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THE TRAINING OF SALESMEN & SALESWOMEN

A MEMORANDUM WITH TWO APPENDICES

ISSUED BY THE PROVISIONAL CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE OF THE L.C.C. CENTRAL SCHOOL OF ARTS
AND CRAFTS TO ADVISE ON THE INSTRUCTION OF
SALESMEN AND SALESWOMEN IN THE WHOLESALE
AND RETAIL TEXTILE DISTRIBUTING TRADE

L.C.C. CENTRAL SCHOOL OF ARTS AND CRAFTS
JUNE 1918

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19/1/1973

Salesmen and salesmanship.

THE TRAINING OF SALESMEN & SALESWOMEN

I.

SUCCESSFUL trading depends on skilful distribution as well as on skilful production but, although educational provision of a suitable character has been made for producers, the like education of distributors has been almost entirely neglected.

The public in satisfying their needs can only choose from what the suppliers offer, and as the makers reach the public through the salesmen the importance of the latter is obvious. They are directly in touch with the consumer, and upon the judgment they use in stocking their shops depends the choice open to the public. If the distributors fail to supply quality for price they prevent the public obtaining the best goods of their class and nullify the usefulness of the skilled workman. To obtain a successful result all the factors of commerce must strive to co-operate, and speculation as to which is the most important may be beside the point: but it is probable that the pivot lies somewhere between the manufacturer's traveller and the distributor's buyer—the latter perhaps being the more influential as he has the power both to refuse to buy and to urge a requirement. Anyway, they are by way of being the midway autocrats of trade, and, while admittedly receiving a certain stimulus from both producers and consumers, their intelligence, determination and courage could and should in much greater degree stimulate both producing and purchasing power.

2 It is wrong and it is also bad business for

anyone to sell what he does not understand. This is a truism, yet modern conditions of employment, with their unavoidable specialised subdivisions, seldom allow employers to give their young assistants the survey of their trade which was possible under the apprenticeship system of former days, when the assistants were practically part of the family. The young salespeople and others employed cannot now be sure of gaining a systematic and complete business education in the shop or warehouse; too frequently they pick up their knowledge as best they can. The resulting lack of personal quality detrimentally affects their prospects, and this, by deterring others who under better conditions might enter the business, tends to re-act unfavourably on the drapery trade.

3 In the interests of both the trade and the individual there should be the inducement of entry under better and more systematic conditions, educational and material. But good as may have been the old system of apprenticeship it probably could not be successfully revived; rather do we need to reconstruct on a new basis suited to our times. The immediate concern of this committee is education, but the educational aspect of the problem cannot satisfactorily be considered apart from the material aspect; they are interdependent. Hence, although it may appear that the committee are touching on matters which are not within the terms of their reference, to outline a complete scheme the education to be provided outside the shop or warehouse should be considered together with the other and more strictly trade conditions of training.

II.

4 The educational aspect subdivides into general education before, and complementary education after, entering the trade.

5 A considerable proportion of the young people who enter the drapery trade do so on leaving the elementary schools, *i.e.* at or about 14 years of age. As a result, their general education has not gone far enough to provide the ground work necessary for the further and specialised development of a person of intelligence and knowledge who as a salesman should be able to act as adviser by appreciating and stimulating the taste of the customer, and later, as a traveller, buyer or principal should be able to raise the quality of both production and distribution. To reach a good standard of preliminary general education and be capable of profiting by the complementary education to be given under this particular scheme, they should not leave school before 16 years of age. It is anticipated, however, that many will still do so, and educational provision for such cases will be found in paragraphs 9, 11 and 12.

6 In order that the young salespeople and others employed shall have a satisfactory training in and knowledge of their trade the slight education gained in the shop or warehouse by the handling and the sale of goods should be re-inforced by a complementary education given elsewhere and under different conditions. No trade needs the judgment which comes from trained observation more than the drapery trade, but as already suggested in paragraph 2, modern conditions of trade, the "speeding up" and the sheer serving capacity required from the assistant

throughout the day make it impossible to get in business hours the opportunity for study, even of such essentials as the origin, raw materials, make, texture, adulteration, dyeing, design and quality of the goods hourly handled and discussed with the customer. It is probable that only a small percentage of assistants have real knowledge of these things and that even fewer have any knowledge regarding subsidiary matters, such as harmony and contrast of colour, style, ticket writing, advertising and the like. To make the study of such essentials possible it should be arranged for in appropriate schools of art and craft (places removed from business distractions and yet given up to education of a practical character approved both by the educationist and the employers and employed); it should be conducted by instructors who are doubly qualified to give contributory knowledge to trade in-as-much-as they are at once artists and practical workers in the subjects they teach, either as designers, producers or distributors. Hitherto the provision of complementary education for the worker has been, in the main, treated as an evening supplement to the knowledge that should be gained in the shop, and for the following reasons there is great waste of opportunity and outlay by the unorganised and optional attendance at evening schools.

