

Research Question 8: What is the relationship between the oral communication activities presenting the most problems for first-line managers and the actual content of training programs?

Survey results show that, in general, organizations are somewhat more likely to train in those areas which are more troublesome. The small size of some categories, however, makes definitive comparisons very difficult.

Table XVII summarizes the complex relationships of Research Question 8. The first three columns show the specific oral communication activity, importance ranking of the activity by those organizations training in the activity, and troublesome ranking of the activity by those same organizations. The fourth column indicates the total number of organizations training in the activity and converts that figure into a percentage of all organizations having training programs. The remaining columns reflect the total number of organizations in each ranking

TABLE XVII

ORAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES--RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINING
AND TROUBLESOME ACTIVITIES

Area	Rank by Firms Training	Rank by Trouble	Firms Training	Those Training by Trouble Category			
				Most Trouble	2nd In Trouble	3rd In Trouble	Not In Top 3
Using the Telephone	7	11	37(51%)	1(100%)	1(100%)	1(100%)	34(49%)
Speaking Before Groups	9	2	31(43%)	12(63%)	3(75%)	4(67%)	12(28%)
Dictating	12	12	5(7%)	--	--	1(100%)	4(6%)
Listening	4	4	47(65%)	6(75%)	9(75%)	5(83%)	27(59%)
Conducting Meetings	10	6	29(40%)	3(60%)	4(44%)	3(43%)	19(37%)
Giving Instructions	5	5	43(60%)	5(83%)	3(43)	4(67%)	31(58%)
Counseling	3	3	51(71%)	10(91%)	5(71%)	8(89%)	28(62%)
Interviewing	2	7	56(78%)	3(100%)	5(71%)	5(100%)	43(75%)
Conducting Performance Appraisals	1	1	57(79%)	12(86%)	14(88%)	10(67%)	21(78%)
Consulting With Superiors	11	10	20(28%)	1(100%)	1(50%)	0(0%)	18(27%)
Group Problem Solving	5	8	44(61%)	2(67%)	3(50%)	5(71%)	34(61%)
Communicating Non-verbally	8	9	32(44%)	1(50%)	1(100%)	2(67%)	28(42%)

category. The numbers in parentheses are percentages of organizations
which place the activity in that ranking and also train in the activity.

In the second row, for example, the greatest discrepancy exists
between trouble ranking and training. Speaking before groups is ranked
second in trouble but ninth in training. Only 31 of the 72
organizations providing training (43 percent) include speaking before
groups as part of their training. Of the 12 organizations ranking this
as the most troublesome area for their first-line managers, only 63
percent train in this area.

As shown in Table XVII, there is no clearcut agreement regarding
which areas are most troublesome. However, four of the top five most
troublesome areas (performance appraisal, counseling, listening, and
giving instructions) involve one-on-one communication activity requiring
strong interpersonal communication skills. These same four activities
are included in the five top-ranked activities covered in training
programs. Therefore, to at least a limited extent, training is directed
toward communication activities that tend to cause trouble.

However, some areas receive emphasis in training when they do not
appear to be a troublesome area. This could be explained by the appar-
ent effectiveness of training or by the fact that training may not be
correlated to need. One example is speaking before groups discussed
earlier. Another example is interviewing. Of the 43 organizations
training in that area, 75 percent do not consider interviewing in the
three top troublesome rankings. Interviewing ranks seventh overall in
trouble; yet, interviewing ranks second in number of organizations
including it in training programs.

Some organizations may provide training in an area because of

available training materials or programs rather than because of an
identified need. Better assessment methods may need to be developed
to more clearly pinpoint training needs.

Research Question 9: What is the relationship between the
perceived importance of oral communication activities and the
actual content of training programs?

Table XVIII presents data showing the inclusion of communication
activities in training programs as related to the importance rating
given the activity by the respondents. Table XVIII is much like Table
XVII except the categories of ratings are now importance categories
rather than troublesomeness categories.

The greatest discrepancy noted when comparing Table XVIII with
Table XVII is related to speaking before groups. Respondents indicated
this activity's overall importance rating was eleventh when identifying
each oral communication activity as very important, fairly important,
and not important. However, the ranking related to the troublesome
nature of speaking before groups was second.

Further comparison is provided in Table XIX which reflects impor-
tance rankings when respondents were asked to rate each activity as
first, second, third, or not in top three importance categories. Speak-
ing before groups ranks eight in this table. Therefore, inconsistency
apparently exists between the perceived importance of this activity and
the actual trouble caused the first-line manager when deficient in this
skill.

Rankings of all other activities in Tables XVII, XVIII, and XIX
are fairly consistent. One slight discrepancy is in the importance
ranking of giving instructions--most important in Table XIX and fourth
in importance in Table XVIII.

