



COURTESY CHARNEY & ASSOCIATES

Management consultant Cy Charney says that co-workers should train each other, rather than rely on specialists.

# Expert urges peer training

**CORPORATE TRAINING** Author and Toronto-based management consultant Cy Charney believes that the best companies offer employees skill improvement courses. And he insists that training is an invaluable investment that doesn't have to cost big bucks.

In his books, *The Instant Manager* and *The Instant Manager*, Charney offers up a new training concept.

"Allow people to train themselves," Charney suggests as a way to reduce costs and breakdown barriers among co-workers. While the method seems a little wacky, Charney swears by it.

"Companies need to provide a better learning environment," he says. "And people learn different-

ly. We have always relied on the help of outside experts when we have experts in our own offices," he says.

Charney's methods are based on the philosophy of peer mentoring, or the idea that if you "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you will feed him for a lifetime," he says.

## Powerful mentoring

He believes that peer mentoring is more powerful for improving critical skills, including resolving management conflict, strengthening team work and problem-solving skills than conventional corporate training.

Charney suggests businesses

identify skills used in the office that can be taught to others, including managers and co-workers. With groups of up to 10 people, including one employee designated to teach the team the skill, get ready to learn. In about a month, they meet again, to evaluate its effectiveness.

"We're not effective in how we manage our people," says the founder of Charney & Associates Inc. "This generation wants to learn.

"It's the mind-set that, 'If you keep me challenged, I'll stay,'" he explains. "The big thing is making learning a process as opposed to an event. I teach people how to teach."

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