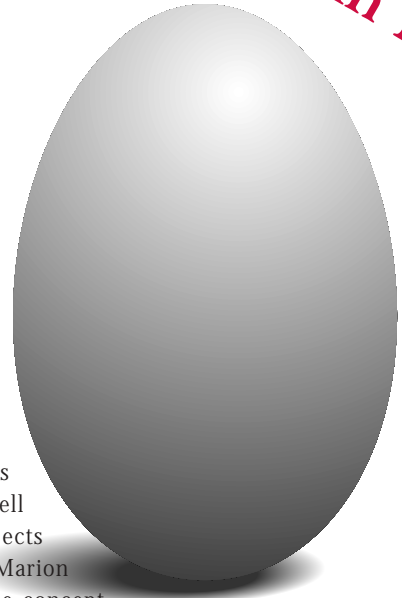


# You Don't Have To Be A Chicken To Recognize An Egg

by Rosemary K. Ryan



If you think the best people to design training for your employees are those with the most knowledge of your business, think again, because you don't necessarily have to be a chicken to recognize an egg. "Often, people choose trainers based on how much exposure the trainer has to a client's (specific) industry," says Cathy Shaughnessy of ShaughnessyHowell Inc., a training and development consulting business based in Waterloo, Ontario. "In many cases, they don't need experts in the field, they need experts in training."

Take, for example, one of ShaughnessyHowell's largest and most intensive projects to date: To design and deliver product and job specific training in such areas as selling, merchandising, and commercial products and services to more than 2,000 retail employees of the Canada Post corporation. A real whopper of an undertaking for ShaughnessyHowell who did it all - designed, implemented and administered a wide variety of diverse projects

during the course of their partnership with Canada Post. Says Marion Thomson Howell, "We established postal schools; developed the concept of qualified, standardized peer training through certification; set up on-the-job

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***- Manon Fortin, manager, retail performance excellence, Canada Post***

training; produced a number of training videos; developed a six-month curriculum for retail representative training; and created questionnaires to determine if additional employee training was required and in what areas." "ShaughnessyHowell has lots of expertise in training methodology, adult education and industry know-how," says Manon Fortin, Canada Post's manager, retail performance excellence. "I think their greatest strength is problem-solving - analyzing problems, then bringing back innovative, workable solutions for your environment. They raised the standard of our training programs and the postal schools they developed have reduced our operating costs and increased our efficiency."

Using organizational skills to die for, ShaughnessyHowell also managed the administration of each Canada Post project with unbridled enthusiasm and unsurpassed expertise. But don't take my word for it, listen to this, from Sally Lore, retail training and communication: "Everyone at ShaughnessyHowell is so well organized, dynamic and motivated - they just shine! Past suppliers have taken our existing (training) information, memorized it and taught it. ShaughnessyHowell took the

information, pulled it apart, improved it, then delivered it. I'll take them over another supplier any day." Adds Ron Thomey, officer, retail training (Pacific division), "What makes ShaughnessyHowell stand out is their professional approach to gathering information and developing it. They have that 'extra touch' - they put together programs that feel and look professional and have real substance."

Canada Post's Lisa Haggarty, officer, retail performance excellence, couldn't agree more: "I was so impressed with (ShaughnessyHowell's) professionalism, dedication and the degree to which they would go to extract information." ShaughnessyHowell developed Back to Basics, a program enabling retail representatives to improve service to commercial customers by substantially reducing the error rate in commercial statements of mailing. The design was based wholly on Canada Post's internal system. "We didn't re-invent the wheel," says Cathy, "but we consolidated information, put it in one place, made it easy to access and created a toolkit for support information."

ShaughnessyHowell dedicated a phenomenal amount of time to developing many of Canada Post's training programs, including a retail representative orientation program. It offered Canada Post's retail employees a six-month curriculum including classroom, on-the-job and one-on-one training. Says Lisa, "I was impressed with ShaughnessyHowell's belief in the program, their ability to identify objectives and promote the program in such a way so people readily bought into it."

As the testimony indicates, Canada Post's partnership with ShaughnessyHowell has been invaluable, one which has boosted efficiency and productivity through the use of experts who, at least initially, had limited knowledge of this specific industry. And despite that limited knowledge, or it could be argued because of it, Canada Post now believes you really don't have to be a chicken to recognize an egg. 🐔

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