TABLE XVIII

ORAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES--RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
TRAINING AND PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE

Area	Rank by Firms Training	Rank by Importance	Firms Training	Those Training by Importance Category		
				Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important
Using the Telephone	7	8	36(58%)	20(83%)	13(42%)	3(43%)
Speaking Before Groups	9	11	29(46%)	17(63%)	9(43%)	3(20%)
Dictating	12	12	5(9%)	0(0%)	2(13%)	3(9%)
Listening	4	2	43(67%)	33(73%)	10(59%)	0(0%)
Conducting Meetings	10	7	28(47%)	22(67%)	6(27%)	0(0%)
Giving Instructions	5	4	43(70%)	33(82%)	8(47%)	2(50%)
Counseling	3	1	50(77%)	39(83%)	8(53%)	3(100%)
Interviewing	2	5	54(79%)	39(87%)	11(65%)	4(57%)
Conducting Performance Appraisals	1	2	55(82%)	44(86%)	7(70%)	4(67%)
Consulting With Superiors	11	8	19(33%)	12(55%)	6(20%)	1(17%)
Group Problem Solving	5	6	44(66%)	30(77%)	11(48%)	3(60%)
Communicating Non-verbally	8	10	32(51%)	16(70%)	15(48%)	1(11%)

TABLE XIX

ORAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES--RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
TRAINING AND IMPORTANCE RANKING

Area	Rank by Firms Training	Rank by Import	Firms Training	Those Training by Importance Category			
				Most Important	2nd In Importance	3rd In Importance	Not In Top 3
Using the Telephone	7	11	36(50%)	--	1(100%)	1(100%)	34(49%)
Speaking Before Groups	9	8	30(42%)	1(100%)	2(67%)	1(100%)	26(39%)
Dictating	12	12	6(8%)	--	--	--	6(100%)
Listening	4	2	46(64%)	9(75%)	9(90%)	8(100%)	20(48%)
Conducting Meetings	10	6	28(39%)	2(100%)	3(75%)	2(67%)	21(33%)
Giving Instructions	5	1	43(60%)	13(76%)	5(83%)	5(62%)	20(49%)
Counseling	3	2	51(71%)	12(92%)	11(92%)	2(50%)	26(60%)
Interviewing	2	6	55(76%)	--	4(80%)	5(83%)	46(75%)
Conducting Performance Appraisals	1	2	56(78%)	11(100%)	12(92%)	7(88%)	26(65%)
Consulting With Superiors	11	9	20(28%)	--	0(0%)	1(25%)	19(29%)
Group Problem Solving	5	5	43(60%)	7(88%)	4(80%)	8(80%)	49(24%)
Communicating Non-verbally	8	10	31(43%)	1(100%)	--	1(100%)	29(41%)

Overall, perceived importance of activities is more closely related to incidence of training than is perceived troublesomeness. Importance rating on a scale of 1=Very Important to 3=Not Important is more closely related to incidence of training than is importance ranking (picking and ordering the 3 most important)

Research Question 10: What is the relationship between the written communication activities presenting the most problems for first-line managers and the actual content of training programs?

The biggest discrepancies reflected in Table XX when comparing training to trouble areas is in using computer terminals and writing informational reports.

Although writing informational reports ranks first in trouble, it ranks fourth in prevalence of training. Only 29 percent of the organizations train in this activity even though it is highest in troublesome ranking.

The use of computer terminals ranks lowest in trouble and highest in training coverage. This may indicate a strong early awareness of the need for training in this most recent form of written communication. The successful conversion of this perceived need into training programs may explain the low trouble ranking.

The relationship of troublesomeness to incidence of training is slightly stronger for written communication areas than it was for oral communication areas.

TABLE XX

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES--RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
TRAINING AND TROUBLESOME ACTIVITIES

Area	Rank by Firms Training	Rank by Trouble	Firms Training	Those Training by Trouble Category			
				Most Trouble	2nd In Trouble	3rd In Trouble	Not In Top 3
Writing Letters	2	3	28(40%)	8(72%)	6(43%)	5(45%)	5(26%)
Writing Memos	2	2	28(40%)	6(38%)	9(56%)	4(27%)	9(39%)
Writing Proposals	6	4	14(20%)	4(33%)	0(0%)	5(31%)	5(14%)
Writing Analytical Reports	7	5	11(16%)	3(33%)	0(0%)	2(25%)	6(13%)
Writing Informational Reports	4	1	20(29%)	5(36%)	6(30%)	0(0%)	9(31%)
Using Computer Terminals	1	7	37(53%)	2(67%)	1(50%)	1(100%)	33(52%)
Reading	5	6	17(24%)	1(50%)	1(20%)	0(0%)	15(27%)

Research Question 11: What is the relationship between the

perceived importance of written communication activities and

the actual content of training programs?

Tables XXI and XXII also reflect the difference in importance of

using computer terminals and incidence of training. A slight inconsis-

tency exists in Table XXII regarding training for and importance of

writing informational reports. Otherwise Tables XXI and XXII support a consistent relationship between training offered and importance of the activity.

TABLE XXI

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES--RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
TRAINING AND PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE

Area	Rank by Firms Training	Rank by Importance	Firms Training	Those Training by Importance Category		
				Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important
Writing Letters	2	1	29(44%)	12(52%)	12(45%)	2(20%)
Writing Memos	2	2	29(44%)	10(43%)	16(52%)	3(25%)
Writing Proposals	6	6	16(27%)	9(53%)	7(24%)	0(0%)
Writing Analytical Reports	7	7	13(23%)	7(50%)	6(20%)	0(0%)
Writing Informational Reports	4	3	22(36%)	9(47%)	13(39%)	0(0%)
Using Computer Terminals	1	4	38(64%)	19(83%)	12(60%)	7(44%)
Reading	5	4	17(28%)	5(26%)	11(38%)	1(8%)

TABLE XXII

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES--RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
TRAINING AND IMPORTANCE RANKING

