

Chapter 7

The "Ring Wise" Employee



Dogs learn in black and white. When performing an exercise, as far as a dog is concerned, there are only two ways to do it:

- The right way, and
- The wrong way

While there may be many ways to do an exercise *wrong*, there is only one way to do it *right*. If a dog is shown what it is supposed to do, and is not allowed to do it any other way, it will learn to do the task correctly. Obviously, this requires the trainer to be consistent in his or her training methodology. It's not fair to the dog to require it do an exercise one way today, and allow it to do it differently (or incorrectly) the next time. That just confuses the poor animal.

There is a lesson here for how we should train people to do their jobs. All too often, they are not properly prepared, and the results are predictable. If people don't know what to do, or how to do it, how can they be expected to do it correctly?

When people don't know how to properly complete a task, they can get pretty creative. Of course, sometimes the problem is that they *don't* want to do what they are supposed to do. When that's the case, we *really* learn how creative they can be in avoiding work.

Where people are concerned, there are times when creativity is a good thing. After all, if they never explored new ways to do things, they would never find better ways to do things.

Dogs can also get creative at times. However, there is a difference. In the obedience ring, what we require a dog to do is usually much more structured than what we normally ask a person to do. There isn't much reason for a dog to seek

out new or better ways to do a particular exercise. Generally speaking, dogs are not big when it comes to "process improvement".

However, trainers occasionally run into the "creative dog", and when they do, they have to learn to deal with such an animal. We have a term for these dogs; we say they are "ring wise". Let me explain where that term comes from.

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