

# Identifying training resources



UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA MASTER'S IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MGT

745: HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT TOPIC: IDENTIFYING TRAINING

RESOURCES Introduction This paper purports to outline steps needed to identify resources for training. It will illustrate the advantages and disadvantages of using different types of training drawing examples from the authors' workplace experience. Resource could be defined as follows, " a source of supply, support, or aid, esp. one that can be readily drawn upon when needed. "...The total means available to a company for increasing production or profit, including plant, labor, and raw material; assets. "

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/resources> Resources can be defined as assets available and anticipated for operations. These include people (learners, facilitators/trainers/consultants), time, infrastructure, equipment, availability of training institutions, and availability of financial resources (money/funds). The kind of resources required depend on the type of training that is to be carried out.

Hence the identification of training resources is a critical component of training/ learning effectiveness that can be manifested at the individual, team, and organisation level. It is therefore important to identify training resources as this allows training to make a difference that is noticeable; training with a practical value or utility to both employees and the organization. One key factor in employee motivation and retention is the opportunity to continue to grow and develop job and career enhancing skills. Employees need to be equipped to handle employee relations and responsibilities competently.

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Training in any organization needs resources to be executed or implemented effectively hence the need to draw up a budget that can be utilized. The major resource for training is financial, therefore the need for the department to have cost estimates for most of the training being investigated. For example at the Botswana Police Forensic Science Laboratory, every financial year when budget estimates are drawn for the lab, training is included in the budget. Courses that need immediate attention (as per the need of the lab or gap that exist) are listed together alongside estimated costs and length of the training.

Institutions that offer the training, course content, length of training and costs are identified beforehand. This budget is then submitted to the training board of the Botswana Police Service for screening and approval. In the Department of Vocational Education and Training (DVET), short term training budget is decentralized to regional offices and the budget tends to be similar or vary slightly from the previous year whereas long term training budget is coordinated at head quarters. The implication is that short term training budget may not necessarily reconcile with any required training.

The organization should also take cognizance of the fact that people learn in different ways, therefore the training has to match employee learning preferences which may help to speed up their training and reduce costs at the same time. Some considerations when identifying resources for training are:

- What areas need training to be conducted? i. e. identifying problem areas.
- Who needs training and in what area?
- How complex is the training that is needed?
- How much time do learners have to learn the new knowledge and skills?

How much money is available to pay for the training,

whether in-house or using a consultant? • How capable are learners to undertake the training? • What are learner's learning preferences and styles? For example, in DVET training for the junior officers (industrial class) is normally done in Setswana. • What institutions are available for tailored or the required training? • Could training be conducted in house, on the job, outsourcing or in external institutions? And which method could suite learners? And benefit the organisation in a valuable and practical manner.

**Types of Training Resources Internal Training** The types of training, classified as internal, external or a hybrid of the two have a bearing on the types of resources needed to implement. Internal training can be mentoring, coaching, seminars, workshops or classroom based training e. g. at the department of Government Printing, there is internal classroom based training whereby employees are taught within the department. The training is based on the theory and technical knowledge that the staff needs in order to improve their performance and prepare them for further training.

This type of training requires a trainer, classroom, equipment such as projectors, television and video technologies. After completion of this internal training, qualifying employees are then sent for further training abroad for a higher learning programme. In the case of Printing, where there are no local institutions that offer training within the country, the department relies on colleges/universities based in the United Kingdom. The Department of Land Board Services in the Ministry of Lands and Housing mostly provide classroom based training, for example, on introduction to computers.

This training is conducted mainly for the industrial class workforce to equip them with basic skills for working and operating computers. The resources used for this type of training include computers, Information Technology officers who conduct the training and the members of staff. At DVET regional offices most short term training programs are externally sourced where it is assumed that specialized courses for specific needs and in addition staff are given liberty to select training courses and institutions but subject to approval by supervisors and funds permitting.

