

Customized training

Also considered a catalyst for change are the programs offered by Learning Systems International (HK) Ltd. The techniques and programs used by Learning International are based on a solid research foundation, and have been tested and tried in companies all over the world.

They were initially developed and tested in USA, and then in Canada as well. Part of the reason for that was because of Quebec. "We serviced Quebec and it had a different culture, and that was the start for our company in dealing with a second language and a second culture," says Georges Driscoll, Group Managing Director.

What has happened in Asia is along the same lines. "Initially we imported in English, then we started doing translations, now we're doing cultural adaptations," says Driscoll. The next stage includes plans to develop local products in Asia for eventual export world-wide.

Learning International has been helping organizations excel by improving the performance of their people. "Our company mandate is to help our clients deal better with their clients," says Driscoll, "This could be in the area of sales, service, or the internal client... the big issue our clients face is how to service well and do it profitably."



The vehicle used to deliver this mandate is training. In Hong Kong about two-thirds of the work is related to sales training and one-third to management training.

Alfred Chan, General Manager of Sales and Marketing at TownGas, has been very pleased with the customized sales skills training programmes, which were launched in April 19, 1993. The programmes will ultimately cover 150 people in the organization, including man-



Learning International emphasizes client service.

agement, sales teams, and customer sales and service staff. "For the long-term, I believe that these training programmes have put us in a more competitive position," says Chan.

In the six years that Driscoll has been in Hong Kong, he has found an increase in the number of training and consulting companies, and at the same time clients have become wiser. "People have gotten more sophisticated as to what works and what doesn't...it forces suppliers (of training and consulting services) to be more professional, adding more value, developing long term relationships, and making things work."

One area of work he has been doing in Hong Kong involves helping organizations achieve a balance between business relationships and business issues.

"I find that the Asians do a better job than North Americans of dealing with the individual on a personal level in business environments, on the other hand they're not as good at getting to certain business issues...the tendency of the work we are doing here seems to be getting people who are

good at relationships to be more sensitive to business issues."

Driscoll also finds that in Asia, particularly in Hong Kong, people are incredibly practical: "If they get a technique that they see value in, they won't discuss it a great deal, they'll just put it to use the next morning!" ♦

