

Investing in education reaps long-term, short-term benefits

Continued from last week

By CAROL TALLEY

Nationally, 1976 was a big year for all education programs in business. Jim Sayer (Education and Training manager) attributes the growth to three things: An increased push toward employee productivity; increased governmental regulation which required business to show they were actively training women and minority groups; and, a factor especially apparent in Tek's field, rapidly changing technology that necessitated on-going training.

Along with these three reasons comes another that Jim touched on last week: Companies are finding they need education benefits as a competitive drawing card.

According to Tom Corrigan, College Relations manager, "Overall, a company's education opportunities are a strong consideration of college students when they're looking at a company. They like to hear they can continue their education and keep on top of their field."

"Tek's education commitment is an excellent selling tool," he continued. "We use it very strongly. Whenever we talk with students we make sure to mention, for a good length of time, Tek's Education and Training opportunities."

"Our industry, especially, is realizing the importance of a strong education program. The volume of knowledge is growing almost exponentially, and companies in the electronics industry realize they need an education and training program to keep up with the changes."

"Our major competitors look very strongly toward their own education programs. But Tek's program is a very attractive one, and is still among the leaders."

"It's something the company can be very proud of."

One result of the national thrust in this area is a lack of technical instructors qualified to teach at the high school or community college level. "There's been a major effort in the past few years to help teachers," Jim said.

"Kids need to get their imaginations turned on to electronics and technical subjects in high school, and you can't do that without programs. And you can't have programs without teachers."

"There are fewer programs in electronics in Oregon now than there were five years ago. Nationally, over 3000 high school and community college technical programs had to be closed down last year due to lack of teachers."

Tek's contributions to solving the program/teacher dilemma are considerable:

"We have continuous input with PCC regarding additions to their programs. We have people on high school and community college boards helping design curricula. We provide teachers and guest speakers to the schools. We help set up programs for teachers, and we'll place a teacher in a summer job to help them keep in touch with their field."

Tom Williams, Community Relations manager, mentioned how Tek's ties with the schools affect Tektronix' relationship with the entire community: "With the advent of moving into communities like Lebanon and Redmond, we've had very good response from Linn-Benton and Central Oregon Community Colleges, Oregon State University and other institutions. They've all been very supportive of our efforts and want to get involved. This helps us get acquainted in those communities."

"Overall, people in the community have good feelings about what Tek's doing in education."

Back in Tek's Beaverton campus community, Jackie Sherrill, a technician in Manufacturing Engineering Component Quality Control, pointed to an incident where her TEP-gained expertise combined with what she'd picked up on the job to save money for the company.

The incident started when a vendor could no longer supply Tek with a certain type of transistor. Over 40 instruments used this particular transistor and some production lines had to be shut down.

One day Jackie and another employee were looking at the data sheet of another transistor when it occurred to them that this particular transistor could take the place of the unavailable one. The appropriate suppliers were contacted and the new part became available, allowing production to get under way once again.

Prior to her first assembly job at Tek in 1974, Jackie was a homemaker with no electronics skills. Thanks to her willingness to learn on the job and take advantage of TEP, she is now a semiconductor expert. Her background is an asset to her personally as well as to Tek.

"It's almost a rhetorical question to ask why Tek is interested in encouraging personal growth," said Marti Bunyard, Career/Life Planning counselor in Employee Resources.

"Where else could the company go to find trained people? We're in a very labor intensive industry, and we've got to invest in education in order to keep our people on top of the technology. You don't just go out and find these kinds of highly trained employees on the street corner."

"Education is a long-term investment in our future."

"Look at all those folks who've come here with no high school diploma and who've gone on to become extremely well-trained people."

Many of these people could find a welcome place in a variety of companies. But Education and Training helps take care of that too. "TEP builds loyalty and identity with Tektronix," Marti added. "And we need that."

Again, Jim Sayer: "My goal is to help people get involved in education that will help them help themselves. I want them to understand more about the company, the company's products, their job, and the job they would like to have."

"This is my challenge, my mission."

TEP offers feast of opportunity

Listing the barrage of classes, programs, training options, and all-round opportunities available through Education and Training is a mouthful.

If Tektronix hired an advertising agency to create a TEP television commercial, it could appropriately sound something like the McDonald's tongue twister of a few years back: "Two-all-beef-patties-special sauce-lettuce-cheese-pickles-onions-on-a-sesame-seed-bun."

Among the ingredients, if one can keep track of them, there's a condiment designed to please nearly everybody.

For the person interested in attaining their high school diploma, there's the High School Diploma Equivalency Program.

People interested in pursuing a four-year Bachelor's Degree* or two-year Associate Degree can take advantage of the many co-op programs with regional universities and community colleges.

For the already bachelored graduate interested in a Masters Degree**, there's a program for this too.

Interested in college credits by examination? The College Credit by Examination Program will take care of that. Rather take self-study classes? Over 60 course topics are available, including videotapes, compliments of the Self-Learning Programmed Instruction program.

For someone whose sights are set on becoming an Electronic Technician or Equipment Service Technician, there's special daytime training opportunity.