(a) The student after a full day's work is mentally and bodily tired of his trade and consequently unfit to profit by the instruction offered in trade subjects.

(b) The curriculum, however well conceived, cannot take full effect because the attendance of the student, being voluntary, is frequently desultory.

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(c) The younger apprentices and learners, at this stage of their career, need absolute control both in the shop and during complementary education.

(d) The employers, being relieved of responsibility and sacrifice, lose a great stimulus of interest in the education of their young people.

Thus the greater number of the young workers do not gain a disciplined education. To obtain good results this important branch of education should no longer be left to chance. The evening schools should remain for voluntary attendance, especially of the older apprentices and assistants, as a means of further improvement and recreative work; but as regards the younger apprentices, learners and improvers, complementary education should be by day instruction, given in the employer's time and without deduction of wages.

7 Day classes held in London and provincial centres for some of the producing trades, *e.g.*, printing, binding, silver and goldsmithing, have proved this opinion to be sound. And, as regards the distributing trades, it has already been satisfactorily tested by the arrangement under which young assistants from certain drapery houses attend the L.C.C. Central School of Arts and Crafts on two mornings a week during business hours. In time other progressive houses will probably follow suit but the movement would still be dependent upon individual consent, and the influence on the trade would be slow and only partial. The education itself would be only partial if it were limited and specialised in scope. Truly to develop intelligence and character it should

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be broadly educational and not narrowly technical, although based upon the occupation and life of the student so that the subjects of education may appeal to him as being worth doing. He has stepped beyond the world of school into a new world, the world of his future, and his interest in it should be used for educational purposes. Citizenship and workmanship must advance together that we may have a right sense of duty and responsibility and know how to use our leisure. This is a larger question than learning to earn a living, it is learning to live.

For educational reform of this character to be real and effective it should be supported by all employers and employed because, firstly, each will personally benefit; secondly, both are responsible to the community for the permanence, improvement and expansion of the nation's trade and, thirdly, it is the duty of all to promote a better understanding of life and work. The fundamental principles should be adopted by the trade organisations and carried out by means of an organised scheme.

8 In the wholesale and retail textile distributing trade the old system of apprenticeship with premium cannot be revived. It must be replaced and the basis of the new scheme should be a Learner's Agreement, providing for a definite complementary continuance of education, to take place in the employer's time during the whole period of the agreement. To be operative, it would probably be necessary that, besides the usual parties, there should also act as signatories to the agreement either the

masters' association, the union concerned and the Local Education Authority, or a body set up for that purpose.

In this connection, the procedure of the French trade courts may be cited (Appendix 1), but in this country there should be powerful auxiliaries of another character, the ancient Gilds of the City of London, e.g. the Drapers' Company, the Mercers' Company, the Haberdashers' Company, the Weavers' Company, the Stationers' Company, which were once pre-eminent in such matters, and might usefully resume much of their old trade importance. A valuable instance is the Goldsmiths' Company, which still exercises jurisdiction regarding apprenticeship, and boys apprenticed "through the Company" have certain advantages not obtainable by others.

9 If, as suggested in paragraph 5, general education could be ensured until 16 years of age, and that be the age of entering the drapery trade, then the length of a Learner's Agreement (referred to in par. 12 as class B) should be at least two years, ending at eighteen years of age.

In the opinion of this committee these are the minimum limits of age and time to secure an education which will serve as the foundation of a good type of draper, and they can be complied with now by pupils from trade schools, central schools and secondary schools. But for some time to come many young people may continue to enter the trade at a lower age than 16, and the situation should be met by an alternative Agreement (referred to in par. 12 as class A) beginning at the time of entry and ending at 18.

10 There should be a minimum scale of wages during the period of the Agreement.

11 During the period of the Agreement the normal working hours should be not more than 48 a week, of which, not less than 3 periods of 2 hours each, a week, should be devoted without loss of wages to complementary education, which should in all cases be arranged to be given at a time when the young assistant is fresh enough in mind and body to profit thereby.

