

# Devising a training program for an organisation



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Organizations are not exempt from changes that society continually faces, therefore training is a fundamental part of organisational life. Many situations require unique solutions based on the unique needs of the organization. Thus this makes training a universal need but one that differs across individuals. Training is the acquisition of knowledge and skills in order for a person to carry out a specific task or job. Training benefits employees in several ways: It increases their sense of ownership in the business. They become more organised, productive and flexible and are better able to meet the needs of internal and external customer's new skills and abilities in areas such as decision-making can empower staff, which makes them more effective.

As a training manager, I know that the first step in conducting a training programme is to conduct a training needs analysis. This involves four stages, Planning, job analysis, training gap analysis and training options analysis. In which I ask myself why is this training needed? What is the perceived problem? What are the aims and objectives? (Grey 1994) It is where I outline how the organizational objectives can be realised through the training programme. To do this I should conduct a gap analysis in which I identify the gap between the existing and needed skills of the employees, and in turn I can specify when, what, who, where and how to conduct the training.

I can classify the exact areas where training is needed, that the training is closely aligned by the goals of the organization, that its causing the least possible disruptions to normal work routine, that's its cost effective and that I constantly keep in mind the preferred learning styles and opportunities to

the individual and the organisation. This needs analysis proceeds in 3 stages, with the outcomes of the one stage influencing and helping to shape the next: (!) Organisation analysis (2) job analysis (3) person analysis.

In the organisational analysis, I link the training initiatives with the organisation's strategic plans. This is a very important step because before training solutions are sought one must ensure that funds are allocated properly, because this can cause costly mistakes to the organisation. In job analysis I identify the tasks, skills and attitudes that one needs to compete the job. This can be achieved through an HTA (Hierarchical task analysis) which was developed by Annett and Duncan 1967, in which tasks are broken down in a deductive manner, hence showing a hierarchical connection between the tasks, and afterwards instruction is sequenced bottom up. However one must keep in mind that the HTA does not necessarily capture the psychological processes that one goes through when doing the task. In the last stage of person analysis, I ask myself question like who needs the training? What skills need to be taught?

Once I have gathered all the information from the training needs analysis, I can move on to the actual content of the programme in the training design, which is the second stage in the training cycle. The training design helps me determine the criterion behaviour, so I determine the contents, design of the training, and what the person should be able to do after the training. Throughout this stage one must keep in mind how people learn. This is because people learn in different ways, and so one must pay close to attention to teach the trainees in the most effective manner suitable to them.

As example depending on the organization and the type of tasks that I'm trying to teach the employees I may choose Fitt's Skills Development theory (1962) which states that skill development progresses through three distinctive phases, Bandura's Social Learning theory (1977) who says that learning is seen to result from strengthening stimulus - response links through reinforcing appropriate behaviour or Anderson's ACT theory (1983, 1987), who's theory is aimed at developing expertise.

Regardless of what method of instruction I choose, I should keep in mind Goldstein's and Ford's 2002 techniques for choosing good trainers. They argue that good trainers are those ' who encourage trainees to use their talents to achieve, set difficult but attainable goals, give exams that show both strengths and weaknesses, show enthusiasm for the subject, allows trainees to express problems related to the course content covered and to share any relevant knowledge and experiences and trainers who stimulate interest in the subject'.

I also should pay attention at how easily the trainees can put what they have learned in the training programme (the skills, attitudes and knowledge) into practise in the work place.

And this all depends on the trainee characteristics, meaning the ' trainee's personality, self efficacy, cognitive ability, age' (Colquitt at al, 2000). With this information I can evaluate who is to be trained and how train them since for example older employees tend to take longer to learn or unlearn. One must also pay close attention to the work environment, including the organisational climate and the social support system (Tracey et al, 1995).

The training evaluation is the final stage of the training cycle. Here I ask myself if the trainees reached their objective, and if the training programme has been a valid one. Throughout this stage I assess the performance of the workers before and after the training programme & this is done by measuring performance, to establish if any changes took place if these changes are as a result of the training. Kirkpatrick explains that there are four stages for evaluation of training programme. (1) Reaction, in which the trainers get to know the trainees opinion about the training programme, which can be both positive and negative. (2) Learning, which actually looks for confirmation that learning took place. (3) Behaviour is the stage in which one sees the trainee performing what has been learnt (4) In the last stage one sees how the training effected behaviour, performance and the organisation.

One should also take note that depending on the organisation one may choose to conduct these stages in either an ' on the job' or ' off the job' training programmes. As an example ' Tesco' which is the largest British retailer and is also the world's third largest grocery retailer with outlets across Europe, USA and Asia, offers employees both on-the-job training and off-the-job training. On-the-job training methods at Tesco include: shadowing - a person already in the job shows the employee how to do it, coaching - a manager or designated colleague will help trainees work through problems and inspire them to find solutions, mentoring - a more experienced member of staff acts as an adviser job rotation or secondment - the trainee has the opportunity of covering their target role, taking full responsibility on a temporary or limited basis.

Off-the-job training is often more appropriate for training in specific new skills or for developing the individual, in areas such as team-building, communications (for example, making presentations), or organisation and planning. It usually involves attending external courses run by professional training organisations or qualified Tesco training staff (www. thetimes100. co. uk )

A well constructed training programme, is beneficial on both and organizational level and an individual level. This is because on an individual level, one gains greater intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, and the employee can enhance their portfolio for better employability. On an organisation level it can lead to enhanced work performance and productivity, less absenteeism & accidents, decrease in wastage, greater customer satisfaction and lower labour turnover. (Arnold et al, 2007)

In conclusion one must keep in mind all the points and stages that I have mentioned, because unless the training is planned and systematic, it's simply a waste of time and money. Organisations that fail to do so, end up making costly mistakes and as a result end up using ineffective training methods, wrong amounts of training (too little or too much) or they fail to follow up on the training used. (Arnold et al, 2007)

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