Other general training courses such as customer services improvement courses are selected by human resources officers as part of staff development. However, public sector reforms are cascaded internally from senior management to junior officers in consultation/ facilitation with performance improvement coordinators and funds have to be availed as a matter of priority, at times combining facilitators, equipment and funds across departments within the same ministry. It is essential to note that internal training is not as costly as external training which is one of its major advantages, as it is cost effective.

Many businesses choose to train employees in-house (type of internal training) can offer a number of advantages over external training providers. Internal training can be:

- tailored to specific business' needs
- scheduled for a time that suits business
- time effective - employees do not spend additional time or money traveling

However, there are a number of disadvantages to note including some of the following:

- The possible tendency for employees not to take the training seriously especially if it is conducted by a core employee with low reputation within the organisation or

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has less to offer to other employees. Difficulties faced by the organisation to identify a suitable trainer or the necessary resources in-house / internally. • The potential risk of passing or perpetuating existing inefficiencies or poor business practices For internal training to be effective, HR managers need to ensure they have the appropriate expertise and resources in-house. They will have to dedicate the necessary resources to training programmes. These resources could include management time, an experienced trainer, training or course materials, equipment such as PCs, telephones or machinery and space in which to carry out the training.

To help expose and enhance the skills of internal trainer with less information to offer to learners, consideration should be given to send them on a train-the-trainer course to ensure their training methods and materials are up to date and effective. Alternatively, if there are no necessary skills in-house, HR managers could purchase off-the-shelf or tailor-made courses or choose whether to use an internal or external trainer to run the course. This should be supplemented by appropriate e-learning courses and investing in internal training support databses.

There are tailor-made courses covering a wide range of topics, one should choose a course that meets organizational and employees needs. They can be targeted, confidential and cost a fraction of the price of sending each employee on an external scheme. ON- The- Job Training (OJT) Under internal training there is also On-the-job training (OJT): Having a person learns a job by actually doing the job. OJT methods Coaching/ understudy For example at the BPS Forensic lab, when new employees start work (newly employed),

they first undergo intensive in-house training before they can be released to work independently.

At first they circulate in all the sections of the lab to get an overview of what each section does, then after which they are sent to the relevant sections they were employed to join. This is where they are taken through intensive coaching on the tests that are carried out at that particular section. Trainees are taught the theory behind the tests done, shown how to do the actual tests, then do the tests themselves under the supervision of the facilitator (usually an experienced member of the section). At the end a supervisor assesses them both theoretically and practically.

When they satisfy the required standard of performance, they are then allowed to work independently. At DVET coaching of new staff does not follow any uniform structure. The new staff members will be coached on the requirements of the job and will then conditions will require older staff in the field to assign tasks coach and supervise the new staff work. At DVET our coaching has advantage of making new staff get to know how to do work quickly, but has disadvantage of not being documented hence may not necessarily consistently follow any set guidelines.

Job rotation Job rotation consists of moving a trainee from department to department to broaden his or her experience and identify strong and weak points, the method is inexpensive and provides an organisation with immediate feed back. In the Department of Culture and Youth, Performing arts Unit job rotation is widely used mainly because of lack of staff. An Arts Festival organizer and manager could be assigned perform information and

systems analysis activities/ funds allocation / research and documentation activities.

This has worked for the department through the years as the organisation is sure of continuity of its programmes despite the loss of any officer in certain specialty areas. One officer who was originally a Performing Arts research and documentation officer ended up being a systems analysis officer. The officer realized that he did not really enjoy his line of specialty hence could easily shift from one specialty to the next for the benefit of the organisation.

Seminars and Workshops At the BPS Forensic Lab, some seminars/workshops are conducted for all the employees on certain subjects, e. g.