In practice, it has been found that in each year the classes cover about 30 weeks. Therefore, allowing half an hour for travel from shop to school, the loss of time to the employer caused by attendance would be 8 hours a week, a total of 240 hours a year. In other words, support of the scheme would cost the employer 5 full weeks of each apprentice's time in each year! Nothing could more plainly show how modest is the proposal; indeed, it is hoped that, realising this, the drapery trade will voluntarily desire to increase the time to be devoted to complementary education.*

12 The complementary education being carried on concurrently with the Agreement, should be arranged as a 2 or more years' course in accordance with the proposal in paragraph 9. The provision in the two types of Agreement should be, broadly, as follows:—

CLASS A.

1st year, age 14 + to 16—History, geography,

*Since this was written Mr. Fisher's Education Bill has appeared and requires attendance at Continuation Schools for 320 hours in each year. It also provides that after the expiration of 5 years the Board of Education may increase the number of hours of attendance at Continuation Schools.

spelling, letter writing and arithmetic, with a trade bearing. Lettering, drawing. Duty and responsibility. Citizenship.

2nd year, age 16 to 17—English and arithmetic. The romance of trade: its historical and geographical aspects, with special relation to the textile trade. Materials and manufacture. Salesmanship and stock-keeping. Ticket writing and trade sketching. Citizenship.

3rd year, age 17 to 18—Materials and manufacture. Dress and furnishing. Fashions and styles. Salesmanship and stockkeeping. Display and Advertising. Ticket writing, trade sketching, colour and design. Citizenship.

CLASS B.

1st year. As 2nd year above.

2nd year. As 3rd year above.

NOTE.—Experience may substantially modify this curriculum.

During the course there should be facilities for students to visit manufacturing centres and see the actual production of textiles.

13 In arranging the timetable of classes it would be necessary to avoid the busy periods in the wholesale and retail trade, both as regards the hour of the day and the time of the year. Probably quite different arrangements would have to be made to suit the convenience of the two branches of the trade and separate courses of instruction instituted.

14 The experimental courses of instruction for young drapers held at the L.C.C. Central School of

Arts and Crafts, Southampton Row, W.C. 1, were begun in 1916, but the short prospectus (Appendix ii) shows that the amount of time at present given each week does not allow the curriculum outlined in paragraph 12 to be fully covered. Much remains to be done regarding the sort of education to be offered, and as teachers capable of dealing with this new aspect of education are not readily to be found, provision may have to be made for training them. The experience already gained by the committee proves, however, that the principles underlying the instruction are fundamental to the further education of this type of worker and should be applied to a scheme of Learner's Agreements for any of the distributing trades.

9th March, 1917

III.

15 To summarise :

- (a) The wholesale and retail distributing trades form a large and most influential part of the community.
- (b) Yet, through the decay of apprenticeship, in the large majority of cases young people entering these trades can no longer be sure of gaining a thorough training in the shop or warehouse. This is particularly the case in the drapery trade.
- (c) No substitute for the lost training nor any further education, complementary to both general education and business training, has been set up.
- (d) To discover the best way to bridge the gap, experimental courses of instruction for young salesmen and saleswomen in the wholesale and retail textile distributing trade are being carried on in the

employers' time at the L.C.C. Central School of Arts and Crafts, Southampton Row, W.C. 1.

(e) The curriculum is undergoing continual revision, but the experiment has already conclusively proved that the principles of the instruction are fundamental to any scheme of training for the distributing trades.

(f) Therefore, there should be set up a revised apprenticeship in the form of a Learner's Agreement providing for

- i. Adequate shop training and a minimum scale of wages.
- ii. Adequate complementary education, based on the particular trade and given in the employers' time without loss of wages.

(g) The development of this scheme to better the conditions of those in the distributing trades and to make for the revival of incentive should be supported by all associations and unions concerned and the great guilds, which formerly took care that all entering their crafts or trades were put in the way of becoming master men.

Appendix I

THE FRENCH LAW OF WORK
AND OF SOCIAL FORETHOUGHT
(Codified Texts)

BOOK I
Agreements relating to work
Published 30th December, 1910

SECTION I
Of the Contract of Apprenticeship

CHAPTER I
Of the Nature and Form of the Agreement

Art. 1 The contract of apprenticeship is that by which a manufacturer, a foreman or a journeyman binds himself to teach the practice of his craft to another person, who, in his turn, binds himself to work for him; the whole under agreed conditions and for an agreed time.