Area	Rank by Firms Training	Rank by Importance	Firms Training	Those Training by Importance Category			
				Most Impor-tant	2nd In Impor-tance	3rd In Impor-tance	Not In Top 3
Writing Letters	2	2	29(40%)	1(100%)	2(100%)	3(100%)	23(36%)
Writing Memos	2	3	29(40%)	1(100%)	1(100%)	2(50%)	25(38%)
Writing Proposals	6	5	16(22%)	2(100%)	1(100%)	---	13(19%)
Writing Analytical Reports	7	7	12(17%)	---	0(0%)	---	12(17%)
Writing Informational Reports	4	1	22(31%)	0(0%)	2(50%)	3(50%)	17(28%)
Using Computer Terminals	1	6	38(53%)	1(100%)	---	1(100%)	36(51%)
Reading	5	3	18(25%)	1(100%)	0(0%)	2(100%)	15(22%)

As was noted earlier, organizations in the study are more likely to train for both written and oral communication based on the criterion of perceived importance of an activity rather than troublesomeness of the activity. This may be because attitudes about an activity's importance are relatively stable over time but the amount of trouble experienced in

a given area is variable depending on the people who are presently on the staff and the current short-term needs of the organization. In order to keep from revising training programs on a regular basis, the more stable criterion for selecting the content of such programs is used.

Research Question 12: Which types of written communication training programs, techniques, sources, and locations are most commonly used?

Since many organizations use a combination of approaches, the data summarized in Table XXIII below merely provide a general indication of how organizations attempt to improve written communication skills.

TABLE XXIII

TYPES OF TRAINING PROGRAMS IN WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Type	Number Using	Percent Using	On-Site	Off-Site	By Outside Consultants	By Company Trainers
Individualized	25	34	20(27%)	10(14%)	29(18%)	15(20%)
Group	43	58	35(47%)	10(14%)	19(26%)	31(43%)
On-the-Job	27	36				
Tuition Asst.	24	32				
Other	4	5				

Group training is used by 58 percent of organizations having training programs. This may be due more to the cost effectiveness rather than to effectiveness of results. This may also be reflected in the tendency to offer group and individualized training on-site instead of off-site. The differential is not nearly so clear between the use of company trainers versus outside consultants. Although company trainers are used more for group and individualized training, consultants do play a significant role by providing 18 percent of individualized training and 26 percent of group training.

As shown in Table XXIV, 45 percent of the respondents considered the preparation of written assignments to be the most effective way to improve written communication skills.

TABLE XXIV

MOST EFFECTIVE TRAINING TECHNIQUES FOR DEVELOPING
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Studying Writing Theory	6	11
Analyzing Written Material	17	31
Preparing Written Assignments for Evaluation	25	45
Other	7	13
	55	100

These results support the widely held theory in education that retention is greater when the learner is actively involved in the learning process. The top two methods found to be most effective also give trainers an opportunity to design assignments related to specific job requirements.

Research Questions 13: Which types of oral communication training programs, techniques, sources, and locations are most commonly used?

As reflected in Table XXV, an overwhelming 93 percent of organizations providing oral communication training use the group approach. This training is more commonly provided on site by company trainers. As is true with written communication training, consultants and off-site programs do provide a significant alternative to or addition to on-site training conducted by company trainers.

Table XXV

TYPES OF TRAINING PROGRAMS IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

Type	Number Using	Percent Using	On-Site	Off-Site	By Outside Consultants	By Company Trainers
Individualized	26	35	18(24%)	9(12%)	8(11%)	23(31%)
Group	69	93	50(68%)	23(32%)	20(28%)	58(80%)
On-the-Job	25	34				
Tuition Asst.	28	38				
Other	0	0				

Just over half the respondents considered role play to be the most effective way to provide oral communication training. Thirty percent selected giving oral presentations for evaluation as the most effective technique. Other techniques apparently are not very effective for this type of communication skill development (see Table XXVI).

TABLE XXVI

MOST EFFECTIVE TRAINING TECHNIQUES FOR
DEVELOPING ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Study oral communication theory	6	8
Analyzing oral presentations of others	4	6
Giving oral presentations for evaluation	21	30
Role playing	37	53
Other	2	3
	70	100

This data also shows the importance of learner involvement in developing communication skills. Role playing is especially meaningful since it provides a new perspective for the learner. Often that is an important factor in the development of oral communication skills.

Research Question 14: Are companies measuring the effective-
ness of communication training by using subjective criteria
which they consider most important?

For most of the subjective effectiveness measures, a relationship
can be seen in Table XXVII between the importance of a measure and the
incidence of its use. Trainees' Reactions During Training is a measure
which is used quite frequently even by those who do not consider it
important (57%). Such reactions are probably difficult to ignore since
they are so readily available and are thus given some consideration even
by those who would not actively seek them out were they less obvious.

Research Question 15: Are companies measuring the effective-
ness of communication training by using objective criteria
which they consider most important?

There is considerable agreement reflected in Table XXVIII between
objective criteria used most frequently and the perceived importance of
the criteria. Such objective measures require some effort in evaluation
and are probably more carefully selected than are the more easily
obtained subjective measures in the preceeding table.

Research Question 16: In the opinion of ASTD members, how
effective is the communication training for first-line
managers?

