

ELEVATING SKILLS: STRATEGIES FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT –HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this essay is the impact of training and development on organizational performance. It was motivated by the observation that some firms do not seem to care about enhancing the ability of their employees, but rather look down upon and penalize whatever flaws they may display. The researcher's main goals in addressing the research problem were to determine whether National Financial Credit conducts training and development programmes for all employees, any potential obstacles to the implementation of such programmes, and the actual impacts that training and development have on job performance. The researcher also placed emphasis on the numerous training techniques created and their use throughout training and development programmes across the globe.

The study also shows that training and development are essential in every company, especially for less experienced or unskilled workers. Generally speaking, the company's training techniques and resources considerably increased the job contribution of its personnel. As a result, there was an increase in the abilities and productivity of the employees, which had a beneficial effect on their performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Training and development play an important role in the effectiveness of organisations and to the experiences of people in work. Training has implications for productivity, health and safety

at work and personal development. All organisations employing people need to train and develop their staff. Most organisations are cognisant of this requirement and invest effort and other resources in training and development. Such investment can take the form of employing specialist training and development staff and paying salaries to staff undergoing training and development. Investment in training and development entails obtaining and maintaining space and equipment. It also means that operational personnel, employed in the organisation's main business functions, such as production, maintenance, sales, marketing and management support, must also direct their attention and effort from time to time towards supporting training development and delivery. This means they are required to give less attention to activities that are obviously more productive in terms of the organisation's main business. However, investment in training and development is generally regarded as good management practice to maintain appropriate expertise now and in the future.

Training has become a major growth industry in recent years. Every organization needs to have well trained and experienced people to perform the activities that have to be done .In rapidly changing society employee training is not only an activity that is desirable but also an activity that an organization must commit resources to ,if it is to maintain a viable and knowledge workforce. Planned development training programme will return values to the organization in terms of increased productivity,

heightened morale, reduced costs and greater organizational stability and flexibility to adapt to changing external requirements. Such programmes and assignments can add up to lifelong careers.

Employee training involves an expert working with learners to transfer to them certain areas of knowledge or skills to improve in their current jobs. Development in the context of human resource management is a broad ongoing multifaceted set of activities (training activities among them) to bring someone or an organization up to another threshold of performance, often to perform some job or new role in the future (McNamara, 2008).

Human resources have been identified as one of the main sources of competitive advantage by many organisations in today's economy (Edvinsson and Malone, 1997; Stewart, 1997; Sveiby, 1997; Mayo, 2001; DTL, 2003; Verma and Dewe, 2004). This is true not only of knowledge-intensive organizations, which are based on services and intangible outputs, but also increasingly of more traditional organizations, both in the private sector and in the public sector.

Within the strategic human resource management (SHRM) perspective, extensive organization training and teamwork are seen as vital to sustained competitive advantage (Kamal, et al., 2008). Consistent with SHRM theory, Kamal et al. (2008) found performance benefits from empowerment and extensive training. The rationale for an effect of extensive training on organizational performance is further strengthened by work on learning organizations (Harvey & Denton, 1999; Power & Waddell, 2004; Senge, 1990). The argument is that by upgrading employees' skills and knowledge, they are in a better position to produce high-quality products and services in the most

costeffective way, adapt to change, and contribute to company competitiveness through product or process innovation

HR practices work to develop individual knowledge and skills, as well as employee attitudes and behaviours. If these effects are prevalent enough in the employee population, then the collective changes in human capital, attitudes, behaviours, and associated organizational climate, should be strong enough to influence organizational performance (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Kozlowski & Klein, 2000; Ostroff & Bowen, 2000)

The main objectives of Training are:

- *Improving Employees Performance
- *Updating Employee skills
- *Avoiding Managerial Obsolesce
- *Preparing for promotion and Managerial Succession
- *Retaining and Motivating Employees.
- *Creating an Efficient and Effective Organization

AREAS OF TRAINING

Training enhances the overall performance of an organization in various ways. Training in one area can benefit the organization in many other areas. The major areas where employees are trained are:

1. Company policies and procedures:

Understanding company policies and procedures is important for an employee of the organization. An employee should acquaint himself with the organization's rule, practices, process and procedures, apart from the organization culture, structure and business.

2. Skilled-Based Training:

Employees should be provided training to match the skill requirements of the job they perform. Such training helps in improving the employee's

job effectiveness. Skilled base training should also be imparted to enable the employees adapt to technological changes.

