Applying NetWork™ to Training/Development Programs

Some examples of NetWork applications.

Financial Corporation...

...uses NetWork for an evaluation exercise on the last day of a three-day supervisory training session. The NetWork exercise involves four participants; each participant in turn supervises the activities of the other three. Participants are then asked to discuss their performance in terms of their own planning, communications, and leadership skills. Participants are better able to assess their skills, analyze what worked and what didn't, and develop an action plan for on-the-job improvements.

Aerospace Company...

...uses NetWork with senior and mid-level managers to improve skills in productivity, leadership, coaching, and group decision-making, and to measure the level and quality of productivity and feedback.

Each person in turn guides her or his fellow team members in marking the target. The activity is timed and each leader receives feedback on both the placement and the quality of the marks. The leadership role is changed with each round of activity. After each round, participants write down their perceptions of the current leader's strengths and limitations.

Participants learn to recognize the balance between control and support demanded of an effective leader. They also learn the importance of descriptive feedback.

Management Consulting Company...

...uses NetWork as an opening activity to get groups (5 - 8 individuals) to understand the complexities of working together on a single task. The group participates in the activity in three or four rounds. Each round is different (i.e., blindfolded, harder/easier target, a manager to lead the group, etc.) The activity is followed by the group listing of behaviors that enable successful cooperation. The remainder of the program then focuses on these behaviors.

NetWork is also used to model Situational Leadership. Each of four rounds is lead by a different manager. During this process members experience a range of leadership styles.

Electronics Manufacturer...

...uses NetWork in their Intercultural Teamwork seminars, where there may be as many as eight different nationalities represented in a single workshop.

The device is used during the first day of a two-day training to help establish a participatory learning environment. The activities also help trainers highlight the disparate assumptions that the group members bring into the training. These trainers also use NetWork to help illustrate four key points about teamwork:

- Each participant must be clear about the objective of an activity.
- Each person must understand their actions contribute to the achievement of that objective.
- Everyone must understand how other people in the group contribute.
- Each person must be aware of obstacles that limit teammates' performance and what they can do to help remove those obstacles.

Management Development Consultant...

...uses NetWork to increase participants' understanding of the difference between content and process, helping them to identify and focus on group process behavior.

From a training group of 18 - 22 people, she generally selects 4 - 8 people as direct participants. This consultant believes that observing the interactions within an activity can be as useful as being a participant. She uses the dartboard target, chosen because it is both familiar to trainees, yet complex enough to provide a challenge.

Activities are arranged to demonstrate varying modes of process. For example, participants are given an extra 5 - 10 minute warm-up period to work with the device before starting one of the basic activities. Facing the dilemma of **how** to approach a task is as important as actually doing the task.

Management Coach...

...uses NetWork when working with executive management teams. He breaks the teams into two groups. Captains are selected and asked to go into an adjoining room where they are given two minutes to see how NetWork looks when assembled. Each captain is then given three minutes with their group to describe the device. The trainer then gives them the disassembled devices, and has them first assemble then use the NetWork in a basic activity. Using the expanded awareness created by this initial exercise, the group then moves to creating a statement of purpose and goals.

Management Consulting Company...

...uses NetWork in their two-day sessions for project team members. The learning device is used to put participants into temporary teams and have them experience the stages of moving into creating a team and doing a task. Performing the activity several times under different conditions helps participants develop valuable insights on dealing with similar situations in the workplace.

User modifications of basic NetWork activities

Blindfolded Activity:
By blindfolding selected participants, the skills required for giving and following instructions are highlighted.

Non-speaking Activity:
By limiting verbal communication, the groups communication dynamics are amplified.

Competitive Activity:
For two or more teams. Teams compete against each other in a number of 3-minute rounds. Strategy sessions are optional depending on the level of difficulty sought by the trainer.

Sub-Team Activity:
Groups are sub-divided into pairs, operating as separate sub-teams in competition with each other. The qualities of fair-play and cooperation are the primary focus.

Quality Activity:
A model target is developed with user-specific markings. The teams are instructed to duplicate the model target as best they can. The targets are judged and winners announced. This approach highlights quality assurance, productivity, and team efficiency.

External Manager Activity:
A team member is asked to direct the efforts of the team while not physically participating in the activity. A variety of management styles can be tested as well as one-way and two-way communication dynamics.

Paired-participant Activity:
Participants are divided into pairs. One of the pair acts as a director, instructing the other participant but not physically participating. The other of the pair is not allowed to talk, but is responsible for physically manipulating the NetWork device.