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Introduction

The business environment has undergone major developments over the recent years and this has necessitated the need for companies to engage in different strategies. This is necessary to make them more competitive in their industries of operation. One of the strategies that have become common is training and development of staff members at the work place. This is because businesses with highly qualified staff members who have the necessary skills and knowledge have been known to perform better.

In addition, they produce quality goods and services for their customers who play a major role in determining the level of business activity that takes place in an organisation. In order for such knowledge and skills to be passed on to an organisation's staff members, different learning styles are used. These styles are included in the training and development programs adopted by such organisations. This paper looks into different learning theories and styles used by TESCO in its staff training and development program. In addition, it will look at the evaluation techniques used by the company to determine the level of skills and knowledge acquired by the staff members and the different initiatives the government has put in place to aid in the development of skills in the labour market. TESCO is a retail chain company dealing in grocery and general merchandise sales. It was founded in 1919 by Jack Cohen and has grown since then both in size and in geographical expansion.

Apart from groceries and other consumer products, the company has businesses stakes in the telecoms, banking, technical support and fuel

sectors. The company faces major competition from other members in the retail chain sector such as Wal Mart, Safeway, Costco and Trader Joe's. In order to remain competitive in this sector, TESCO has adopted a training and development program for the company's employees in order to help them realise their potential and as such increase the performance of the company. Other than training and development programs, the company also engages in monetary rewarding for the employees such as benefit packages, paid leave and flexible working hours, defined pension schemes and profit share schemes (TESCO, 2005, Para. 2-5). The introduction of this comprehensive training program at TESCO has helped the employees to learn new concepts and thus use them in their work places. In training their staff members, TESCO has adopted individual training which allows a large number of their employees to acquire the necessary knowledge within a short time. Such knowledge is then used to improve the quality of work done in the organisation and as such produce quality results.

This has made TESCO more competitive compared to its rivals in the market.

1. Learning Theories and Learning Styles

1. 1. Differentiate between different learning styles

Learning styles refers to approaches used in the learning process. The learning styles are mainly based on individual perceptions towards the information given in the learning process and how they process this information in their minds.

From this, different learners can be developed. They can be either abstract and concrete perceivers or reflective and active processors. In addition,

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there are various learning styles that are available to organisations. Visual learning style prefers the use of pictures, images and colours to ensure that information is well organised and communicated to others.

Through this, learners will be able to have a good sense of direction with a well laid down outcome. Aural learning style on the other hand uses sound and music to ensure that the learning outcomes are well achieved. In this case, some certain music will be able to invoke strong emotions and feelings. It can be further enhanced by good sound recordings that will guarantee visualisations. The verbal learning style uses both the spoken and written word. This is enhanced through reading and writing. The use of rhyme and rhythm will ensure that assertions are effective.

Physical or bodily-kinesthetic is a learning style that uses sense of touch and the body to learn. In the process, learners are more sensitive to the physical world around them. Movements and hands-on work can also be used to enhance learning activities. The logical or mathematical learning style uses the brain for mathematical or logical reasoning. This enables the learners to recognise patterns more easily.

In the process, they are able to group and classify information that will help them to learn and understand. In this style there is need to understand the reasons behind the skills and their content (LeFever, 2004, p. 20).

1.

2. Learning Theories and their Contribution to the Planning and Design of Learning Events

Various theories have been developed regarding the learning process. The focus here will be on the constructivist, experiential and social or situational theories due to their applicability to TESCO. The constructivist is of the view that adults have the ability of learning by constructing their own knowledge. This is applicable to TESCO as some of its employees learn from the experience gained through working in the company. This means that they are able to deal with different work situations depending on the experience they have. This is especially so for those who have worked in the company for long periods of time.

The experiential theory caters for the needs of different people and as such provides training for those specific needs. TESCO provides for this kind of learning; for example where employees are trained to be team building managers, planning, communications and organisational managers through their off job training programs. The social or situational learning theory advocates for learning through observing others and how they deal with different situations. In TESCO this is undertaken through on the job training, for example through shadowing and mentoring.

