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Workshops: To Benefit, You Must Participate!

by Carroll Thrift

Every year thousands of individuals around the country attend workshops but never get involved. They don't get involved personally, and they fail to get involved with their fellow attendees. They don't participate.

To maximize the effectiveness of a training workshop, the participant must work to secure the benefits that the workshop offers. This should involve following a basic process before, during, and, particularly, after the event. When the participant invests a bit of thought and energy, the groundwork is laid to become an effective participant.

BEFORE YOU GO
You must ask yourself why you are attending the workshop. Define your personal/professional needs as well as the needs of your organization. Start a "needs" list; brainstorm with yourself.

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Talk to fellow employees and, perhaps, members of the board of your organization. Hopefully, before the workshop, you will understand both individual and organizational needs and how they interface. What do you want to achieve from this workshop? Your list of objectives should be clearly expressed and must be in writing.

Review the workshop format and agency carefully. Understand what the training session intends to teach you. An understanding and knowledge of the topics will help you prepare for your objectives. Start some preliminary reading. Don't try to become an expert, but read enough to brief yourself on the topics. Become familiar with the vocabulary of the workshop topics. This will help you follow the workshop leaders during their presentations and discussions.

After this initial workshop preparation, think about your attitude and get excited. Remember that you will pick up a lot of new ideas and techniques for your business, which may not exactly fit into your organizational or personal needs. Gear your thinking to adaptability — how you might make your learning experience work for you.

**DURING THE WORKSHOP**

Don't just sit there; participate! Research indicates that an improved social environment promotes greater productivity and better morale. Think about what you can do to promote the goals of the workshop. Becoming involved mentally and emotionally with the group helps fulfill the workshop goals. In turn, others are motivated to jointly work for a much higher achievement.

Motivation is a two-way street: Leaders can be motivated by active participation, and an energetic leader motivates his or her group. Good, active participation helps to satisfy the basic individual need for recognition and interaction, and this results in motivation, learning, and achievement.

Here are a few pointers:

* Ask questions or make appropriate comments when it is time to do so. Be brief and concise, and deal with one point at a time.

* Try to participate in a variety of ways. It is helpful to use questions, information, opinion, and personal documentation.

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Monthly newspaper advertisements, made possible through services donated by a local advertising agency and a newspaper, are encouraging one Georgia community to have its pets spayed or neutered.

The LaGrange-Troup County Humane Society (P.O. Box 2268, LaGrange, GA 30241) began its advertisements last March out of concern for the serious local pet overpopulation. The ads attract readers with headlines such as, "Why were so many of our friends destroyed in LaGrange last month?" or "In memorium." Each ad ends with a list of the number of local animals euthanized and killed along streets for either the current or the previous month.

According to Mary Ellen Parkins, president of the society, James Postma, owner of ATLANTA, a local advertising agency, offered his time and skills without charge out of concern for the humane society's need to euthanize and to deal with so many abandoned animals. He produced for the society three ads, to be rotated monthly, and he is doing more for the group as time permits. Postma is also working on related TV and radio spots.

Glenn Long, publisher of The LaGrange Daily News, offered the society newspaper advertising space at the discount price normally reserved for churches. He also offered to place the ads in prime page positions when possible.

Parkins said it may be too early to calculate the ads' effectiveness within the community; however, between June 1983 and June 1984, for example, the society's sale of spay/neuter certificates increased by approximately 450 percent, and Parkins noticed that citizen interest in pet adoptions increased and the number of animals entering the shelter decreased after the first ad appeared.

With a 25,000 population, LaGrange's textile mills were once owned by the Callaway family, which has established the Callaway Foundation Inc. and which matches local contributions made to any charitable cause. When the humane society raised $33,000 to build its new shelter, the Foundation matched that figure, enabling the group to proceed with the new shelter.

"Needless to say, we are very proud of our city, and, hopefully, with help from nice people, we can become a 'model city' in the area of animal welfare," said Parkins.

Action 81 Inc. operates a national network to expose and prevent pet theft. Through contacts in every state, it monitors theft areas, numbers, and methods used; breeds; and markets for stolen animals.

The group estimated that approximately two million dogs and one-half million cats are stolen each year in the United States. Cats are not often considered stolen because owners tend to be less involved with their welfare.

