

# Free essay on perceiving human resources beyond the aspect of instrumental traini...

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Introduction: Due to the swift changes those are evident in the economy due to rampant globalization; the concept of continual learning has become imperative. It is the interconnected nature of the economies which exhibits the elements of high speed information technology and communication that makes the practice of knowledge economy and knowledge workers inevitable to achieve a sustainable economic development accompanied with the relevant and appropriate social change (Mayson, 2006).

Many organizations in the contemporary world scenario realize the practical implications of effective and constant developmental training needs of their workforce. Such continual training sessions not only act instrumental in enhancing the employee's core competencies but also help them direct their competencies towards the achievement of organizational objectives. A competent workforce adds to the competitive advantage and flexibility of the organization.

According to Mayson (2006, pg. 82) " Organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Organization for Economic Cooperation And Development (OECD), identify the development and maintenance of the social capital through continuous life-long learning as the key to individual fulfillment and a robust and prosperous society".

In the face of such realization, most organizations strive to motivate the employees to achieve self-development through regular participation in continuous learning processes. To facilitate such incessant learning, these organizations plan numerous practical training and development sessions with an aim to attain self development. As per the version of Kozlowski and

Salas, (2010, pg. 232) “ Other researchers have argued that the modern work place requires adaptive expertise, that is, the ability to adapt to novel or changing job demands through a deeper conceptual understanding of the domain”. This statement reaffirms the need of the changing requirements of the human resource department of the organizations to be equipped in order to face the challenges posed by the contemporary work culture.

Consequently, the concept and application of adult learning is gaining importance to meet the requisites of the contemporary work culture.

According to Delahaye (2011, pg. 65) “ Historically, most organizations have viewed human resource development as merely instrumental learning - as procedural training and task-oriented problem solving. This view is based on the belief that learning in organizations is merely transmission of explicit knowledge from one person to another, the knowledge generation process of combination”. Therefore in addition to just adhering to the conventional trends of providing only process oriented training, there needs to be new innovations adapted in the field of training and educating the employees which promote knowledge retention and flexibility of the employees.

In the view of Murray and Jennex (2007, pg. 270) “ The human factor plays a decisive role in the conversion of information into knowledge. There are competencies, experiences, values and insights that make a rich person specific context”. Therefore, it is understood that involvement of employees in activities which aid the conversion of information to knowledge is essential. Such involvement encompasses acts of communication, construction and cognition. (Murray & Jennex, 2007).

The existing characteristics of the work culture today hence demand a whole

new perspective of looking at the Human Resource Management and its practices while addressing the training needs of the employees. Features such as knowledge work, life-long learning and communities of practice thus need to be incorporated in the framework of the human resource management of the modern day organizations which possess a multi dimensional work-force. The following paragraphs attempt to provide an insight into the three indispensable dimensions of modern day human resource management i. e. Knowledge management, Life-long learning and Communities of practice.

Knowledge work/management: The human capital that is knowledge based seems to be one of the most highly sought after intangible asset to devise an effective competitive strategy for the organizations in the era of globalization (Malloch, 2011). Thus, there is this growing relevance of the efforts directed towards the transformation of human competencies that previously went unnoticed, into manageable sources of the firm to enhance the competitiveness of the organizations in the present scenario of extreme internationalization.

Once the significance of knowledge work is implicit, what forms the next step is the approach to be adopted towards the management of such concept. With the advent of the concept of knowledge work, there arises a conflict between the traditional techniques of dealing and managing the human resources of an organization and the modern methods of addressing the issues related to the work force. Therefore, the traditional process, practice and methods as followed by the human resource management do not serve the needs of the human resources related to the concept of knowledge work.

The scope of knowledge work is far wider than the scope of the traditional human resource approach. Contrary to the traditional human resource management, the modern day knowledge work aspect of human resource management deals with determining the talent sourcing techniques to acquire the scarce knowledge workers, drafting the motivational programs for the knowledge workers, devising the reward strategies, develop assessment strategies to evaluate the performance of the knowledge workers, preparing appropriate competency systems that promote suitable opportunities for the career enhancement of the knowledge workers and finally and most importantly, drawing upon a suitable organizational structure to accommodate the knowledge workers (Srinivasa and Kandula, 2003).

Further, in the organizations following the concept of knowledge work find themselves different from the ones adopting the traditional work in the following aspects such as locus and focus of work, skill sets, performance measures, organizational structures, employee's impact on the success of the organization, control of work, managerial functions, authority/ power and control of work outcomes (Srinivasa and Kandula, 2003).