Art. 2. The contract of apprenticeship is made either by public deed or by agreement under hand. It may also be made verbally, but testimony to it can only be received in conformity with the Section of the Civic Code: "Of Contracts or Agreed Obligations generally." Notaries, secretaries of committees of experts (*conseils des prud'hommes**)

* A "*conseil des prud'hommes*" is a court having jurisdiction in matters in which masters and workmen or employees are concerned. It comprises an equal number of masters and workmen elected by their peers. As this kind of court exists only in industrial districts, generally in big towns, in other places the justice of peace has jurisdiction in the same matters.

and clerks to justices of the peace may draw up the contract of apprenticeship. This document is subject to a stamp duty of 1 fr. 50 c. even when it contains obligations or receipts for money or personal property. The fees due to public officials are fixed at 2 francs.

Art. 3 The agreement or deed of apprenticeship contains:

- 1 The full name, age, occupation and residence of the master.
- 2 The full name, age and residence of the apprentice.
- 3 The full names, occupations and residence of his father and mother, his guardian, or the person empowered by his parents, and in their default by the justice of the peace.
- 4 The date and period of the contract.
- 5 The conditions of lodging, board, premium and all other agreements between the parties. It must be signed by the master and by the representatives of the apprentice.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Conditions of the Agreement.

Art. 4 No one unless he is at least 21 years of age may take minors as apprentices.

Art. 5 No master, if he is unmarried or a widower or a divorced person, may give lodging, as apprentices, to any young girls who are under age.

Art. 6 The following may not take apprentices :
Those who have served a sentence for crime.
Those who have been sentenced for acts of immorality.

Those who have been sentenced to more than three months' imprisonment for offences dealt with under Articles 388, 401, 405, 406, 407, 408, 423 of the Penal Code.

Art. 7 The disqualification resulting from Art. 6 may be withdrawn by the prefect on the advice of the mayor when the culprit after the expiration of his sentence has lived for three years in the same township. In Paris the disqualification will be withdrawn by the prefect of the police.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Duties of Masters and Apprentices.

Art. 8 The master must stand toward the apprentice *in loco parentis* looking after his conduct and his morals, whether in the house or outside, and warn his parents or their representatives of serious faults that he may commit or of any vicious tendencies that he may show. He must also warn them without delay in the case of illness, of absence, or of any fact which necessitates their intervention. He will only employ the apprentice, except when otherwise agreed, on work and service connected with the practice of his craft.

Art. 9 If the apprentice is under 16 years of age and cannot read, write and reckon, or if he has not finished his first religious education, the master is

bound to give him during working hours the time and opportunity necessary for his instruction. Nevertheless, this time must not exceed two hours per day.

Art. 10 The master must teach the apprentice in due order and with due fulness, the particular art, trade, or profession which forms the subject of the agreement. He must deliver to him at the termination of the apprenticeship, his discharge or certificate proving the fulfilment of the agreement.

Art. 11 The apprentice owes to his master faithfulness, obedience and respect. He must help him by his work according to his ability and power. He is bound to make up at the end of the apprenticeship the time which he has lost by reason of illness or of absence which has lasted more than 15 days.

Art. 12 Every manufacturer, foreman or journeyman convicted of having enticed an apprentice away from his master to employ him in the capacity of an apprentice or of a journeyman will be liable in whole or part for the damages adjudged to be paid to the forsaken master.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Termination of the Agreement.

Art. 13 The first two months of apprenticeship are reckoned as a trial period during which the agreement may be cancelled voluntarily by either of the parties. In this case, no damages shall be assigned to either party, unless this has been expressly provided for.

Art. 14 The agreement of apprenticeship is automatically terminated :

- 1 By the death of the master or the apprentice.
- 2 If the apprentice or the master is called up for military service.
- 3 If the master or the apprentice incur one of the sentences set out in Art. 6 of the present section.
- 4 In the case of young girls, in the event of the divorce of the master, of the death of the master's wife, or of any woman of his family who may be managing his household at the time of the agreement.