The respondents seem to feel that training for first-line managers
is reasonably effective. A total of 74 percent selected either "very
effective" or "moderately effective" to describe their perception of the
training. As shown in Table XXIX, almost 11 percent believe that their
organization's communication training program is "ineffective" or "very
ineffective". This figure, coupled with the 15 percent who are

TABLE XXVII

SUBJECTIVE EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA
USE VERSUS IMPORTANCE

Area	Rank by Firms Using	Rank by Import	Firms Using	Those Using by Importance Category			
				Most Import	2nd In Import	3rd In Import	Not In Top 3
Trainees Reactions During	1	3	56(76%)	11(92%)	9(90%)	16(94%)	20(57%)
Trainees Reactions After	5	1	29(39%)	18(67%)	7(35%)	3(43%)	1(5%)
Supervisor's Reactions	3	2	38(51%)	7(70%)	16(67%)	10(59%)	5(22%)
Higher Management Reactions	6	6	16(22%)	3(60%)	1(25%)	4(57%)	8(14%)
Trainer's Evaluation	4	5	35(47%)	4(100%)	7(100%)	6(67%)	18(33%)
Informal Observation	2	4	41(55%)	8(89%)	6(75%)	10(77%)	17(39%)

TABLE XXVIII

OBJECTIVE EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA
USE VERSUS IMPORTANCE

| Area | Rank by Firms Using | Rank by Import | Firms Using | Those Using by Importance Category | | | |
				Most Import	2nd In Import	3rd In Import	Not In Top 3
Change in Performance Appraisals	2	2	31(44%)	12(63%)	5(56%)	6(67%)	8(24%)
Records of Production, Etc.	6	6	20(28%)	1(50%)	8(73%)	2(50%)	9(17%)
Records of Absence, Etc.	4	5	25(35%)	25(35%)	7(100%)	3(75%)	6(55%)
Productivity of Trainee's Department	3	3	26(37%)	9(69%)	3(60%)	5(71%)	9(20%)
Specific Objectives	1	1	44(62%)	16(94%)	13(76%)	7(78%)	8(29%)
Testing At End	8	9	9(13%)	--	1(100%)	1(100%)	7(10%)
Testing Before and After	9	7	7(10%)	1(50%)	0(0%)	3(50%)	3(5%)
Attitude Surveys	5	3	23(32%)	5(62%)	8(67%)	3(38%)	7(16%)
Formal Program Evaluations	7	8	12(17%)	3(100%)	0(0%)	4(80%)	5(8%)

TABLE XXIX

EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION TRAINING
AS PERCEIVED BY RESPONDENTS

Degree of Effectiveness	Frequency	Percentage
Very Effective	9	12.2
Moderately Effective	46	62.2
Undecided	11	14.9
Ineffective	7	9.4
Very Ineffective	1	1.3
	74	100.0

The effectiveness ratings provided by the respondents become more meaningful in light of the information in Table XXX showing the respondents' participation in the development of or the conducting of communication training.

ASTD members proved to be a knowledgeable source of information about communication training. Sixty-one percent had major participation in the training. Only three of the respondents, 4 percent, indicated they had very little or no participation in the training. The only real difference in the participation categories appears to be that those who did not have major participation in the development and conducting of the training programs are more likely to be undecided about the effectiveness of the program.

TABLE XXX*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS RATING
AND DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION

Degree of Participation	Effectiveness Ratings					
	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Undecided	Ineff.	Very Ineff.	Total
Major Participation	7	30	3	4	1	45
	9.46	40.54	4.05	5.41	1.35	60.81
	15.56	66.67	6.67	8.89	2.22	
	77.78	65.22	27.27	57.14	100.00	
Some Participation	2	14	8	2	--	26
	2.70	18.92	10.81	2.70	--	35.14
	7.69	53.85	30.77	7.69	--	
	22.22	30.43	72.73	28.57	--	
Very Little Participation	--	--	--	1	--	1
	--	--	--	1.35	--	1.35
	--	--	--	100.00	--	
	--	--	--	14.29	--	
No Participation	--	2	--	--	--	2
	--	2.70	--	--	--	2.70
	--	100.00	--	--	--	
	--	4.35	--	--	--	
Total	9	46	11	7	1	74
	12.16	62.16	14.86	9.46	1.35	100.00

* The numbers in each column represent in this order: frequency of responses, percent, row percentage, and column percentage.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication is a critical element in the success of any manager. This is especially true for the first-line manager who must communicate with upper-level management, peers, and employees. This study was conducted to examine the status of communication training for first-line managers in Oklahoma organizations represented by ASTD members. A summary, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from this study are included in this chapter.

Summary

This study of the status of communication training was limited to the first-line manager because of the critical nature of his responsibility to serve as the connecting link between management and employees. ASTD members were selected as the contact persons since they are usually closely connected to training programs and would likely be willing to contribute to a research study in the training area. Oklahoma organizations were selected because of the desire to encourage improved organizational effectiveness and educational programs in the state.

A mail questionnaire was sent to ASTD members representing 143 Oklahoma organizations. Careful design of the questionnaire and a systematic survey procedure resulted in a 72 percent response rate. The questionnaire was used to gather data related to 16 specific research

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questions. These questions pertain to communication training methods, content, effectiveness measures, and other items related to communication training for first-line managers. Relationships between numerous factors of training and organizations were examined. Careful examination of these relationships through simple frequency tables and contingency table analysis provides some helpful insight into the current status of communication training for first-line managers.

Conclusions

The major findings of this study reflect the importance of communication skill and identify specific areas for further research. The conclusions will be discussed in terms of the research questions addressed.

1. Communication skills are a key factor in selecting a first-line manager. Although technical skills are more important, 62 percent of the respondents rated communication skills of high or very high importance. The relationship of this importance to the job requirements is evident in the survey results showing that 74 percent of the managers spend over 50 percent of their time communicating.

2. Communication skills are not only important for selection but also for successful fulfillment of job requirements. Survey results show 96 percent of the respondents rate communication skills of moderate or higher importance in the performance appraisal of first-line managers.