1. 3.

Implications of the Learning Curve and the Importance of Ensuring the Transfer of Learning to the Workplace

The learning curve represents the knowledge and skills acquired in a specific time while performing a particular task. The graph shows that the time taken to complete a specific task reduces when the task is repeated time and

again. At the workplace, the learning curve can be used to gauge or determine the time employees take to perform particular tasks and as such determine their productivity. This is important as it can help organisations forecast their productivity.

In a company like TESCO which is more service oriented, it can be used to determine how long it takes employees to perform particular duties and as such determine their productivity and the need for training. The transfer of learning in the work place is important as it enables more people to acquire different knowledge and skills that they would otherwise have had no time to acquire, especially when offered outside the workplace due to time constraints. TESCO offers on the job training for its employees and thus ensures that they gain new skills and improve their productivity.

2. Planning and Design of Training and Development

2. 1. Training's Contribution to the Achievement of Business Objectives and the Role of Training and Development Policy

In order for an organisation to carry out its training and development program successfully, comprehensive planning is necessary.

This ensures that the training and development process runs smoothly and challenges can be easily recognised and changes made immediately.

Training and development of employees contributes to the attainment of different business objectives as it enables employees to learn what is important to the organisation and focus on it. Training also gives employees of an organisation a solid basis upon which to gauge their work in line with the objectives and goals of the company.

This ensures that employees address the actual goals set out by the organisation and also increases their competence. Training and development policies in an organisation are thus meant to enable the organisation improve its productivity, efficiency and effectiveness in its daily operations as it better utilises the potential and abilities of its employees in terms of their knowledge and skills.

2. 2. Training and Development Stages

Training and development helps to improve the employees' skills, knowledge and attitude. This is well done with a good and proper planning, implementation and evaluation process. In order to carry out successful training and development, an organisation should carry out an assessment on its employees to determine the kind of training required.

The kind of training should be able to suit the needs at that particular period. It is important to have an assessment because every organisation has different departments that demand distinct skills. A proper assessment will enable the management to know which areas to lay more emphasis on. After this has been done, it will be good to create a training program with reference to the needs of the employees.

It is assumed that every employee in an organisation has specific needs as far as their skills are concerned. In this stage it will be efficient and advisable if the training program is created according to the needs of the employees at a given time. The next stage is to take into consideration the different personalities of the employees as well as the learning styles that best suit them. The training that is undertaken is supposed to be appreciated by

employees. This will only be achievable if it is done in relation to their personalities and the styles that they will be comfortable to use.

After this has been done it will be necessary to plan the training and evaluation process. A proper plan will give a roadmap on how the training will be carried out. This will ensure that there is consistency and time bound training and development.

Finally the management is supposed to come up with the techniques and methods that will best deliver their training and achieve the required objectives.

2. 3. Factors to Consider when Planning a Training and Development Event

In order to accomplish the goals of training in an organization it is important to take several factors into consideration. This is because they play an important role in ensuring that a training and development program is effective and efficient. These include the number of people that are expected to go through the program and the time the program or event is expected to run. The number of people to be trained is important as it will determine the style that will be used to ensure that all the employees are covered.

This will also help to tell the impact that the program will have on the organisation and specific departments. Time is important as it will have an impact on the delivery of the process. It is important to know the time that the process will take so that the organisation can create enough time that will be enough to for the employees to participate in. The cost of the program should be taken into consideration by the organization so as to ensure that it fits within the company's budget. Some of these training

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programs can be very costly and the organisation should have enough funds to ensure that they engage in an effective process that will achieve its aim. The people undertaking the training and the issues they will be dealing with are also considered since not everything can be covered within the available time. Issues to be tackled should be well analysed to ensure that they are pressing and worth the training and development program. The relevance of the training to the performance of the organization should also be taken into account.

This is because it will ultimately add some value to the organisation.