Art. 15 The agreement may be terminated on the demand of the parties or of one of them :

- 1 In the event of one of the parties failing to carry out the stipulations of the agreement.
- 2 By reason of serious or persistent breaking of the regulations of the present section and of other rules governing the conditions of work of apprentices.
- 3 In the event of persistent misconduct on the part of the apprentice.
- 4 If the master changes his residence to another township than that in which he lived at the time of the signing of the agreement. Nevertheless, the demand for the termination of the agreement on these grounds must be lodged within three months of the date of change of residence.

5 If the master or the apprentice incurs a sentence of imprisonment for more than one month.

6 In the event of the marriage of the apprentice.

Art. 16 If the time for the duration of the apprenticeship is longer than usual in the locality, this time must be reduced or the agreement terminates.

CHAPTER V.

Of Jurisdiction.

Art. 17 Claims which may be made against third parties in accordance with Art. 12 of the present section will be brought before the committee of experts, or before the justice of the peace of their place of residence.

Art. 18 In the various cases of termination of contract provided for in Chapter IV. the damages or repayments which may be due to one or the other of the parties will be, failing stipulation, awarded by the committee of experts or by the justice of the peace in districts where there is no committee of experts.

Appendix II

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL
CENTRAL SCHOOL *of* ARTS & CRAFTS
Southampton Row, W.C. 1

Principal - - - FRED V. BURRIDGE
INSTRUCTION OF SALESMEN AND
SALESWOMEN IN THE WHOLESALE AND
RETAIL TEXTILE DISTRIBUTING TRADE

Session 1917 - 1918

This instruction is complementary to general education and shop experience, and is devised to cover two years. It is divided into an elementary course and an advanced course; the classes in each course meet on two mornings a week from 9 - 11 a.m. The instructors are practical workers of long experience in the subjects with which they deal and the lessons are illustrated by lantern slides, specimens, demonstrations and visits to the Victoria & Albert and other Museums.

The students are expected to be regular and punctual in attendance, to keep both rough and detailed notebooks, and to do the homework required. An examination is held at the end of each course and certificates are awarded to students who satisfy the examiners in regard to attendance, notes and examination.

Sessional reports are sent to all employers.

SCALE OF ADMISSION.

- 1 Students under 21 years, free on employer's certificate.
- 2 Students over 21 years, earning not more than 30/- a week, 4/6 the session.

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- 3 Students over 21 years, earning more than 30/- a week, 10/- the session.

NOTE.—As pointed out in paragraph 14 of the memorandum, the experimental syllabus has so far mainly been used to explore the vocational bases on which to build the complementary education proposed. There can be no doubt that to provide adequate instruction in subjects of general education also, the amount of time required by the Education Bill will be necessary.

SYLLABUS

FIRST YEAR—Elementary course.

Section I.—Materials and manufacture. Mondays, 9 - 11 a.m.

Part I.—September 24th to November 26th, 1917. The development of textile manufacture in ancient times.

Part II.—January 28th to March 18th, 1918. The nature and characteristics of various materials used for weaving which affect the usefulness, artistic appearance and durability of the finished webs.

Part III.—April 8th to June 24th, 1918. The development of textile manufacture in modern times.

Section II.—Salesmanship. Thursdays, 9-11 a.m.

Part I.—September 27th to November 29th, 1917. The rise and development of trade, its history and geography.

Part II.—January 31st to March 21st, 1918. Employer and employed. Citizenship.

Part III.—April 11th to June 27th, 1918. Drawing, lettering and ticket writing. Museum visits.

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SECOND YEAR.—Advanced course.

Section I.—Materials and manufacture. Fridays, 9-11 a.m.

Part I.—September 28th to November 30th, 1917. The recognition of different materials and textures, and the appreciation of quality in textile fabrics.

Part II.—February 1st to March 22nd, 1918. The effect of modern artistic developments, mechanical invention and discoveries of science on textile production.

Part III.—April 12th to June 28th, 1918. Design in textile fabrics.

Section II.—Salesmanship. Tuesdays, 9-11 a.m.

Part I.—September 25th to November 27th, 1917. Modern trade conditions. Relation of distributor to producer and consumer. Citizenship.

Part II.—January 29th to March 19th, 1918. Trading and stock keeping. Shop architecture. Window dressing. Advertising and publicity.

Part III.—April 9th to June 25th, 1918. Dress, style and fashion. Trade sketching. Museum visits.

L.C.C. EDUCATION OFFICES
VICTORIA EMBANKMENT, W.C. 2
R. BLAIR, EDUCATION OFFICER



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