

## *The Answer to Training*



We hear it all the time: our younger staff needs training. Except everyone's too busy or we can't afford to pay for it. In the end training is classic back-burner stuff at agencies because, no matter what the excuse, no one has the time!

Yet up-'n'-comers demand it. They're recently out of a schooling system that requires constant learning, testing, reinforcement, advancement, then learning, testing, etc. When they step into the business world the structured feedback and required growth all but stop.

Brian Tracy, a well known sales trainer and author, recently wrote a piece that offers some solutions to this situation. He says, and he's right about this, "No matter what your job you've gone as far as you can with what you now know. Any progress you make from this moment onward will require that you learn and practice something new." But how?

Anyone remember Earl Nightingale, the host of a popular syndicated radio program some years ago who founded the training company Nightingale-Conant? One of his aphorisms was just one hour a day of study is all it takes to get to the top.

Are you kidding me? Who has that kind of time these days! But it gets worse. Nightingale actually claimed that 1 hour per day of study will put you at the top of your field within three years, in 5 years you'll be a national authority, and in 7 years, you can be one of the best people in the world at what you do.

If he's only half right, that's pretty astounding.

I believe the heart of his message is valid. To get beyond what you already know, you've got to learn all you can about our business, particularly the "softer" skills like personal relationships, persuasion, and thinking-around-corners. Those kinds of skills - not the stuff you studied in school - are what make leaders in our arena successful, right?

The fact is you're just not going to get much schooling of any kind in most agencies today. And with the speed of change, you can't afford to wait for the company you work for to invest in you. To get ahead you've got to go get smart on your own.

Think about it: you don't actually work for anybody anyway - you're self-employed. You're working for your own advancement, to better your life and your

family's. Let's get crazy for a moment: What would happen to your career if you made a decision today to invest, let's say, 3% of your annual income back into yourself, for your own personal and professional development? It makes no sense to be cheap about your education - you're investing in yourself!

Look at your clients. They're constantly evolving new and improved products to be more competitive and grab more market share. You should do the same (Nightingale claims if you do you'll probably never have to worry about money again).

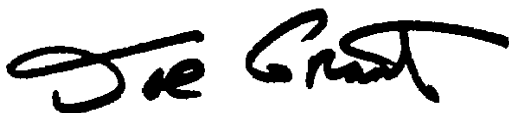
And here's something that may strike you as over the top, but it's worth considering. Tracy says if you read only one skill improvement book a month, that will put you into the top 1% of income earners in our society. If you read one hour per day in your field, that will translate into about one book per week. One book per week is 50 books a year and that's 500 books over ten years. If you did that I have no doubt you'll be one of the best educated, smartest, most capable and highest paid people in our business. Regular reading will transform your life completely; it has for many others, including me.

Here's a way to put this idea into practice.

Ask the successful people around you for their best book recommendations. Whatever advice they give you, immediately go out and buy those books and begin reading for one hour every morning before you start work. That way you'll eliminate the excuse of being too tired to read in the evening.

When you read, underline and take notes when you find important ideas that you can use. Then implement them immediately. Being aware of good ideas without taking action is truly stupid.

Remember, if you don't learn something new about your career daily, you'll be stuck in place.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Grant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "G".