Computer programmer, quality assurance technician, circuit board designer, draftsman, machine operator, secretary...On-going class sequences support these and other careers within Tektronix.

One of the nicest things about Tek education is the Tuition Refund Program. Under the program, Tektronix will pay for all or part of employee course costs.

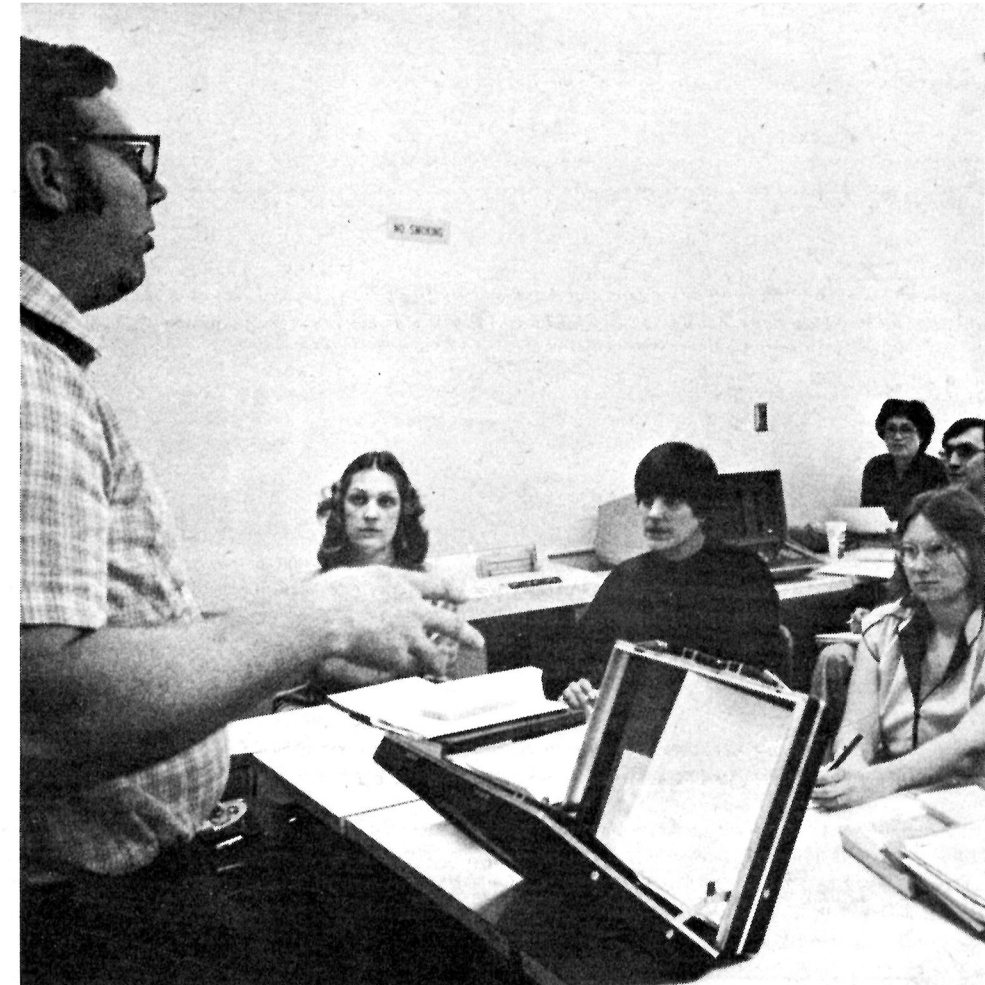
If the subject matter relates directly to one's current job, 100 per cent of costs are usually covered; if the link isn't so direct, 50 per cent coverage is the going rate. Tuition refund applies to classes taken at Tektronix or any accredited college. It doesn't however, cover the cost of purely recreational classes.

"The great variety of programs are needed due to the many kinds of work we do at Tektronix," said Arnold Sykes, Human Resources Planning and Development manager.

"The fact is, TEP is absolutely novel for business," said Tom Sloan, Employee Relations manager. "I don't know of any other company in the world with such a complete program."

*Bachelors degrees are available in: Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Business Administration, and Management Development.

**Masters degrees are available in: Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Electronic Science, and Business Administration.



Steve Coan (Automated Instrument Compatibility Evaluation) has taught 4051 Programming with the Tektronix Education Program for three years. 4051 Programming is one of TEP's more popular classes.

Finding teachers at Tek

How does Education and Training get the hundreds of instructors it needs for TEP programs?

"Well," said Jim Sayer, "First off, we don't hire outsiders; we only use people who work at Tek. Sometimes we get volunteers, sometimes we recruit. But always we look for three characteristics in a potential TEP teacher:

"First, can they relate to people? A teacher has to like people. Second, do they work with the subject matter they teach? We want subject matter experts, not classroom managers. Third, and most important, do they want to teach? We won't twist anyone's arm."

Have they every had any problems getting enough instructors?

"Yes, we sometimes do," said Larry McCoy (Education and Training), "Especially with the big, popular classes such as programming classes for a new Tek product. It can be hard finding instructors with the required expertise, and the ones who are qualified only have so much extra time."