Action 81 Inc. has joined PETWATCH of West Yorkshire, England, in a continuing effort to attract widespread public attention to the problem of pet stealing. For further information, contact Mary C. Warner, president, Action 81 Inc., Rte. 2, Box 151, Berryville, VA 22611 or Joan Wearne, president, PETWATCH, P.O. Box 16, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, England.

You've probably seen old horror movies in which a bat eerily glides into a bedroom to suck blood from the neck of its sleeping victim. In reality, most bats are gentle, useful, and interesting creatures. However, their presence disturbs people, and they can cause health problems and structural damage. Wildlife workers must learn to properly manage bats and educate the public about them because, as bats begin to migrate or to hibernate this fall, public complaints about them will increase, and the animals may suffer needless, often cruel, mishandling.

According to Arthur M. Greenhall, author of "House Bat Management," a resource publication of the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, there are 18 families and about 900 species of bats. About 40 species are found north of Mexico, from coast to coast and in the mountains. They are the only true flying mammals. Bats use sonar to navigate and locate obstacles. Their high-frequency sounds, inaudible to humans, produce echos that help them measure the distance between themselves and other objects. Bats also make sounds that humans can hear such as the familiar high-pitched squeak.

According to Greenhall, most bats in the U.S. are insectivores (they eat insects), some of which are harmful to humans. Often, bats hibernate near woods or water, such as a pond, where insects are plentiful. Use of chemical pesticides has decreased the insect supply for bats, however.

In other parts of the world, fruit-eating bats pollinate trees and shrubs, which produce many fruits and nuts commonly found in grocery stores, according to Bat Conservation International Inc. (c/o Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, WI 53233). Bat manure, called "guano," is rich in nitrogen and is used as fertilizer in some countries.

Bats mate in the fall and winter. Births occur between April and August, and baby bats are weaned in July and August. They can live ten years or longer. Bats' natural habitat is caves and trees; many have been found in mines. Day roosts are dark and secluded. Bats routinely prepare for winter at the first sign of frost, when they migrate toward a sleeping victim.
Send your holiday greetings on a 1984 HSUS greeting card with its snowy night scene painted by Thaddeus Krumeich, designer of the popular HSUS note cards.

Inside a warm, cozy room, a curious cat peers at the peaceful, moonlit reindeer paused outside the window. The card contains the message, "May the hope for peace and goodwill which fills this season be extended to all creatures, both great and small."

The full-color cards are 5" x 7". Each package of 25 cards and envelopes costs $7 -- $6 if you order four or more packages. Send check or money order to The HSUS Greeting Cards, 2100 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037. Orders will be sent by UPS and must be delivered to a street address (please do not use a P.O. Box number). Allow three to four weeks for delivery.

An award-winning video tape, which features an HSUS-accredited humane society, documents the daily operation of a large animal shelter and calls for greater pet owner responsibility. The film may be purchased or rented by local animal groups for public viewing.

*Kiss the Animals Goodbye*, produced by independent filmmaker Erik Friedl (Magic Window Productions) features workers from the Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley, which is accredited by The Humane Society of the United States, and the Burbank Animal Shelter, both in California, as they receive unwanted and stray animals and adopt out or euthanize them. Friedl shot the 27-1/2-2-minute film, since cut to 20 minutes, after reading a newspaper account of Santa Clara County's pet-overpopulation problem. Actual scenes of animal euthanasia exemplify the 200 to 300 animals the Santa Clara humane society must kill on an average day. Humane workers in the film dispel several myths associated with animal shelters and emphasize workable solutions to critical pet overpopulation.

"I was particularly touched by a dog who, with great calm and dignity, looked steadfastly into the camera lens as he was euthanized," said Friedl. "I found that whenever I started editing scenes taking place in the euthanasia room -- and this was weeks after I had completed shooting -- the unique smell of the room would literally come back and hang around me for hours."

The new film recently earned "first place" in its category, "Environment and Nature," in the San Francisco International Film Festival, making it eligible for Academy Award consideration next year. The film was also declared a finalist in the 1984 American Film Festival in New York City. It recently aired on the local Los Angeles PBS station and may soon be seen on the San Francisco PBS station. Friedl is approaching other stations, too, to arrange for air time.

"Warren Brodrick of the Santa Clara society gave me unflagging support, as did his entire staff," said Friedl. "Fred DeLange of the Burbank shelter allowed me to film additional material, which I found I needed during the editing process. My ultimate goal is to have as many people as possible see the film."