OccupationHealthand Safety workshops. Employees gather at a venue and a consultant/facilitator is sourced to deliver on the subject. However, for other workshops one or two employees are chosen to attend on behalf of the lab (especially for those that involve a wide range of participants from different labs/departments and charge expensive attendance fees). After the seminar/workshops the rep(s) share what they have learnt with other employees of the Forensic lab through presentations. They also produce a report which is sent to the Police HR department and a copy left with the Director, Forensic Science Services.

At DVET seminar and workshops are the major methods used to enhance skills of staff for short term training. External Training External training has to do more with taking employees to an institution or a place outside the parameters of the workingenvironment. Unlike internal training, this requires more and extensive preparation. It is also capital intensive as more money is



needed to pay for accommodation, food, learning materials and other costs associated with training. The HR unit has to first identify appropriate institutions where they can send their employees and this takes time as one has to research on the place before making any decisions. After completing the research a database of these learning places is created so as to have readily available information on where to get what kind of training and at what cost. In identifying these training institutions, the HR unit can send out tenders/quotations to companies. In other cases, institutions themselves send out brochures or call the organizations and advertise themselves. For example, BNPC and BOBS email their training programmes for the year to our department on matters relating to productivity and quality management.

They also advertise on the newspapers. At DVET regional offices every year a compiled list of staff needs are sent to HR officers at head office who in turn prioritize and select officers from training. However, due concerns on transparency of the whole exercise a training committee is about to start working on staff training, though its guidelines are yet to be finalized.

Attachment An example of external training which may not be as costly is sending employees for attachments to other organizations that offer similar services or have advanced technology that you need to learn about.

As some people learn better in a practical environment, so sending them for an attachment to an organization that offers the same or similar services will be vital. This kind of training is very cost effective because sometimes if it is done locally, not much money is spent. Example: The department of GPPS wanted to buy new equipment, an image-setter which we found was available at a local private printing house. One officer from the unit that uses

the equipment was sent to that company for three months to learn how to operate the equipment. There was no money required as the company offered to help.

The training was effective as the employees now assists in operating the equipment and was also able to teach colleagues in the same unit. Example of External training at the BPS Forensic Lab It comes in the following forms a) Attachment of Scientists to labs outside Botswana who have advanced technologies and expertise that ours. The scientists are sent there to learn how to do certain tests or how to operate certain machinery. When they come back, they teach other members of the section, make presentations to the whole lab, and produce a report. b) Short courses (e. g. o obtain certificates on certain operations), Masters's Degrees in Forensic Science as well as PHD's in Forensic Science. These courses are offered outside Botswana (no local institution offers courses on Forensics at present), and in many instances people are sent to the UK or the USA. The skills that they acquire in their training are also shared by teaching others what they learnt and also come up with better ways of doing things. They also submit reports and make presentations. Apprenticeship training It is a structured process by which people become skilled workers through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

At the University of Botswana this is done mainly by the engineering department. Students spend time in the classroom learning there after take a semester or 2 working on attachment with DeBeers or any engineering company. This method is advantageous because it links work experience with the learning experience hence preparing a learner to be ready for the

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workplace. Furthermore, to cut cost in external resource training an HR Manager should plan ahead to cut costs. That way the manager could be able to send or book a course for a larger group of people to get discounts.

Or could send one person on a training course and ask them to teach others in the business. Or take up free offers and cheap training from providers of new machinery and systems. How to identify External Resources Important

Steps for identifying external resources drawn from the authors' various workplaces, 1) List all institutes that offer training and information about them that is location, contacts, type of workshops, Etc. There are many institutes offering training courses, workshops and programs. With the advent of the Internet, many sites also offer free or chargeable online training. ) List key training areas offered by each institute 3) Relate each training area to employees' needs, competencies and capabilities identified earlier. 4) List web sites that offer free or chargeable online training and maintain up to date information. 5) Correspond with institutes to keep the Department up to date. The advantages of using training providers are: •

they are specialists • they can bring you up to date on current best practice and new ideas • employees may interact with counterparts in other companies • employees may learn better away from their usual work environment The disadvantages: it is difficult to know the ability and subject knowledge of the trainer • putting an entire team through training at the same time can disrupt your business • they are more costly than delivering internally • the training may not be specific to your particular business • Not up to date lists of institutions will lead to loss of time when training is required. • Limited knowledge in what is available in terms of training may

lead to misconceptions about what the staff may require in terms of their training.