2. 4. TESCO's Approach to Training

TESCO invests greatly into the training and development of their employees. It has adopted a very flexible training program which focuses on individual employees and their individual needs. Individuals are identified and allowed to participate in this program depending on their potential and in the process their leadership and other skills are improved. The program also allows on the job and off the job training.

On the job training uses training methods such as mentoring, shadowing, job rotation and coaching, whereas off the job training offers specific training on specific skills such as communications, planning, organization and team building. They are then allowed to practice the acquired skills practically in the company (The Times 100-A, 2010, para. 3-6). In terms of development, TESCO offers a long term development strategy for its employees through workshops, learning logs, review platforms and helps employees to continuously carry out evaluations on themselves.

3.

Role and Purpose of Evaluation and Evaluation Techniques

3. 1. Importance of the Evaluation Process and its Contribution to the Marketing of Training and Development in an organisation

After carrying out staff training, it is important to carry out evaluations in order to determine the effectiveness of the training and whether it has been beneficial to the employees and in effect the organisation as a whole. The main purpose of the evaluations is to determine the levels of skills and knowledge that the employees have acquired from the training and whether they are applying them in carrying out their duties and if so, if their productivity has improved. Once the evaluation has been carried out, the results can be used to show the importance of training and development to the organisation and as such increase its popularity and the commitment of the organisation towards investing in further training and development programs for its workforce. It is normally expected that once staff members have undergone training, the result will be witnessed in their productivity and quality service delivery and impact on the general performance of the organisation.

3. 2.

Evaluation during Different Stages of the Training Cycle

It is necessary to carry out evaluations during and after training programs for employees as this enables the organisation to keep track of the training and development progress. During the training, employee trainees may be asked to fill in learning questionnaires which will help trainers to determine the level of skills and knowledge acquired at different levels of training.

Employees may also be asked to submit their own self assessment plans and <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-development-program-in-addition-it-will-look/>

these may be used by trainees to determine whether the employees are finding the training beneficial. Upon completion of the training and development program, employees may be required to engage in debriefing meetings with line managers and trainers from which the impact of the training can be assessed.

In the long run, an assessment can be carried out on the employees to determine whether they are applying the skills and knowledge acquired during their training on their day to day work activities.

3. 3. Roles Played by Key Stakeholders in the Evaluation Process

The major stakeholders in the evaluation process include the managers of the organisation, those offering the training, the organisations customers as well as the employees themselves. The trainees are required to participate in the training program and evaluation process and generally support the evaluation process. Trainer's importance stem from the fact that they are the ones who offer the training, assess the trainees and work in liaison with the management to ensure the training program runs as expected and also give feedback to the management on the process that will be used to develop the necessary reports. The managers of the organisation aid in developing and implementing of the evaluation process as well as allocating necessary resources to the process.

Managers are supposed to ensure that the trainers are accorded enough funds for them to be able to avail all the resources that they need. Because they run the organisation, their support will ensure that the process is participatory and involving which will bind all employees together. For the

process to be effective it needs proper implementation which will be enhanced by managers as they will oversee it. Employees are supposed to be involved in the evaluation process for it to be successful.

In this case, they need to provide the necessary skills that will enhance its implementation. On the other hand, they are also supposed to be cooperative as this will make the evaluation process to be done faster. The organisations customers also play an important role as they are supposed to be cooperative on whatever is being done to help in evaluation as the outcomes will likely benefit them more.

3.

4. Pros and Cons of Different Evaluation Techniques

A comparison will be made between system based and goal based evaluation. The goal based model as developed by Kirkpatrick rests on four levels of evaluation, namely learning, results, reaction and behaviour (Guera-Lopez, 2008, p. 47-48), while the system based model's evaluation (in this case the CIPP model developed by Stufflebeam) is conducted on the basis of process, context, product and input (Guera-Lopez, 2008, p.