Pyramid Film and Video is distributing the 20-minute version in 16mm, 3/4", VHS 1/2", and Beta 1/2", which costs $425 or rents for $60. The original 27-1/2-minute version, containing additional euthanasia footage, may be purchased or rented upon special request. Write Pyramid Film and Video, Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1048; telephone, (213) 828-7577, or call toll-free, 1 (800) 421-2304.

Instead of allowing animal adoptions as gifts, sell gift certificates to avoid trauma for animals that would be surprise gifts and, possibly, returned to the shelter.

That's what The Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton does (101 Champagne Ave. S., Ottawa, Ontario K1S 4P5), according to Michael Bloomfield, managing director. Their certificate has a cute picture, the society's name, and the slogan, "We Speak For Those Who Cannot Speak For Themselves," on the front. The reverse side explains that the recipient is entitled to choose a pet at the humane society, lists the society's address, and explains that the adoption procedure will require a spay/neuter deposit and include a vaccination and a three-week health guarantee. It also has spaces for the gift giver's and -recipient's names and the date.
A local humane society has developed four unique bookmarks and invites other animal groups to reproduce them for their own use.

The Beaver County Humane Society (P.O. Box 63, Monaca, PA 15061) passes out the bookmarks in all of its offices as part of its humane education program. Each is a different color with simple line drawings that explain that dogs and cats need such things as food; water; a collar, license, and leash; checkups; toys; and love. (Shown here are two of the bookmarks.)

Shelters that want to reproduce the bookmarks may remove the Beaver County Humane Society's name and substitute their own but must retain the artist's signature, "Biddle '84." For further information and to inquire about bookmark samples, contact Mary A. Dobias, vice president, at the above address.

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windows, doors, and other gaps between the exterior and interior of the house, closing these openings eliminates holes commonly used by bats through which to enter and leave.

Bats can squeeze into tiny openings such as in overhangs where wood is warped or decayed; loose vents; cracks under eaves and cornices; spaces under corrugated roofing or doors and around windows; and where electrical wiring, outlet boxes, and water pipes are located.

Bat holes also can be found around water faucets, porches, and the chimney. Bats will not gnaw through wood or building materials as do mice and rats, according to Greenhall.

All bats should be out of a house before bat proofing begins. Then, it is essential to keep them out. In the past, bat toxicants such as DDT or anticoagulants merely temporarily removed bats from a location. Most importantly, these poisons scattered sick bats over a wide area, making them easier to encounter and pick up, and the toxicants have caused serious human health problems after settling down to living quarters.

Bats may be trapped alive before bat proofing begins. Remember, some squeaking bats may attract the attention of raccoons and cats, which could enter the traps and eat them. Trapped bats must be only handled by animal workers who are immunized against rabies.

A simple bat trap was devised by the owners of an old farmhouse, according to Greenhall. Based on the principle that bats must fall out of an opening before they can spread their wings to fly and glide, the owners sewed 1-1/2 yards of cheap, sheer curtain material into a funnel wide enough at the top to cover a bat hole but small enough at the bottom to fit over a foot-long piece of dryer vent or other tube. (The makeshift tube was too slippery for the bats to climb up and too narrow for them to fly out.) The cloth was securely taped to the tube, with a garbage bag taped to the tube’s bottom end. At dusk, the top of the funnel was taped around the bat hole.

Bats would leave the hole, fall down the funnel, through the pipe, and into the bag. Under these circumstances, they can be released outdoors and the bat hole immediately sealed. The process can be duplicated until it is determined no more bats are inside the house. (Be certain to clean up bat droppings, which encourage bats to return to their familiar territory.)

Remember, most bats use human habitats to escape from the cold weather. They do not wish to bother, or be bothered by, humans. Animal workers must assist community residents with the permanent, humane removal of bats from their houses and offices in order to protect both people and bats.

Use the above information about bats to develop a brochure for fall distribution, to educate the public about bat behavior and humane bat removal.

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Avoid arguments and taking on too much of an issue, particularly during problem-solving sessions. It's okay to dissent, but be tactful and support your argument adequately.

* Occasionally, topics can die or drag. Change the subject. Ask a good question, or make a new point and move into a different area of thought.

* During group discussions, use the pronouns "we" and "you." It will help group action to avoid the use of "I."