3. Human Relation Training:

In an organization, employees interact with their peer, supervisors, subordinates, suppliers and customers. They might also have to interact with external agents like Government agencies or legal bodies. It is important to employees to know how to manage their professional relationship. Human resources training is essential to improve the employee's skills in the area of self training, interpersonal skills group dynamics, perception, leadership styles, motivation, disciplinary procedures, grievances redressed, and so on.

4. Problem Solving Training:

Every employee encounters problems in the course of his work in an organization. These can range from simple operational problems to major decision-making problems. Training in problem-solving skills equips an employee to deal successfully with such problems.

5. Managerial and supervisory Training:

All employees in an organization, at some point of time perform managerial and supervisory functions such as planning, organizing, directing, controlling and decision-making. Thus, training in these areas is essential for employees as they move ahead in their career paths to assume positions of increase responsibility.

II. TRAINING METHODS

The most popular training methods used by organizations can be classified as either,

1. On-the-job training
2. Off-the-job training

1. On-the-Job training:

On the job training takes place in a real environment where the trainee is exposed to an actual work situation. The major advantage of this method is that the trainee will get hands-on experience. This form of direct learning helps

the employees understand and imbibe the training lessons better. This will also help in better application of the knowledge and skills gained during the training. The disadvantage of on-the- job training is that, as the trainee is still going through the learning process, any mistakes he commits on the job might result in a loss to the organization. Hence while choosing this method, the organization should assess the damage caused due to the mistakes by the trainees. Some widely used on- the-job programmes are

- a. Job instruction training
- b. Apprenticeship Training
- c. Job rotation
- d. Committee Assignments

a. Job instruction training:

In this method of training, the trainee is given instruction by their trainer while performing the job on the site and any doubts of the trainee are cleared immediately. This method is very popular because the trainee can discuss his problem in performing the job immediately with the trainer. Job instruction training follows a systematic sequence of activities.

- As the first step, the trainee is prepared for the training by giving him clear information about the training to be imparted, the job to be performed and the venue and the time of training, any doubt regarding the training should be cleared at this stage.
- After the training is imparted to the trainee, in the form of instruction, the trainee is asked to demonstrate the job. This will help in assessing the trainee's understanding of the instruction and his learning.
- After the trainer is satisfied with the performance of the trainee, the trainee is left on his own, with someone designated to be called upon when he requires any assistance or help.

b. Apprenticeship Training:

In this apprenticeship training, a worker is attached to an experienced or senior worker.

The worker learns while observing his senior and helping in the task. The period of apprenticeship is generally long, ranging from 2-5 years. The trainees are paid only nominal wages as apprentices during training. The method is training generally used in technical jobs. mechanics, electricians, plumbers learn their jobs by working with trained persons. This is one of the traditional methods of training and still in use for learning certain jobs.

c. Job Rotation:

This is a training method where the trainee is placed on various jobs across different functions in the organization. The trainee gains cross-functional Participation, feedback and knowledge transfer to job are generally high in coaching. Individuals seeking to enter skilled trades, like those of carpenters, electricians, etc, are required to go through formal apprenticeship under experienced employees, before they join their regular jobs. The apprenticeship period typically ranges from one year to five years. Apprenticeships are not “employees” of the organization and are not governed by any of the laws that are applicable to regular employees. They do not even figure on the organization’s rolls.

Coaching is similar to apprenticeship where the coach acts as a model for the trainee to emulate. Typically, the supervisors or HR professionals function as coaches. Coaching is provided for employees when needed, rather than being a part of knowledge and is equipped to take up different jobs. The time spent on each of the jobs ranges from one to two days to several weeks. Under job rotation, the trainee moves from his trainers/supervisors in each of the different job assignments.

d. Committee assignments:

Under the committee assignments method, groups of employee are given an actual organizational problem and are asked to find a solution. The trainee develops their team-management skills, interpersonal skills,

communications skills, problem-solving skills and leadership while solving the problem as a group.

2. Off-The-Job- Training

While the training is performed on the job, any mistake by the trainee might result in damage to the organization, especially if it involves a customer or something of value. To avoid such situations, off –the-job training is used. An advantage of off the job training is that the employees are free from distractions of his job requirements and would be able to concentrate better on learning the job rather than just performing it. Off-job-training refers to the training imparted away from the employee’s immediate work area.

Methods of Off-The-Job-Training:

1. Class Room Lectures:

The lecture or conference approach is well adapted to conveying specific information rules, procedures or methods. The use of audiovisuals or demonstrations can often make a formal classroom presentation more interesting while increasing retention and offering a vehicle for clarifying more difficult points. The lecture liabilities include possible lack of feedback and the lack of active involvement by the trainee. However, this can be partially offset by reducing the structured lecture format and allowing trainee to provide feedback to the lecturer or creating discussions groups under the direction of a conference leader.