Life-long learning: According to Weert and Kendall (2004, pg. 1) " Life-long learning must be seen against the background of profound changes concerning a global environment such as personal, economic, social, cultural and political. It is a must in the real life context of the knowledge society and covers all purposeful learning from the cradle to grave of very diverse group of learners." Lifelong learning owing to its numerous beneficial features is encouraged by many organizations especially by the organizations that are

technology and communication based. It is such sought after attribute of the management systems in the organizations that it possesses the latent to revolutionize the methods and content of teaching by educational institutions. Such change is deemed necessary in the face of lifelong learning concept so as to mend the education preferences of the students to match the requirements of the modern organizations.

It is the fast growing relevance of competence among the workforce of an organization that is of ultimate significance in this period of internationalization. Such relevance can be regarded to be extremely appropriate and necessary to bridge the widening gaps between the nations due to varied cultures and easy accessibility of extremely diverse talent across the globe. The following viewpoint as presented by Malloch (2011, pg. 43) affirms the needs that are presented above “ The societal changes that fostered the concept of “ the learning society”, “ learning organization” and “ life-long learning” imply a new conception of the relation between learning and education or training with increased focus on informal learning possibilities outside the educational institutions in daily life and in working life especially”.

Further, work place provides very conducive environment that favors lifelong learning process with as broad scope as possible. For example, any new technology that is adopted at a work place, requires the employees who are immediately concerned with the use of such technology to be engrossed in the process of learning all that is possible and relevant about the new technology. Therefore the learning that takes place at work place can be in any form such as structured training, on job training, knowledge sharing

practices among the employees that discuss the most appropriate and effective ways of doing their jobs etc (Malloch, 2011).

There are concerns still existing that pertains to devising the most effective training techniques in an organization. The most immediate outcome that is desirable to the organizations from such training techniques is the fostering of the organizational learning concept. According to Malloch (2011, pg. 54) “Originating in organizational psychology and management the concept of organizational learning is highly relevant in to this discussion in that potentially it helps to build the conceptual bridges between learning in the work place and organizational performance”. Thus, to meet the requisites of the new knowledge based economy as opposed to the traditional economy, the organizations especially the work force in the organizations need to adapt the concept of lifelong learning. On the contrary the jobs and the job requirements were very stable and hence the concept of lifelong learning did not see the light of the day.

Communities of practice: The concept of communities of practice is very familiar in learning organizations. Learning organizations can be characterized with the features such as continuous learning, innovation, responsiveness, collaboration, commitment, shared values, extensive use of technology, open communication and shared vision etc. (Wilson, 2005). The underlying reason of the growing importance of “communities of practice” is the significance of integration of work as well as learning in the modern organizations. Communities of practice can be defined as participation in such unique group of activities, which are joined by the employees depending upon their areas of specialization on which the activities are

based. While participating in the activities, the employees share as much practical knowledge as possible which not only teaches them various approaches of handling some very difficult tasks but also teaches them through the fun way thus, not letting any work pressures build upon the employees.

The communities of practice can be familiarized with its characteristics such as real life problem solving, knowledge sharing, enriching the employees with organizational knowledge and objectives. Communities of practice offer various levels of activities, such as primary activities which suit the needs of newcomers and detailed oriented activities that entail the in depth understanding of the relevant domains and knowledge. The detailed oriented activities best suit the needs of seasoned group of employees in the organization. In fact, for the seasoned group of employees, such activities prove to be truly instrumental to solve complicated or unusual issues which have never before been faced or not discussed about in the organizational literature.

Conclusion: Therefore it can be rightly concluded that there is extreme relevance of concepts such as knowledge work, lifelong learning and communities of practice in today's work places. As can be seen in the discussion above, the need of emergence of such concepts can be attributed to the rapid developmental changes on the political, social and economic fronts in the world. With the advent of globalization, world is becoming a smaller place with each passing day. The gaps among nations and diverse work cultures are fast being bridged. There is vast as well as swift availability of multi faceted talent at very affordable prices. There is no dearth of



aptitude, but what needs to be present to utilize the full potential of the aptitude is the right approach towards the handling of such latent. The traditional ways of training and development no more serve the human resource purpose of the organizations. Hence, the application of latest technological methods is required to bring together the widely scattered talent throughout the world while also devising strategies that can compensate such talent adequately and also facilitate their personal development. It is the provision of this personal development of the work force that completes the full circle assists the development of a dependable human resource that can rigorously strive towards the achievement of organizational objectives.

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