3. The predominant management style used in 51 percent of the organizations surveyed was the traditional style. Compared to

to other two styles identified, traditional organizations put less emphasis on communication skills in selection and appraisal; but almost three-fourths of the traditional organizations recognize a need for communication training. Consultative management, used in 32 percent of the organizations, put high emphasis on communication skills in the selection and appraisal areas, but find less need for training programs than do the other styles. Therefore, communication skills are apparently important for first-line managers in all types of organizations. The primary difference is in where the emphasis on these skills is directed--selection, appraisal, or training.

4. Organizations providing communication training for first-line managers are quite likely to train middle managers with the training decreasing as advancement is made into top management. Communication training for employees in these same organizations receives less emphasis than does management training. This difference would relate directly to the unique requirement that a manager accomplishes work through others.

5. Communication training is provided in 76 percent of the organizations represented in this study. However, size is a definite factor in the existence of a communication program with 94 percent of organizations with 500 or more employees offering communication training for their first-line managers. This compares with only 31 percent of organizations with fewer than 100 employees offering training.

Although a limited number of organizations were represented in this study, a greater-than-average incidence of training was

evident in the manufacturing, retail, health, mining/petroleum, and utility sectors. The distributing and banking sectors are somewhat below average, however.

6. At least one-third of the organizations not offering communication training cite reasons which indicate the effective screening for communication skills in the selection process precludes the need for extensive communication training for first-line managers. However, the need for continued emphasis on the benefits of training is reflected in the 18 percent of organizations not offering training because of "management insensitivity to the problem" and "low motivation."

7. There is little or no relationship between proportion of job time spent communicating and proportion of the total training program devoted to communication training. Only 19 percent of the organizations spend 50 percent or more of their training time on communication while 74 percent of first-line managers spend 50 percent or more of their time communicating. However, many organizations apparently use the selection process to identify and select those who already possess appropriate communication skills.

8. Four of the top five most troublesome oral activities (performance appraisal, counseling, listening, and giving instructions) involve one-on-one communication activity requiring strong interpersonal communication skills. These activities receive heavy emphasis in most communication training programs. However, other less troublesome activities receive training emphasis that may be a result of convenience rather than real need.

Better need assessment methods could more clearly pinpoint training needs.

9. Perceived importance of oral communication skills is more closely related to the content of training programs than is the identification of troublesome communication activities. This may indicate that training is provided before problems arise.

10. The relationship of troublesomeness to incidence of training is stronger for written communication activities than it is for oral communication activities. However, since more importance is attached to oral communication skills and more oral communication training is provided, more oral problems may be dealt with before trouble arises.

11. As was true with oral communication, written communication training in organizations in this study is more likely to be based on the criterion of perceived importance of an activity rather than based on the troublesomeness of the activity. This approach may result from perceptions of importance remaining stable over time with specific problems fluctuating considerably over time. Thus, the more stable criterion may be used to maintain more stability in ongoing training programs.

12. Group training offered on site by company trainers is the most common way to provide written communication training. However, individualized training, off-site programs, and outside consultants do contribute significantly to the total training effort. The two most common training techniques used for written communication are preparing and analyzing written material. This supports the need for direct learner involvement in the training.

13. Group training offered on site by company trainers is also the most common way to provide oral communication training. An important supplement to this type training, however, is the individualized training, off-site programs, and outside consultants.

   Role playing is considered by 53 percent of the respondents to be the most effective technique in developing oral communication skills. Giving oral presentations for evaluation is also used extensively. Other techniques are not considered to be very effective. Again, this reflects the apparent usefulness of actively involving the trainee in the learning process.

14. Limited relationships exist between subjective criteria considered important in measuring effectiveness of communication training and the subjective criteria actually used. The two most commonly used criteria, trainees' reactions during training and informal observation, are evidently used because they are readily available rather than because of perceived importance.

15. There is stronger agreement between objective criteria used most frequently and the perceived importance of that criteria. Objective measures require more planning and are therefore likely to be carefully selected with perceived importance considered. For example, the two top-ranked measures, specific objectives and changes in performance appraisals, would require careful planning and evaluation procedures.

16. Respondents in the survey believe that communication training for first-line managers is generally effective, with 74 percent identifying the training as very or moderately effective.

Since only four percent of the ASTD members responding have very little or no participation in the training, the respondents' perception of the effectiveness of the training should be a realistic appraisal.

An examination of the current status of training is helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses in training programs. However, additional research can be useful in increasing training potential.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. A study should be conducted to develop and test more precise measures of effectiveness for communication training. Such measures would contribute to the establishment of definite relationships between specific communication training content, techniques, and organizational effectiveness. These relationships would assist training directors in verifying potential benefits and justifying training costs.

2. A study should be conducted to determine the communication skill level and measurement methods used by organizations in selecting and appraising first-line managers. This study could enable organizations presently using subjective methods to develop objective methods to insure a more uniform and equitable system. The study would also benefit prospective managers wanting to develop appropriate communication skills and educators striving to provide appropriate educational programs.

3. A study should be conducted to determine why some organizations have a wide disparity between the stated importance of communication skills and what they actually include in their communication training.

4. A study should be conducted to compare the effectiveness of training in different combinations of group/individualized training, on-site/off-site training, and use of company trainers/consultants.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

94

TRAINING THE FIRST-LINE MANAGER

TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

A Study of Training Programs in Oklahoma Organizations

Represented by ASTD Members

This study is undertaken to determine the current status of communication training and to assess needed changes to help the first-line manager achieve a desirable level of productivity. As an ASTD member, you can play an important role in this project by answering carefully the following questions.

Please use the following definitions:

First-Line Managers -- those managers at the lowest level of the managerial hierarchy who assign tasks to and evaluate performance of employees.

