

Assignment



Purpose Statement and Research Questions The following paper is based on the following Problem Statement and covers the Purpose Statement for this study and a set of Research Questions:

It has been argued that between 15% and 20% of individuals who participate in a workplace learning event (training) ever use the new knowledge or capability on the job. There are many who have developed tools and techniques to improve the return on investment with some impressive results. What is unclear from the research to date is the exact set of criteria/conditions that result in the maximization of training's return on investment.

Purpose Statement

In 1995 an Industry Study Group found that 43% of businesses measured business results that had arisen from implementing training methods and up to 60% of the same companies reported measuring changes in workplace behavior relevant to training. Even though that is an increase on previous studies that have shown the percentage of businesses who measure results that are directly attributed to training efforts as a lot lower, the fact still remains that showing a direct causality between training and training programs is still a problem. Two problems that will be the focus of this study will be (1) finding variables that are directly impacted by training methods and (2) accounting for other influences of change that also might be causal reasons for the changes in the variables identified.

While companies often measure their business success through sales figures, customer complaint numbers, accident figures, staff absences and similar statistics these same figures only offer a statistical reference if applied to staff training and its effectiveness. However anecdotal evidence is harder to

ascribe measures to. Questionnaires have been used with some effectiveness to determine employee opinions on training programs, and how the same employees feel their skill set has improved because of the training (Olian et al, 1998). But the problem with using similar methods to accurately gauge the return on investment for the training in the workplace is that the data is often self-reported which comes with its own set of limitations.

Another issue is that to get an accurate measure of improvements relating directly to training, a methodology would have to include a way of collecting data on a range of variables that included post-training behaviors as well as behaviors during and after the training had been finished. Also to ensure that some other causal element (such as a change in staff moral due to the implementation of training program) has not influenced the data collected (Olian et al, 1998).

The purpose of this study will be to collect data and analyze the methods used in previous studies on the effectiveness of training in the workplace. The studies will be found by searching for specific keyword phrases in online journal databases (such as ProQuest for example) and then filtering these studies using specific criteria such as publication date and the type of workplace and employee the study is related to. The focus in this study will be on managerial training and studies published since 1990 will be used. The data collection will concentrate on the models/methodology used in the studies with a view to determining the variables used in each study. It is anticipated that when compared with the author's conclusions and results section that a pattern will emerge that could result in some significance between the variables used and an increase in some measure that is used to

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determine the effectiveness of each employee.

This study is important because up until now there has not been a classic set of variables that show a direct causal link between training and improved workplace performance. Should such a measure be possible, then the resulting training methodology could be used in future research to better enable businesses to monitor the return on investment gained from implementing workplace training programs.

Research Questions

The research questions considered in this study will be:

1. Is there a causal relationship between workplace training and improved performance?
2. What are the variables that can be used to find the relationship between workplace training and improved performance?
3. Are there other factors that could influence improved performance for employees who have not undergone the training - i. e. attitude improvements due to the implementation of the training program that improves productivity (the implied training question)?

References

- Industry Report. (1995). Training, October, 37-74.
- Olian, J. D., Durham, C. C., Kristoff, A. L., Brown, K. G., Pierce, R. M. & Kunder, L. (1998). Designing Management Training and Development for Competitive Advantage: Lessons from the best. Human Resource Planning, 21(1), 20+.