

**Bob Pike**

Founder, chairman, and CEO of the Bob Pike Group  
Founder and CEO of Creative Training Techniques International, Inc.  
Tucson, Arizona

Pike, known as the “trainer’s trainer,” has been developing programs for government entities and businesses since 1969. Pike and his staff offer both public and in-house seminars and workshops, including a train-the-trainer boot camp and research-based creative teaching techniques course. He is also the author of *The Creative Training Techniques Handbook*, and co-author of several books, including *Dealing with Difficult Participants* and *One-on-One Training*.

**Q: How did you get interested in becoming a training consultant?**

A: For my first full-time job, I was a pastor at a church. I also did engineering drawings on the side, but I was \$350 a month in debt. I started working with a college friend who was selling sales training and management development programs. In my first six months, I made \$150. I realized that I was so afraid of rejection, that avoiding rejection became a bigger goal for me than making sales.

In 1967, I read Maxwell Maltz’s book *Psycho-Cybernetics*, which said that it takes 30 days to replace one attitude or habit of thinking with another. So for 30 days, I decided I would do everything I could to succeed, and at the end of 30 days, I could say ‘I’m just not cut out for this,’ and I could go do something else. So I used affirmations such as “I’ll do it now” and my favorite, “I’m a master salesman.”

In those 30 days, I made a little more than \$1,100 in commissions, which in 1970 was a lot of money. Within a year, I was generating as much as \$6,000 a month in commissions and within a two-year period of time, I had nine promotions. That was what gave me my start in the training and consulting industry, and that’s where I started designing training programs.

**Q: Do you have any interesting anecdotes from your boot camp or seminars?**

A: At the beginning of one of my train-the-trainer programs, I would have each person introduce themselves. One time, we got to this one guy who stuttered severely. It basically took him 90 seconds to say “I’m Elmer from St. Louis, Missouri.” I am wondering why he is in this program, but I have learned to trust the process.

At the end of the seminar, Elmer stood up, came to the front of the room, and took the microphone from me. He said, “My name is Elmer, and I’m from St. Louis, Missouri. You might have noticed on the first day that I stuttered. I came here this weekend to overcome my fear of people. I don’t stutter anymore, and that’s because I’m not afraid of people anymore. I’m never going to be afraid again.”

The group just erupted in a standing ovation. I realized this is why I do what I do.

It helps people go from where they are to where they want to be.

**Q: What do you find personally rewarding about public speaking?**

A: For me, it's the opportunity to do interactive public speaking. My presentations are different from someone who you might think of as a speaker. We tend to see a speaker as someone who stands up and wows the audience. The audience just sits there enraptured, but I like to get people thinking and then let them to talk to one another.

We trust people who are engaged with us, not the ones who see us as part of the 9-to-5 experience. I capitalize on that fact by giving 20 characteristics identified in people that can be trusted.

**Q: What do you see in the future of the training industry?**

A: I've seen training go through cycles. I was asked to be the keynote speaker at the ASTD's Southern Minnesota Chapter's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and I thought it would be interesting to talk about what things were like 25 years ago in the training business compared to what they are like today.

Twenty-five years ago, trainers were concerned about getting management buy-in, transferring learning, engaging people in the learning process, and measuring the effectiveness of training? And guess what our issues are today? The same issues.

**Q: How do you spend your free time?**

A: I'm an avid golfer. My goal is to play the top 100 courses inside and outside the United States. So far, I've played about 42 in the United States and 27 outside the country.

I'm also an avid reader. I read five to seven books a week. I also read between 30 and 40 magazine and trade publications a month. So when I say that I'm a lifelong learner and that I love learning, that's just true.