

In-Service Training: A Fable

**A successful team is made up of competent individuals
trained in different disciplines,
abreast of their own field**

ROY E. MOSER

THIS IS A story of eleven men. Names? Place? Date? All unimportant. They weren't brothers; not even related. In fact, they weren't even good friends. Their wives didn't play bridge together; their children weren't acquainted. They came from different backgrounds too. Some were poor, some rich. Some from the city, some from rural areas. Race? Creed? Color? It varied—but that's not important either.

The eleven men were a team. They had a common goal which held them together, and toward which they strived—individually and collectively. As a matter of record, they had several goals: to win next Saturday's game, to win the league championship, and over the long haul to be the best damned football team there ever was—or will be. They knew what they were shooting for.

These men weren't just pick-up type characters. They just didn't happen to be on the team. No sir! Each was a specialist, and had been carefully chosen, tried, and tested before he became a real team member. Each could do his job better than anyone else, on the team or off. Some specialized in blocking. Some received passes. Some ran with the ball. One called the signals and set the plays. They all knew how to tackle, block, run, and kick, but each had his own specialty which made him a valuable member of the team; and they won games.

Maybe they weren't friends, but they sure had respect for each other. They knew they could rely on their teammates to pull their weight and do it effectively. They knew and respected each other's abilities—and limitations. They worked together—all for one, and one for all—and all that stuff.

ROY E. MOSER is Extension Food Technologist, Cooperative Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

One day, one of the coaches started studying game statistics and observed that many of their past games had been won by a field goal. Those three points were important. Sure they had a field goal specialist, but think how wonderful it would be if all eleven were good field goal kickers. So the coach set up an in-service training program, and for days the men practiced kicking field goals. Some never were very good at it, but they tried with the rest to develop this new tool which had helped to win so many games.

Well, they didn't win so many after that. While practicing all the field goal kicking, some of their other muscles got rusty. Coordination and timing slipped. They seldom got close enough to the goal to kick a field goal, and when they did, it was hard to decide who would kick it. They lost games.

To win the championship this year and next, they knew they would have to play better every time they took the field. What was good enough last week would not be good enough for the next game. So, with the help of their coaches, they set about a new program of in-service training. They worked constantly at it. They wanted to be the best. With the coaches' help, each of the eleven set out to learn his particular job better. He studied the requirements of his position and set about improving his capabilities for it. Passers passed. Receivers received. Blockers blocked. Each developed himself to the limit of his capability. Each was a true specialist. Field goal kicking was left to the field goal specialist.

In practice, they scrimmaged together, too. Here they learned about their teammates. Soon they knew how each would react to a given situation, and the team became a unit—not just eleven guys out to play ball. They won their games, the championship, and developed into a great team.

MORAL 1: Any resemblance between a winning football team and a successful Extension marketing team should be more than coincidental.

MORAL 2: A successful team is made up of competent individuals, trained in different disciplines who, keeping abreast of their own fields, become each day more competent in their subject matter. But realizing that others on the team play an important part in the game, and recognizing and respecting each other's talents, they cooperate intuitively to reach a common goal.

So it is in Extension.

THE REAL ART of progress is to preserve order amid change and change amid order.
—H. L. AHLGREN.