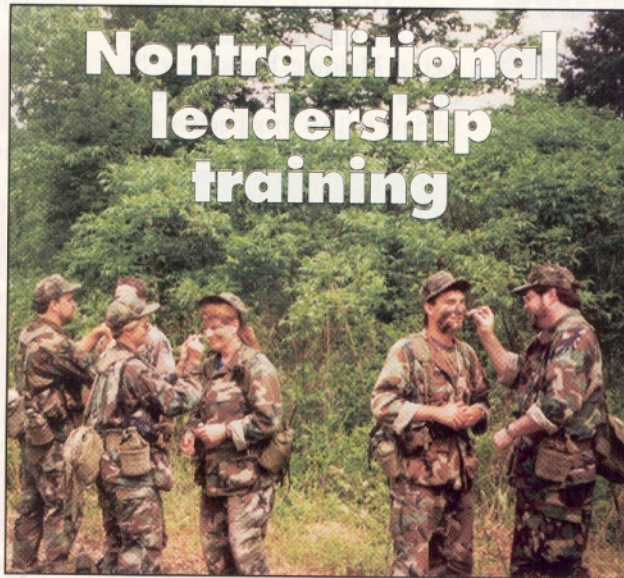


# MANAGEMENT

Last month we wrote about Louisville, KY custom molder DJ Inc. that believes in partnering as a strong vendor-customer relationship. But DJ's somewhat unconventional business practices don't stop with partnering. The molding company has also sent 110 of its employees to Leading Concepts Inc., a Louisville-based leadership and team-building organization.

What makes this organization less than typical is the fact that its president is a 27-year-old former U.S. Army Ranger. He doesn't teach in a classroom or conference center; he teaches outside. And he doesn't use paper, pencil, and an overhead projector; he dresses his students in Army fatigues, arms them with paintball guns, and puts them through Army training maneuvers for



These DJ employees spent four days and four nights going through Army training maneuvers, transferring military teamwork skills to their everyday jobs.

four days, transferring military teamwork skills to the business world. "The only difference [between the military and business]," says Leading Concepts president Dean Hohl, "is that with one you have bullets, with the other you have dollars."

The idea, says Hohl, is to remove people from their traditional, comfortable environments, putting them in relatively unfamiliar territory where everyone starts on the same level. "We deal with each other as human beings, instead of stereotyping." DJ vice president Harry Pelle says it's unlike anything he's ever done. "It's not five

hours at the Holiday Inn eating jelly donuts," he says. "This type of event takes people completely and totally out of their element."

A typical four-day workshop is conducted in a military encampment. Participants are required to learn Ranger leadership skills, use paintball gear, and perform patrol missions. It's called experiential learning and through it participants learn how to lead others, build teams, overcome obstacles, and achieve goals. The focus is on the task or the goal of the team, not personalities or differences among the team members.

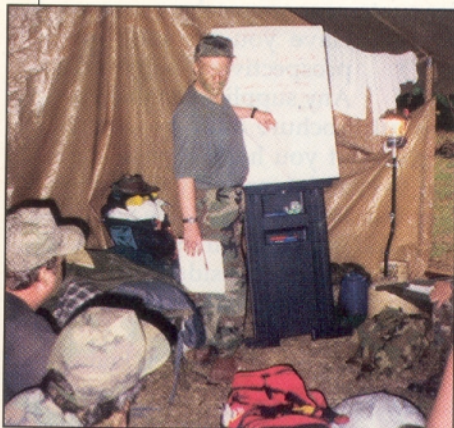
Hohl says leadership changes constantly, giving everyone a chance to head the group. Several times a day, "coaches" pause the action to hold a group discussion, relating skills and

concepts learned back to the workplace.

Back at work, employees use these skills to develop new strategies and methods for meeting objectives, tackling problems, and doing their job. Pelle says the course has made a huge difference in his shop. He says his employees work better as a team and recognize the strengths that different personalities bring to the company. "In the old days, there was friction between some people," Pelle says. "Now we see it as constructive debate."

Pelle also says that he's not yet met someone at his company who didn't think it was the best training he or she had ever received. And they've all learned a valuable lesson. "A lot of people confuse management with leadership," he says. "You manage tasks. You lead people."

Leading Concepts is based in Louisville and has satellite offices in El Paso, TX and Tucson, AZ. A mobile unit is also available if the criterion for a minimum number of students is met. For more from Leading Concepts, circle 351.—Jeff Sloan



Leading Concepts' military-based training involves periodic breaks to apply lessons learned to the work environment. Here, DJ engineering manager Dan Wice briefs the troops in one of the camp's tents.

## IN THIS SECTION

- Combat training.....13
- Picking offshore partners.14
- By Design .....16
- Plant Site Strategies .....22
- IMM Software Review.....26