107). The concept of Kirkpatrick's method of evaluation is easy to grasp, gives four different levels on which the success of training can be gauged, it is reliable and thus recommended for use and gives those carrying out evaluations a framework that can be easily used to measure the level and effectiveness of training. Its disadvantages include: The fact that it is simple makes it prone to overgeneralisations, the levels are not correlated to each other and as such cannot be used as hierarchies and in most cases

evaluation usually stops at the first or second level.

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The CIPP model is decision oriented, practical, comprehensive and practical but is disadvantageous in that it is too structured, complex and costly to the organisation.

3. 5. Contribution of Evaluation Models and the Difficulties Faced in Practice

It is important to note that the evaluation process especially in training and development is a complex process and as such it is necessary to use evaluation techniques that will capture the essence and purpose of the training. Evaluation models enable organisations to determine the effectiveness of their training programs and as such should be carried out whenever possible. In practice however, the implementation of these evaluation techniques may prove difficult because they require a lot of time and resources, which may not be available to the organisation at all times. These evaluations can also not be conducted regularly.

TESCO conducts structured monitoring and evaluation processes to those employees that have undergone training through instruments such as timetables, scheduled tasks that are required to be performed by the employee trainees as well as check lists for the trainees. Employees are also required to carry out regular assessments on themselves through recording of their progress in learning logs and coming up with personal development plans. This ensures that their post training progress is monitored (The Times 100-B, 2010, para. 2).

4. Government-led Initiatives Aimed at Developing Skills in the Labour Market

4. 1. The context influencing the role of government in training and development and the growing emphasis on lifelong learning and continuous development

Any country's government should take an active role in developing the skills of people in the labour market, and many do so through offering proper education systems.

The government's role is pivotal and as such should be taken seriously by government policy developers and implementers. The Government's main role is coming up with viable education policies that will ensure that once a person goes through the education system, he/she is ready to work in the labour market because the necessary skills and knowledge has already been acquired. The government is also charged with the duty of providing the necessary resources required in education and training institutions so as to provide both theoretical and practical skills to the country's citizens to ensure that they become marketable in the labour market.

4. 2. The Development of NVQs, MCI and the Competency Movement

According to Powell, the competence movement came to be in the United Kingdom as a result of the belief that the competencies essential for the performance of certain roles should guide peoples' occupational roles.

As such the body charged with the development of a competent labour force in the United Kingdom, that is the Manpower Services Commission and Training Agency under the government, has sought to take the country's

labour force through a competent guided training (2001, p. 20). This system is aimed at improving the flexibility of UKs workforce in the labour market.

To do this, different occupational standards have been developed. This includes the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and the Management Charter Initiative (MCI) for managers which were developed. These two standards form the basis upon which managers competencies are gauged through assessment processes which can be either appraisals, appointments and other training programs.

4. 3. Contemporary Training Initiatives Introduced by the UK Government

Contemporary training programs have been undertaken to ensure that human resource is well endowed with the necessary skills. These have been introduced every now and then to ensure that there is competency and efficiency in the country (when it comes to human resource issues). The United Kingdom government has established several training initiatives under the Learning Skills Council such as the Train to Gain among other apprenticeship programs. The main aim has been to ensure that there is proper planning and funding of further education in all aspects. To ensure that all the areas of the country are covered the government has made it possible for the council to cover different regions for a wider reach. There have been focused skills training programs that have also been funded by the government through the Learning skills council.

In extreme cases, the government has been involved in partnerships to enhance trainings. An example is the partnership with local authorities to conduct trainings on their employees. Beyond 2010 the government has a

new initiative to involve small and medium sized businesses so that they can also be able to enhance training programs that will improve efficiency and productivity in their operations. Even though the programs have proved to be successful since their establishment, they have also faced their share of problems. An example of this is the funding problems that were brought about by the global economic crisis between 2008 and 2009 (Woods, 2009, para. 1-6). These needs to be attended to so that the laid programs can be enhanced as they ultimately have an impact on the employees.

Employees need to gain new skills for efficiency and improved productivity and this can only be attained through good training initiatives.

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