* Take some notes, but don't try to write down everything. Prolific notes can be distracting for you, the leader, and the other participants. By trying to record everything, you may miss important points. Be attentive, and note the learning points, ideas pertinent to you and your organization and the ones you need to take home. Ask the speaker if he or she will be distributing notes from the session. If not, ask if a copy could be sent to you after the workshop.

* Practice good listening. Listening must be an active and constructive process. Much too often, the listener will hear only a part of the message, usually something penetrating or attractive. Other time is spent letting the mind wander away from the speaker. Be prepared to concentrate; listen as well as talk.

* Try to arrange time to meet the speakers. Maintain a dialogue with a speaker and other participants to focus on items of interest, on questions, and on individual concerns. Utilize workshop breaks and lunch or dinner periods to conduct this type of business.

The most important aspect of any training workshop is the participants. They bring a wealth of experiences, examples, and solutions to common problems. It is essential for all participants to interact, communicate, and share. Each participant must initiate the first stage of networking. You must try to get acquainted with as many other workshop participants as possible. This will help you learn and develop a professional camaraderie and support system that can extend many years into the future. It is important that each participant maintain communications with other participants, especially during the 12 months to 24 months following the workshop.

Build your individual constituent system and maintain it. Networking is a key benefit of a workshop. However, you must make it work. Make a personal commitment to maintain open and frequent communication with your contacts. Your professional peers will always provide you with needed support for and advice about your work endeavors.

AFTER THE WORKSHOP

Workshops provide reasonable penetration into specific subject areas, and this hopefully propels your imagination and creativity. You should leave this special period with a lot of constructive process. After returning from your training experience, take action immediately; don't procrastinate. While ideas are fresh and enthusiasm is high, review your workshop objectives and how to implement them. Take some time and review all your personal notes, speakers' notes, and handout materials. Share the information with fellow employees and board members. You may want to prepare a report of the entire experience, including pros and cons, for your superiors. Offer opinions, suggestions, and use examples. Finally, assess your current needs and objectives in comparison to the original list you prepared before the workshop. Make a new list of objectives with specific action plans. Redefining your needs, objectives, and action plans will provide a workable framework within which to implement your new ideas.

Carroll S. Thrift is senior resource specialist for The Humane Society of the United States.

WANTED — Executive director for humane society/animal clinic. Experience in finance and personnel administration, shelter/clinic operations, be willing to lead active board, and assume total operating control. Short- and long-range planning skills essential. Write in confidence, sending experience, and requirements, to Bob Dorf, 518 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10036.

WANTED — Animal-control program manager. Responsible for operation of the animal-control agency, including field and kennel services (adoption and lost/found services, fee collection, licensing, disease control, and enforcement of all animal-control ordinances). Must have a bachelor's degree from a major college or university with courses in business or public administration and two years of animal-control experience, including one at the administrative level. Salary, $1,976 to $2,568 per month. Send resume to Lane County Personnel, 125 E. 8th, Eugene, OR 97401 by September 21, 1984.

WANTED — Shelter director. Handle 6,000 animals annually. Must be experienced in animal care and humane work. Administrative skills essential; veterinary technician experience helpful. Send resume, references to Humane Society of Scott County, P.O. Box 3746, Davenport, IA 52808.
Last month's issue of Shelter Sense featured an article about one organization's successful effort to end pound seizure in its city. It emphasized that informed, considerate, consistent, and fast action by humane workers can help end this practice. However, over some animal organizations loom dark clouds that may make such efforts difficult or impossible to carry out.

In recent months, the boards of directors of various local humane societies, zoos, and animal shelters have welcomed new directors who have ties to the biomedical community. In some cases when the issue of pound-seizure repeal has been broached, it has been quickly silenced under the influence of the new directors. In other cases, pound seizure has been approved by a board where it did not previously exist.

Animal organizations must be mindful of those connected to the research community before such a person takes his or her place on the board of directors. It is far more difficult to undo damage to your organization's community image and the animals in its care than it is to prevent damage in the first place.

Upon request, The HSUS Companion Animals Section will send a copy of one local organization's questionnaire for potential candidates to its board of directors. Use it as a guideline so that you will know who your board members are and for what they stand.

IMPORTANT * IMPORTANT * IMPORTANT

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When writing or calling The HSUS to change your address, specify to which publication you are referring. All HSUS membership publications (which do not include Shelter Sense) are handled by a separate office.