E-learning and distance learning courses: There are different types of distance learning methods including correspondence courses and e-learning courses. Some courses may be completed online while others might incorporate study books, CD-ROMs or audio and video tapes backed up by student tutorials and seminars. Distance education and E-learning are therefore advantageous because they

- allow employees to complete training while remaining in employment
- can be completed at a time to suit the business and employees
- are cheaper than externally provided courses

are available for a wide range of business topics

- Offer recognized qualifications from entry level diplomas and certificates to post-graduate degrees.

Training via the Internet: Using the internet or proprietary internal intranets to facilitate computer-based training. University of Botswana has recently established an E-Learning e. g. WEBCT, programme whereby students and staff could learn through internet/ intranet. This type of computer based learning carry the Advantages of reduced learning time, cost-effectiveness and consistency in instruction material, methods and presentation.

The University also has distance programmes offering Degree in business studies and Diploma in Primary Teaching Education. Radio/ Teletraining: A trainer in a central location teaches groups of employees at remote/ or different locations via TV hookups. This is mainly used by Ministry of Education especially through radio. As a teacher one experience radio lessons

whereby both students are taught through radio and instructions are given to the teacher as to how or what to provide to the students.

Videoconferencing: Interactively training employees who are geographically separated from each other—or from the trainer—via a combination of audio and visual equipment. One recalls a situation whereby, students who studied Music at University of Natal - Petermarisburg campus from 1999 - 2000 experienced video conferencing. At the time the University, currently known as University of Kwazulu Natal, offered Music Degree at the Durban Campus, which then disadvantaged students in Petermarisburg. Therefore the University devised the video conferencing to train Petermarisburg students in music courses from Durban campus.

While lessons were on process in Durban Petermarisburg students also experienced an interactive and learning process of the same class through video conferencing. Conclusion While internal training is important and can be invaluable in some areas of development, the external training process can add interest, give a greater breadth of experience and working practices, and equally important is the freedom to be able to choose a course and a style of learning that is suitable for each individual, rather than the department or team as a whole.

Each individual member of the workforce will have different needs, both in terms of the type of training they require, the level of training and of course the time needed to train. Pitman Training for example, offers flexible learning, which means companies can guarantee each of their employees is meeting their individual achievements and targets, while fitting in their study

at a time which suits them. Training can be done at their convenience, without having to sacrifice time at work and also without upsetting that all important work-life balance.

Possibly the biggest benefit of drawing on the expertise of an external trainer such as Pitman Training, is the attraction of gaining a nationally recognized certification - providing your staff with confidence that they're receiving quality training, and your company the knowledge that it has quality trained staff. All types of training resources seem to carry advantages and disadvantages; this study recommends that an organisation should choose training resources according to its learner's needs and capabilities. Organizations could outsource trainers who would make the learning meaningful; skills transfer easy and motivate the learner.

Outsourcing has the advantage of quickly addressing specific needs, and easier to coordinate but has the disadvantage of being relatively expensive. Organizations could also broaden employee's skills through on job training and in house seminars, workshops as well as forums and short courses to save on time and cost since time is an essential tool for effective production and success of the organisation. It is advised that organizations should purchase training resources such as laptops, projectors, mobile screen, flip charts, markers, and conference room etc for in house training to be efficient and effective and cost effective.

Therefore this paper concludes that there is no best method of training resources but it mostly relies on the needs and capabilities of an organisation. Hence an organisation should choose what is best for it and

also consider balancing all the methods provided in this paper. REFERENCES

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/resources> Training Development:

Fertile Ground for BPO. IDC, May 2003 [pic] ----- [pic]