Communication Training -- activities supported by the organization which are designed to improve communication skills and techniques.

If you wish to comment on any questions or qualify your answers, please feel free to use the space in the margins. Your comments will be taken into account.

Thank you for your help.

Professor Sue Seymour
Department of Business
Cameron University
Lawton, OK 73505

1. Which of the following general skill categories would be considered most important in selecting a first-line manager in your company? (Circle one number)
   1 TECHNICAL SKILLS
   2 COMMUNICATION SKILLS
   3 CONCEPTUAL SKILLS

2. How important is communication skill in the selection of a first-line manager in your company? (Circle one number)
   1 NO IMPORTANCE
   2 LOW IMPORTANCE
   3 MODERATE IMPORTANCE
   4 HIGH IMPORTANCE
   5 VERY HIGH IMPORTANCE

3. How important is communication skill in the performance appraisal of your first-line managers? (Circle one number)
   1 NO IMPORTANCE
   2 LOW IMPORTANCE
   3 MODERATE IMPORTANCE
   4 HIGH IMPORTANCE
   5 VERY HIGH IMPORTANCE

4. Which of these two areas of communication skills would be most important for your first-line managers? (Circle one number)
   1 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS
   2 ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

5. Please estimate the approximate percentage of time your first-line managers spend in some form of communication on the job.
   1 0 - 25%
   2 26 - 50%
   3 51 - 75%
   4 76 - 100%

6. What is the predominant management style in your company? (Circle one)
   1 TRADITIONAL (decisions made and passed downward)
   2 CONSULTATIVE (employee input sought and considered)
   3 PARTICIPATIVE (employees involved in decision making)

7. Please rank what you consider to be the three most troublesome written communication activities for your first-line managers. Use numbers 1-3 with 1 being most troublesome.
   _____ WRITING LETTERS
   _____ WRITING MEMOS
   _____ WRITING PROPOSALS
   _____ WRITING ANALYTICAL REPORTS
   _____ WRITING INFORMATIONAL REPORTS
   _____ USING COMPUTER TERMINALS
   _____ READING
   _____ OTHER (Please specify) _____

8. Please rank what you consider to be the <u>three</u> most troublesome <u>oral</u> communication activities for your first-line managers. Use numbers 1-3 with 1 being most troublesome.

____ USING THE TELEPHONE	____ INTERVIEWING
____ SPEAKING BEFORE GROUPS	____ CONDUCTING PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS
____ DICTATING	____ CONSULTING WITH SUPERIORS
____ LISTENING	____ GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING
____ CONDUCTING MEETINGS	____ COMMUNICATING NON-VERBALLY
____ GIVING INSTRUCTIONS	____ OTHER (Please specify)
____ COUNSELING	_____

9. What categories of personnel in your company receive some communication training? (Circle all numbers which apply)

1 FIRST-LINE MANAGERS
2 MIDDLE MANAGERS
3 TOP MANAGERS
4 EMPLOYEES
5 NO COMMUNICATION TRAINING

If your first-line manager communication training is an integral part of a total management development program rather than a separate program, please answer the following questions only in relation to the communication portion of the training.

If you do not have any communication training for first-line managers, please go directly to Question 26. Otherwise, please continue.

10. What percent of your total training program for first-line managers is devoted to some aspect of communication? (Circle one number)

1 5% OR LESS
2 6 - 25%
3 26 - 50%
4 51 - 75%
5 76 - 100%

11. Approximately how many hours of communication training does the first-line manager receive during the <u>first year</u> in that position. (Circle one)

1 20 HOURS OR LESS
2 21 - 40 HOURS
3 41 - 60 HOURS
4 61 - 100 HOURS
5 OVER 100 HOURS
6 THE PROGRAM IS ON-GOING

12. How long have you had communication training for your first-line manager?

1 LESS THAN ONE YEAR
2 2 - 4 YEARS
3 5 YEARS OR LONGER

13. When a first-line manager is initially selected for that position, in which area of communication does the greatest deficiency usually exist?

        1 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
        2 ORAL COMMUNICATION

14. For each of the following content areas, please provide two responses. First, indicate whether your company provides training in that area. Second, rate the importance of each of the areas. Use the following rating scale:

        1 Very Important
        2 Fairly Important
        3 Unimportant

		Training Provided (Circle one)		Degree of Importance (Circle one number)		
1	WRITING LETTERS	YES	NO	1	2	3
2	WRITING MEMOS	YES	NO	1	2	3
3	WRITING PROPOSALS	YES	NO	1	2	3
4	WRITING ANALYTICAL REPORTS	YES	NO	1	2	3
5	WRITING INFORMATIONAL REPORTS	YES	NO	1	2	3
6	USING COMPUTER TERMINALS	YES	NO	1	2	3
7	READING	YES	NO	1	2	3
8	USING THE TELEPHONE	YES	NO	1	2	3
9	SPEAKING BEFORE GROUPS	YES	NO	1	2	3
10	DICTATING	YES	NO	1	2	3
11	LISTENING	YES	NO	1	2	3
12	CONDUCTING MEETINGS	YES	NO	1	2	3
13	GIVING INSTRUCTIONS	YES	NO	1	2	3
14	COUNSELING	YES	NO	1	2	3
15	INTERVIEWING	YES	NO	1	2	3
16	CONDUCTING PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS	YES	NO	1	2	3
17	CONSULTING WITH SUPERIORS	YES	NO	1	2	3
18	GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING	YES	NO	1	2	3
19	COMMUNICATING NON-VERBALLY	YES	NO	1	2	3
20	OTHER (Please specify)	YES	NO	1	2	3

15. Which of the above areas do you consider most important for your first-line managers? (Put number of area in appropriate box)

    ☐ MOST IMPORTANT

    ☐ SECOND MOST IMPORTANT

    ☐ THIRD MOST IMPORTANT

16. Who is the _primary_ source of instruction for your first-line manager communication training? (Circle one number)

        1 COMPANY TRAINERS
        2 OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS
        3 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
        4 OTHER (Please specify) _____

17. Which types of training programs do you use for written communication training? (Circle the number of all types used. If #1 or #2 are circled, place check marks in the columns to the right to describe that training.)

