

Another Avenue of Training



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At a recent conference, I ran into my friend, Mike, the company's sales representative, and had a nice lengthy conversation about workforce turnover these days, and the current employees constantly training new employees on day-to-day operations. During our conversation, Mike offered to come to our plant, to give refresher training of their sampling equipment. I told him, every year I assist our operators setting up the automated samplers for my annual pretreatment sampling event. They are familiar with the sampler, and some are proficient.

Our workplace recently had multiple retirements and has a reasonably new staff of operators and trainees. Our employees are all trained in-house on sampler operations. After discussion with the plant manager, we

thought it would be a good idea to accept Mike's offer. Why turn down free training?

Mike, and another sales representative, Jarrod, came out to our plant, from two different Florida locations, on a day when all the operators would be available. It was a typical Florida fall day, humid and ninety degrees, with a slight breeze. They provided about an hour's worth of full training for the automated sampler. The operators were able to learn—in-person and for free—the full gamut of sampler operations, directly from the company that sells the equipment. They provided the standard operations, troubleshooting, what-if scenarios, and answered multiple questions. In addition to the in-depth training, the operators now have a direct contact to the sales representatives to discuss purchase options for accessories, replacement parts, and other issues.

Although no sales were made on this trip to our plant, the sales representatives now have an expanded networking circle of people who can recommend them and their product to colleagues, without paying for advertising. We used to believe "word of mouth" is the best advertising and this is how it gets established.

There are more avenues of training besides classroom and online courses. Not all training comes with continuing education units and not every conversation with a sales rep is to buy a product.

Let's utilize all possible avenues of learning to continue to better ourselves—especially when it's free.

