

# Ready, Set... Educate!

## Tips on Getting Started

### STEP 1 Ask for Help

Within 90 days of hiring, for **all new employees** who possess basic math and English skills, ASA recommends the following basic courses:

- *Introduction to Pipe, Valves and Fittings*®
- *Customer Service: The Path to Higher Profits*®
- *Essentials of Profitable Wholesale Distribution*®

In addition, for employees who will/or work the **counter, inside sales, and/or outside sales**:

- *Introduction to Steel, Stainless Steel, Iron Pipe and Fittings*®
- *Introduction to Copper, Tube, Plastic Pipe, and Fittings*®
- ProductPro® Specialty Series courses as needed by topic, for example,
  - *Domestic Water Heaters*® if they are selling water heaters or
  - *Residential Hydronic Heating Systems*® if they will work in that area
- *Essentials of Profitable Inside Sales in Distribution*® for inside sales and others on track for outside sales

In addition, for employees who will work in the **showroom**:

- *Essentials of Fixtures and Faucets*® course
- *Essentials of Profitable Showroom Sales*® course

In addition, for employees who will work in the **warehouse**:

- *Essentials of Profitable Warehouse Operations*® course

For all **managers and supervisors**:

- Provide a desk reference copy of *The Art and of Supervising and Motivating People*® to be used when addressing areas of HR legal vulnerability like interviewing, hiring, disciplining etc.

## 2 Make Training Successful by Blending Several Training Delivery Methods

The following generally apply to both book-based and computer based-training:

- Don't rely on unsupervised home-study—the least successful training method
  - Combine several methods such as self-study, discussion, short classroom, review/exam sessions.
- Assign a mentor to act as a consultant or coach to ensure trainees make consistent progress
  - Supervisor or other experienced employees are good examples
  - Good mentors often make good managers: a proving ground for management development
- ASA courses are designed with short segments, quizzes, etc.
  - If the course includes an exam, remove it and save it for the end of the course
- Build in real examples from your warehouse, financial statements, histories, and policies
  - Integrate sales reports into sales training
  - Use financial statement when training on profitability
  - Collect product samples and schematics for ProductPro® product training
- Work in short, small classroom sessions at less busy parts of day
  - Lunch and learn sessions with a few people to learn together
  - Short sessions at end of day
  - Coffee break sessions with quick overviews of important segments
- Consider a review and exam session at end of course
- When available, use the ASA resources like the summary seminars, leader's guides, ASA University, etc.

## 3 Make Training Successful by Leveraging ASA Training with other HR Practices and Outside Resources

Utilize other HR procedures to help make training successful:

- Job descriptions
- New employee orientation
- Performance review procedures
- Training in other aspects of job, company and business
- Recruitment and retention procedures
- Consider using *ASA's Employee Performance Improvement Tool Kit*®

Build in other (non-ASA) training that will likely be necessary:

- Develop some resources in-house
  - History and purpose of your company
  - Special job-related procedures, i.e., closing out counter cash operations
- Review job descriptions for special needs, i.e., fork lift safety and certification for warehouse personnel
- Use ASA's online *Ultimate Training Resource*® for resources for training

## 4 Make Training Successful by Working with ASA to Get Started

- **Assign a Training Coordinator to work with ASA**

It's best to assign a specific person who will place orders, receives results of courses, distributes certificates, and resolves any issues that arise.

If you use several on-line courses, ASA can provide company specific log-ins and a trainer's access to allow your company to monitor students' progress on-line and download course results into your own database.

- **Review the ASA catalog**

Start with the basic ASA recommendations in #1 above and refine them to fit your company and the different jobs and job levels in your company. The entire catalogue of ASA offerings, program descriptions, sample pages and on-line ordering are available at [www.asa.net](http://www.asa.net).

- **Order the materials from ASA**

Use downloadable order forms in the job description areas of the website. Or order directly online. Or request an order form by e-mail by contacting Iris Sterling at [isterling@asa.net](mailto:isterling@asa.net).

- **Establish timetables for completing the training program(s)**

The ASA Education Foundation has a list of estimated hours for completion that should be spread out over anywhere from a few weeks to several weeks. The timing strategy should be designed to keep the student on track without being burdensome. Learning a little bit over time provides much better retention than crash learning. This list of hours is available on request.

- **Provide incentives for students to complete the programs**

One of the most powerful incentives can be using completion of training as part of an employee development program. For example, make completion of the *Essentials of Inside Sales Inside Sales*® course a prerequisite for moving from a counter sales position to an inside sales position.

You may wish to tie in a modest hourly wage increase for a student who completes the first three modules of Product Pro® within the given time frame. Other incentives, such as a gift certificate or dinner at a local restaurant, might be an added incentive.

- **Celebrate learning by making completion of training a "big deal"**

Make a big deal at company meetings, in your newsletters, on bulletin boards, or other opportunities of the employees in your company who have completed their training programs.

Frame their certificates and hang them prominently for your customers and other employees to see. Ask these employees often about how the specific training they've received has helped them perform their jobs better, and about what they would like to learn about in the future.

**If you want to discuss additional ideas, thoughts and strategies for your training, please contact Paul Martin at [pfmartin@asa.net](mailto:pfmartin@asa.net)**

## ASA Education Foundation Courses

## CEU Recommendations

	<u>HOURS</u>	<u>CEUs</u>
<b>ESSENTIALS COURSES</b>		
<i>Essentials of Profitable Wholesale Distribution</i> ® (coursebook/online)	24 hrs / 1 hr exam	2
<i>Essentials of Profitable Inside Sales in Distribution</i> ® (coursebook/online)	29 hrs / 1 hr exam	3
<i>Essentials of Profitable Showroom Sales</i> ® (coursebook/online)	24 hrs / 1 hr exam	2
<i>Essentials of Profitable Warehouse Operations</i> ® (coursebook)	24 hrs / 1 hr exam	2
<b>PRODUCTPRO® COURSES</b>		
<i>Introduction to Pipe, Valves and Fittings</i> ® (coursebook/online/cd-rom)	9 hrs / 1 hr exam	1.5
<i>Introduction to Steel, Stainless Steel, Iron Pipe and Fittings</i> ® (coursebook/online/cd-rom)	14 hrs / 1 hr exam	1.5
<i>Introduction to Copper Tube, Plastic Pipe &amp; Fittings</i> ® (coursebook/online/cd-rom)	14 hrs / 1 hr exam	1.5
<i>Essentials Fixtures and Faucets</i> ® (coursebook/cd-rom)	24 hrs / 1 hr exam	2.5
<i>Domestic Water Heaters</i> ® (coursebook/online)	9 hrs / 1 hr exam	1
<i>Domestic Water Well Pumps</i> ® (coursebook/online)	9 hrs / 1 hr exam	1
<i>Sump, Sewage and Effluent Pumps</i> ® (coursebook/online)	9 hrs / 1 hr exam	1
<i>Residential Hydronic Heating Systems</i> ® (coursebook/online)	9 hrs / 1 hr exam	1
<i>Residential Water Processing</i> ® (coursebook/online)	9 hrs / 1 hr exam	1
<b>SALES and CUSTOMER SERVICE COURSES</b>		
<i>Customer Service: The Path to Higher Profits</i> ® (workbook/online)	6.5 hrs / .5 hr exam	.7
<i>Advanced Inside Sales</i> ® (cd-rom/online)	.5 hrs	.5
<b>OTHER</b>		
ASA Convention and Trade Show	20 hrs	2

*Submit Certificate of Completion or proof of attendance to Certification Authority with request for CEU*