



**TOGETHER**  
*for a sustainable future*

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Meeting of In-plant Group  
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ATTACHMENT TO INDUSTRY 1/

by

A.W. Pemberton\*

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\* Cranfield School of Management, U.K.

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Attachment to industry in groups of two or three where possible, or single individuals to each firm.

1. There is a distinction which may be drawn between different types of training programmes, and which will affect the conditions of attachment to industry very directly.
  - Production oriented courses may call for attachments to a specific industry, although in a number of different firms in the industries concerned. The participants are attached to study particular methods or techniques and any participation in the work of the organization is bound to be limited by their growing knowledge, particularly where there is a wide gap between the home countries' technology in that field and that of the host country.
  - Service and function oriented courses on the other hand, are more likely to be producing people who can perform that service or function over a range of different industries. Provided their training has been adequate, and the technology gap referred to above not too great, there is more chance that participants in this category will be able to make a positive contribution during their period of attachment.
2. So far, my experience has been limited to the latter group, and the In-plant Group Training Programme in the field of Materials Handling, which Cranfield Institute of Technology ran, demonstrated the points referred to exactly.
3. Basic Organization of the actual in-plant work was divided into two periods, one of one week, where groups of participants were given an opportunity to investigate a very simple project, and the second period of five weeks where they individually either handled a specific project from start to finish or worked as part of a project team in an organization. Both methods proved to be possible in the Materials Handling Programme.

4. Contacts with Industry: Cranfield Institute of Technology has a very wide range of industrial contacts both through the Department of Management and the Department of Industrial Production. Former students of a wide range of courses are now managers and executives in many industries in the United Kingdom and abroad, and the selection of suitable firms was limited more by location and type of industry than by lack of contacts. Of some thirty firms approached, over twenty offered detailed cooperation and some seventeen or eighteen eventually participated. Refusals were rare, and never on grounds of unwillingness. Two firms had to refuse because of industrial disputes and another was in the course of a major organizational change.

5. The range of firms selected covered:

- Food industry
- Electronics
- Furniture manufacture
- Warehousing and storage
- Glasware manufacture
- Light engineering
- Precision engineering
- Heavy engineering and foundry
- Car accessory manufacture
- Dock and railway operation

This wide spread was taken so that some attempt could be made to "match" the basic knowledge of the participants to the attaching firm. It was at this point that one of the major difficulties of placement arose. Ideally, we should have liked to have placed most of the participants in a small to medium firm in a matching industry, but such firms are not always capable of the strains of accepting an extra man or woman over a short period, as their own staff is usually quite small, and therefore fully occupied to such an extent that they would find it onerous to 'carry' an outsider. We did manage to place one man in such a firm, but only for the single week investigation.

However, it was quite evident, that despite the firms willingness to accept a man for the longer period, there would be losses on both sides rather than gains.

6. The second difficulty arising from this situation is that generally, the larger the firm, the more sophisticated their methods, both in production and organization. This tends to widen the gap between the participants previous experience and what he sees 'on the ground'. There does not seem to be a satisfactory way round this problem, other than a short period of "acclimatisation" if this can be arranged. If those people in the firm who are in daily contact with the participant are made aware of the problem this can go some way towards solving it.

7. Liaison between the programme director, the firm and the participants must be close and continuous. At least one visit must be paid to the firm before the participants are attached, and the whole project or situation discussed and agreed, and a thumb-nail sketch of the participant given to the man who will be his "section head" during the attachment period. This should make clear any strengths or weaknesses in the participants field of knowledge, and be totally free of any personal bias. If it is not possible to "deliver" the participants to the firm by road, then they must be given absolutely clear directions on how to get to their destination, be provided with the telephone number at departing and arriving organizations, and the name of a specific person to contact in the case of difficulty, or who will meet them. At the same time a telex message should be sent to the firm, giving precise time of arrival, so that the participant does not feel 'lost'.

8. At least one but preferably more visits should be paid to each participant whilst he is attached to the firm, either by the programme director or his deputy. At this visit the man's progress should be discussed with him temporarily, and ample time allowed for a discussion with the participant, to ensure that he has comfortable lodging and his personal needs. His opinion should also be sought on the particular project, to see how this fits in with his training and

background. If there is something seriously wrong, and this first visit is in the second week of attachment, there is time to make a correction: left later than this, and dissatisfaction may develop.

9. In the case of the Materials Handling Programme, the main period of attachment was judged satisfactory in almost every case. So far as the "employers" were concerned, in the case of two groups the firms' sent a letter of congratulation on the results of their work, and another firm expressed their satisfaction with their participant in such terms that they would gladly employ him on a permanent basis!

10. From the participants' points of view, the relevance of their direct experience varied: one man was asked to look at the future prospects of a rather 'run-down' foundry by modern standards and was elated to discover that it exactly accorded with current practice in his country, and that a common solution to a current problem arose therefrom.