	Held on Site	Held off Site	Conducted by Outside Consultants	Conducted by Company Trainers
1 INDIVIDUALIZED TRAINING	___	___	___	___
2 GROUP TRAINING	___	___	___	___
3 ON-THE-JOB TRAINING				
4 TUITION ASSISTANCE				
5 OTHER (Please specify)				

6 NONE ARE USED _____   If 6 is circled, go directly to Question 19.

18. In developing written communication skills, which technique seems to be most effective in your company. (Circle one number)

    1 STUDYING WRITING THEORY
    2 ANALYZING WRITTEN MATERIAL
    3 PREPARING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS FOR EVALUATION
    4 OTHER (Please specify) _____

19. Which types of training programs do you use for oral communication training? (Circle the number of all types used. If #1 or #2 are circled, place check marks in the columns to the right to describe that training.)

	Held on Site	Held off Site	Conducted by Outside Consultants	Conducted by Company Trainers
1 INDIVIDUALIZED TRAINING	___	___	___	___
2 GROUP TRAINING	___	___	___	___
3 ON-THE-JOB TRAINING				
4 TUITION ASSISTANCE				
5 OTHER (Please specify)				

6 NONE ARE USED _____   If 6 is circled, go directly to Question 21.

20. In developing oral communication skills, which technique seems to be most effective in your company. (Circle one number)

    1 STUDYING ORAL COMMUNICATION THEORY
    2 ANALYZING ORAL PRESENTATIONS OF OTHERS
    3 GIVING ORAL PRESENTATIONS FOR EVALUATION
    4 ROLE PLAYING
    5 OTHER (Please specify) _____

21. Please circle the number of the subjective criteria you use in evaluating communication training for first-line managers. (Circle all that are used)

    1 TRAINEES' REACTIONS DURING OR AT CLOSE OF TRAINING PROGRAM
    2 TRAINEES' REACTIONS THREE TO SIX MONTHS AFTER TRAINING
    3 REACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE SUPERIORS OF TRAINEES
    4 REACTIONS OF HIGHER MANAGEMENT
    5 TRAINER'S EVALUATION OF PROGRAM
    6 INFORMAL OBSERVATION
    7 OTHER (Please specify) _____
    8 NONE ARE USED

22. If you could choose any of the subjective criteria in Question 21, which would you consider most important in properly evaluating the effectiveness of communication training? (Put number of criteria in appropriate box)

    [ ] MOST IMPORTANT

    [ ] SECOND MOST IMPORTANT

    [ ] THIRD MOST IMPORTANT

23. Please circle the number of the objective criteria you use in evaluating communication training for first-line managers. (Circle all that are used)

    1 CHANGES IN TRAINEES' PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS AFTER TRAINING
    2 RECORDS -- OF PRODUCTION, COST, QUALITY, SAFETY
    3 RECORDS -- OF ABSENCES, TURNOVER, TARDINESS, OR GRIEVANCES
    4 OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY OF TRAINEE'S DEPARTMENT
    5 ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
    6 TESTING AT END OF COURSE
    7 TESTING BEFORE AND AFTER COURSE
    8 ATTITUDE SURVEYS AMONG EMPLOYEES BEING SUPERVISED BY TRAINEES
    9 FORMAL PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDIES
    10 OTHER (Please specify) _____
    11 NONE ARE USED

24. If you could choose any of the objective criteria in Question 23, which would you consider most important in properly evaluating the effectiveness of communication training? (Put number of criteria in appropriate box)

    [ ] MOST IMPORTANT

    [ ] SECOND MOST IMPORTANT

    [ ] THIRD MOST IMPORTANT

25. Which term most accurately describes your personal opinion regarding your company's efforts to equip your first-line managers with communication skills necessary for satisfactory job performance. (Circle one number)

1 VERY EFFECTIVE
2 MODERATELY EFFECTIVE
3 UNDECIDED
4 INEFFECTIVE
5 VERY INEFFECTIVE

| Please go to Question 27. |

26. What is the primary reason that your company does not offer communication training for first-line managers? (Circle one number)

1 NO APPARENT DEFICIENCY IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS
2 NO TRAINING DEPARTMENT
3 NOT ENOUGH FIRST-LINE MANAGERS
4 FUNDS NOT AVAILABLE
5 INADEQUATE COMMUNICATION TRAINING MATERIALS
6 OTHER (Please specify) _____

27. What is the total number of employees in your company in Oklahoma? (Circle one number)

1 LESS THAN 100
2 100 - 199
3 200 - 299
4 300 - 399
5 400 - 499
6 500 AND OVER

28. Please record on the line below the actual number of first-line managers currently working in your company in Oklahoma.

