

While it is impossible to show statistically the extent to which the recommendations of the "White House Conference on Aging" are being implemented by the business community, there can be little doubt that the idea of pre-retirement counselling and training is becoming more prominent in the United States - although not necessarily oriented towards "courses". The notes on what some firms are doing in the United States give some idea of what a small cross-section are doing.

The "Harvard Business Review" reported recently that current executive thinking is being increasingly disposed to accepting more responsibility by their corporations towards their employees. Also, a confidential study prepared for the Institute of Life Insurance showed that pre-retirement counselling headed the list in answering the question: "Which possible service do you think Life Insurance Companies should provide?" - the score was double the next in line: "investment advisory service".

There is no uniformity in their methods, but a reading of this Appendix will show how meticulous most firms are in seeing that their employees reaching retirement are supplied full details about their pension entitlement. In many cases, the information is repeated yearly as far back as five years, and put forward in the greatest detail. In all of the firms where a description of the programme is given, the emphasis is on personal counselling. In considering these notes, one must remember that what is described in general terms and in detail in some of the supporting documents is a description of company policy on paper - and probably in general intent. However, the practice in many cases falls short of this "ideal". The success or failure of any programme rests largely with the personnel people or supervisors in administering them, and several companies admitted that frequently performance falls short of stipulated policy. Nevertheless, some of the documents prepared for the execution of that policy are of particular interest; they do provide most useful ideas to anyone setting up a really meaningful programme, and should be used accordingly.