2. Simulation Exercises:

In this method of training, the trainee is exposed to an artificial work situation that closely resembles the actual work situation. In situations where the organizations cannot afford any mistakes by the trainee during on-the-job training, simulation exercises are great help. Simulation exercises can be in the form of

a. Case exercises- In this method, a real-life problem encountered in the organizations is

presented to the trainees in the form of a case study. They are then asked to analyze the case and present their views and recommendations for solving the problem. They also have to suggest alternative courses of action to provide for contingencies that might arise.

b. Experimental exercises- In these exercises, the trainer simulates situations where the employees are exposed to actual work problems. For example, the trainer can create a situation where the employees are required to work in teams. After the exercise is complete, the trainer discusses the behavior of the employees during the exercise, with the group. He appraises the trainees about their performance and discusses the exercise with the help of the theoretical concepts. In this way, the employees learn quickly and also understand their mistakes or problems easily. Hence, in experiential exercises, employees learn through direct experience.

c. Computer modeling- Complex computer modeling simulates the work environment by programming a computer to imitate some of the realities of the job. Computer modeling is widely used by airlines in the training of pilots. The computer simulates a number of critical job dimensions and allows learning to take place without the risk or high costs that would be incurred if mistakes were made in a real life flying situations. An error during a simulation offers an opportunity to learn through one's mistakes. A similar error under real life conditions might cost a number of lives and the loss of a multimillion-dollar aircraft quite a high price for learning exercise. Obviously, complex computer modeling is expensive and can be justified only where programmes are formal. A number of trainees will be developed and the costs of allowing the individual to learn on the job are prohibitive.

d. Vestibule training- This is a training method where the actual work conditions are

simulated and the equipment used by the trainees is similar to what is used on the job. In this way, the trainees gain experience of using the equipment without any pressure of work or cost involved. Though expensive, vestibule training helps employees gain knowledge about the actual job situations. It also reduces the problem of transferring learning to the job, since the trainee uses the same materials and equipment during training, as on the job.

e. Role playing- Role-playing is described as a method of human interaction. It involves realistic behavior in imaginary situations. The trainee assumes the role of different characters in the organizational context. For example, some trainees may form the HR Department while others form the labor union. The ensuring role-play of negotiation can help them improve their negotiating skills, communications skills etc. A role play basically helps in improving the communications, people-management and relationship management skills of the trainees

3. Programmed instructions:

In this method of training the trainee is given a series of questions after he studies the relevant material required for the accomplishment of the job. After the trainee answers questions, he is given immediate feedback whether it is right or wrong. If the answer is correct, he is asked to proceed to the next questions but if it is wrong, he is asked to refer back to the material. This kind of program promotes continuous interaction between the trainer and the trainee and facilitates learning.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Method of Sampling:

There are many sample methods to collect data. The sampling method used is simple random sampling.

Sources of data :

The data has been collected from both Primary and Secondary sources for the research work.

Primary Data

The primary data is collected with the help of questions, which consists of closed ended questions. The questionnaire is chosen for of its simplicity and reliability. Researchers can expect a straight answer, which is directly related to the questions asked. Interpretation of data under this can also be done correctly .It helps the respondent to understand the significance and answer reliably. In this method response rate and reliability is higher. In addition to this the data is collected through observation method and personal interview.

Secondary Data

Secondary data is collected through the document provided by Personnel Department such as training schedules, personnel manuals, reports regarding suggestions, scheme etc., relevant books from various authors on HRD, magazines, journals and other reports.

IV. CONCLUSION

Finally we conclude that employee demands with reference to training and development and ultimately the gaps found in the required skills vis-a-vis attained skills have become so wide that inter-relationships of training and performance are badly disturbed. There is still a big gap between the knowledge and skills imparted and acquired in the institutions and its applications as seen in the industrial environments. Due to this gap, companies now feel that there should be a close liaison between such institutions and the industry so that employee development programs are made more purpose oriented. There are training institutions which offer customized as well as off-the-shelf programs based on their client's business operations but yet, there is much to be improved. Therefore, training and development cannot be disconnected from the business activities of the organizations; on the contrary, this is the area that clearly illustrates positive relationships

between training activities and the organizational performance.

In particular it is recognised that an effective training and development policy can be a crucial factor in addressing inequalities in employment in relation to race, gender and disabilities. It is recommended that organization produce a training and development plan, the aim of which shall be to empower all employees to carry out their roles to the highest standards, and deliver high quality services to customer. In these guidelines, training and development are broadly defined as those activities aimed at raising the standards of employee practice and thus lifting the quality of the employees, and customer learning and organisation experience.

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