_____

29. Please indicate the general category which most accurately describes your company. (Circle one number)

1 MANUFACTURING   6 HEALTH SERVICE
2 DISTRIBUTING   7 OTHER SERVICE
3 RETAILING   8 MINING & PETROLEUM
4 BANKING   9 UTILITY
5 INSURANCE   10 OTHER (Please specify) _____

30. Which of the following terms most accurately describes your participation in either the development of or the conducting of communication training for your first-line managers? (Circle one number)

1 NO PARTICIPATION
2 VERY LITTLE PARTICIPATION
3 SOME PARTICIPATION
4 MAJOR PARTICIPATION

31. What is your organizational title? (Circle one number)

1 DIRECTOR OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
2 PERSONNEL MANAGER
3 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
4 OTHER (Please specify) _____

Is there anything else you wish to tell us about your training programs?
If so, please use this space for that purpose. Any comments you make to
help improve communication training will be appreciated.

Your contribution to this project is greatly appreciated. If you would
like a summary of results, please print your name and address on the back
of the return envelope (NOT on this questionnaire). You will receive a
copy.

APPENDIX B

INITIAL COVER LETTER

103

CAMERON UNIVERSITY

Department of Business

November 8, 1982

2800 West Gore
Lawton, Oklahoma
73505

Ms. Susan Wilson
Training Coordinator
MidAmerican Federal Savings & Loan
P.O. Box 3499
Tulsa, OK   74101

Dear Ms. Wilson:

As a member of the Tulsa Green Country Chapter of ASTD, your
help is needed in completing a research project involving
communication training.

Communication difficulties seem to be a problem at all levels
of organizations. Emphasis in this study is on the first-line
manager, a key person in providing better communication between
labor and management. However, the first-line manager often
receives limited communication training.

Many training directors have expressed interest in knowing what
is being done in other organizations and in obtaining ideas for
improvement in this area. My purpose in this study is to
obtain and analyze information about training programs in
Oklahoma firms represented by members of ASTD.

As a member of your local ASTD chapter, your response is vital
to the validity of the study. You may receive a summary of the
results by writing your name and address on the back of the
return envelope.

By sharing 15 minutes of your time and returning the completed
form by November 19, you will have played a big part in this
effort to improve communication training. Thank you for your
professional concern.

Sincerely,

Sue Seymour
Assistant Professor

ws

(405) 248-2200, Ext. 265/365

APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD

November 18, 1982

Last week a questionnaire about your organization's communication training for first-line managers was mailed to you.

You were the only one in your organization to receive this questionnaire. Therefore, it is extremely important that your response be included if the study is to accurately reflect the current status of communication training for first-line managers.

If you have already completed and returned your questionnaire, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today.

Sincerely,

Sue Seymour, Assistant Professor

APPENDIX D

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

107

CAMERON UNIVERSITY

Department of Business

2800 West Gore
Lawton, Oklahoma
73505

December 1, 1982

Mr. Walter A. Dempsey
Manager, Human Resources
Sun Gas Liquids, Inc.
P.O. Box 2039
Tulsa, OK   74102

Dear Mr. Dempsey:

About three weeks ago I asked you to share some information
about communication training for your first-line managers. As
of today, I have not received your questionnaire.

I have undertaken this study because of the frustration
experienced by many training directors as they try to develop
an effective communication training program.

Your help is very important! Your organization is one of a
small sample of Oklahoma organizations represented by ASTD
members selected for this study. A high response rate is
essential if the results are to be meaningful and lead to
improvement of training.

If you are not familiar with your organization's communication
training program, please ask a colleague who is involved in
training to complete the questionnaire.

In case your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is
enclosed. Please complete and return the questionnaire today
if possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sue Seymour
Assistant Professor

ws

Enclosures 2

(405) 248-2200, Ext. 265/365

APPENDIX E

COVER LETTER TO ALTERNATE ASTD MEMBER

109

CAMERON UNIVERSITY

Department of Business

2800 West Gore
Lawton, Oklahoma
73505

December 2, 1982

Ms. Sandra I. White
Training Specialist
MidAmerica Federal Savings & Loan
P.O. Box 3499
Tulsa, OK 74101

Dear Ms. White:

As an ASTD member, your help is needed in completing a research project involving communication training.

Communication difficulties seem to be a problem at all levels of organizations. Emphasis in this project is on the first-line manager. Although the first-line manager is a key person in providing better communication between labor and management, communication training is often limited or unavailable.

Many training directors have expressed interest in knowing what is being done in other organizations and in obtaining ideas for improvement in this area. My purpose in this project is to obtain and analyze information about training programs in Oklahoma.

As one of a limited number of business representatives selected for this project, your response is essential for the collection of meaningful data. You may receive a summary of the results by writing your name and address on the back of the return envelope.

By sharing a few minutes of your time and returning the completed form, you will have played a big part in this effort to improve communication training. Thank you for your professional concern.

Sincerely,

Sue Seymour
Assistant Professor

ws

Enclosures 2

(405) 248-2200, Ext. 265/365

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VITA

Wanda Sue Reed Seymour

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR FIRST-LINE MANAGERS IN OKLAHOMA ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Major Field: Business Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Martha, Oklahoma, September 17, 1938, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John C. Reed.

Education: Graduated from Martha High School, Martha, Oklahoma, in May, 1956; received Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Business Education from Oklahoma State University in May, 1960; received Master of Science degree in Student Personnel and Guidance from Oklahoma State University in May, 1963; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1983.

Professional Experience: High school teacher at Guthrie, Oklahoma, 1960-62; instructor in Department of Business, Southwestern State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma, 1962-65; instructor and assistant professor in Department of Business, Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma, 1965-1983.

Professional Organizations: Delta Pi Epsilon, American Business Communication Association, National Business Education Association, Mountain-Plains Business Education Association; Oklahoma Business Education Association.