11. Status of Participants: This is a matter which we did not anticipate, but which showed up in some cases in the first period of attachment. It was fortunate that this was so, for it prevented further mistakes for the longer period. Foreign students are often working with British firms: most of them have either just graduated or have arrived in the United Kingdom for further training. Mostly they are young men, with little industrial experience, and not much what might be called "business social background". UNIDO participants are usually managers and executives in their own countries with a background of specialized knowledge and certain social standards which they have worked for. If they are not particularly articulate in their host country's language, there is a tendency for people to underestimate there is a tendency for people to underestimate their knowledge and status. This results in them being treated as "students". It must be made clear to the attaching organizations that they are not "students" and this

is partly the purpose of the "thumb-nail sketch" referred to earlier.

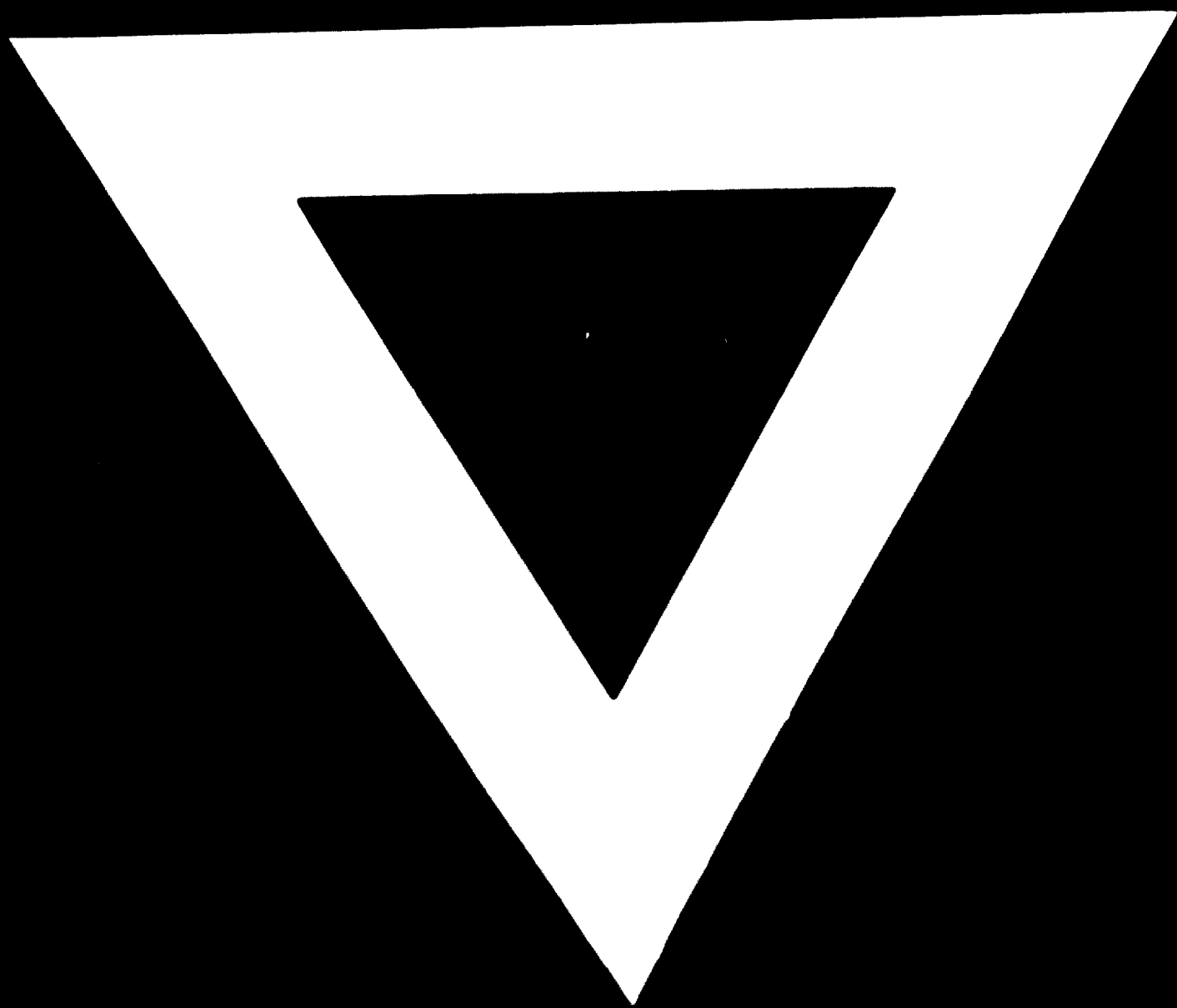
12. Relation of Experience to Group Members: It was not sure whether all participants would be happy to discuss their experiences with their group members formally on return from their attachments. Without exception, however, each member of the group addressed his fellows in a short report after each attachment. This was not forced upon them, they unanimously agreed to do so, and it was highly successful.

13. Conclusions: To even have a chance of success, organization of the attachments (at least for functional groups) requires an immense amount of organization and liaison. Something like 2,000 miles of travelling around was needed in a small country like the United Nations to carry this through. Given the right contacts and goodwill on both sides, the attachments were relatively easy to arrange in our case. We feel that it must be done on a personal basis between the directing staff and named executives in the attaching firms and that the latter must have a real desire to make a contribution to the participants training.

14. An estimate of the total man-hours required of the directing staff for this particular activity (excluding typing and similar administrative matters) would be about 30-40 man-hrs.







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