

Developing a Training Package At Westcan

Chris is a human resources (HR) manager at Westcan Hydraulics, and Irven, the VP of HR, is her boss. One morning Irven called Chris into his office. "I just saw an old training film called *Meetings Bloody Meetings* starring John Cleese," he said. "It deals with effective ways of running meetings." Irven, a competent and well-liked engineer, had been promoted to VP of HR three months earlier. Although he had no HR expertise, he had been an effective production manager, and the president of the company had hoped that Irven would provide a measure of credibility to the HR department. In the past, employees saw the HR department as one that forced its silly ideas on the rest of the company with little understanding of how to make those ideas work.

"Well," said Chris, "I . . ."

"Oh, yes," Irven interjected, "I talked to a few managers this morning and they were enthusiastic about it. It's the first time I have ever seen managers enthusiastic about any type of training. Do we have such a training package available?"

"No, I do not believe so," Chris replied.

"Well," said Irven, "we need a one-day training session. It must be interesting, useful, and generalizable to all managers. Okay?" With that, Irven stood up, signaling that the meeting was over. Chris went to work designing the training. She began by going to the local university and viewing the meetings film her boss had seen. After examining some books that dealt with meetings, she decided that she had a good idea of what made meetings effective. She then called Larry, a friend at Satellite Systems, to see what he had.

He faxed over a copy of a lecture he had given on the dos and don'ts of an effective meeting. It was nicely broken down into three parts: pre-meeting, meeting, and post-meeting. That information and a simulated meeting (to provide hands-on practice) could make up the one-day training program. Chris had never written a simulation and needed help. She put in a call to Karen, a subordinate who was fresh out of university and had majored in HR. Karen would surely be able to help develop a simulation, Chris thought.